

## **COUNCIL**

**24 JULY 2014**

### **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**

**A James Peck of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor O'Brien, the following question:**

With the new Paramount Park due to built, and a large estimated number of the Chinese community due to visit the park, would the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services be willing to put mandarin in the foreign languages curriculum to give young people the advantage when applying for jobs at the park and any jobs in other sectors?

**B Don Cameron of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following question:**

What is the Council doing to establish and monitor standards (including consideration of Selective Licensing) for private landlords to ensure their properties are maintained to acceptable standards and, when dealing with

tenants and other interested persons (such as neighbours), care and integrity are demonstrated?

**C Alan Higgins of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:**

Councillor Jarrett has allegedly described hardworking Council Tax payers as 'Turkeys' to a Medway Messenger Journalist. In June 2014, it was reported that Council sub-contractor Civica had taken debits from people without consent. Will he indicate the total number of residents impacted by the blunder by Council sub-contractor Civica and will he apologise to those that have been fleeced twice and indicate what recompense will be given to those impacted?

**D Raja Miah of Gillingham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, the following question:**

Former Conservative Councillor Vaughan Hewett said that "I cannot accept the whip from someone who, in my opinion, is inappropriate for the work required this coming year." Does he consider his whip to be inappropriate for the work?

**E Sue Groves MBE of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, the following question:**

Medway Council has recently become the first Council to publicly welcome residents who report Council meetings as they happen using social media.

Would the Leader agree to increase both the accessibility and transparency of their meetings significantly through the use of live audio or video streaming? This would open up democracy to many who do not have the benefit of suitable public accessible transport or who are unable to get to meetings in person, whilst also showing that Medway Council are willing to take the lead in showing what true democratic inclusivity looks like as an example to other Authorities.

**F Sean Varnham of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following question:**

At the last Sweeps festival members of the Labour party were handing out leaflets to members of the public and causing an obstruction in Rochester High Street. Can the Portfolio Holder clarify the Council's position on political parties distributing propaganda at Council organised festivals?

**G Rita Mew of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:**

The new 25 year airport lease signed between Medway Council and Rochester Airport Limited appears to contain no additional safeguards for local residents with respect to the volume of noisy, intrusive helicopter, gyrocopter and microlight flying.

Tell us what if any, protective measures for residents were discussed and included in the new 25 year lease to safeguard local residents, environment and enjoyment of life?

**H Bernard Howell of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:**

The Council publicity information for the Rochester Airport states: "The Council cannot afford to pay for these improvements without private sector funding."

Expressed as a percentage of the ratepayers' £4 million contribution to the airport operator, what matching private sector funding is forthcoming or agreed towards the overall cost of the airport infrastructure improvements?

**I Michael Fowler of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty, the following question:**

At the last Council Meeting you belittled the Strood Library campaigners' petition by discarding signatories not living in Strood. Yet you did not discard people supporting the airport plans not living in Medway. If you had, the support for the airport masterplan plan would have been minute in comparison to the hundreds and hundreds of legitimate residents opposing it.

Why do you ridicule the Strood petitioners, yet support a minority of out of area people for the airport plan over hundreds of local residents?

**J Keith Baldock of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:**

The Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) Jan 2014 for Rochester Airport states: Section 7 (b) Circuit training is prohibited on Runway 02 on Fri, Sat, Sun, Public Holidays and at other times that the aerodrome authority consider appropriate.

You and the ward Councillor were at the RACC meeting dated 7th Oct 2011 where it was agreed to withdraw the restriction. You and the ward councillor are party to the withdrawal of the restriction and have legitimised Rochester Airport Limited in exposing residents to the ear piercing and intrusive noise of trainee helicopter, gyrocopter, microlight and aircraft pilots flying circuits at weekends when people are enjoying the tranquillity of their gardens.

As in this case, self imposed restrictions do not work as they can be arbitrarily dropped for whatever reason.

Will you and Medway Council support a legally binding permanent reinstatement of the ban on circuit flying at weekends and bank holidays to protect residents enjoyment of life and property values?

**K Tony Jeacock of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:**

Can the Portfolio Holder please advise me as to the accuracy of a report that a number of street parking permits are being issued to Medway Maritime employees, enabling them to park in residential streets near to the hospital?

If this is the case, what is the maximum number that can be issued in this way?

**L Paul Chaplin of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:**

Can the Portfolio Holder please tell me, is there any likelihood that either now or at any time in the future, Medway Council will sell off any land it owns that could provide access to the proposed Gibraltar Farm housing development, thus potentially enabling it to proceed?

**M Rachel Garrick of Rochester will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, the following question:**

Councillor Turpin rebelled against the Tory whip at the Full Council meeting earlier this year over his concern surrounding the £4.4m spend on Rochester Airfield.

Does the Leader see a conflict of interest in accepting the RAL submission that the development will cost £4.4m to develop, when the independent TPS estimates suggest the cost could run to £13.5m?

**N Ben Pranczke of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty, the following question:**

According to Councillor Alan Jarrett 'The spectre of our green spaces being under threat has never been more acute' and that 'Developers circle. There is talk of another 500 houses at Hoo, 500 at Lordswood, hundreds more in Rainham and elsewhere.'

How much has the botched Planning process cost hardworking taxpayers?

**O Jonathan Primett of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, the following question:**

Does the Leader agree with Councillor Irvine that restrictions to licensing takeaways near schools are 'nannying fussbucketry' and what is the official administration policy on takeaway restrictions near Primary and Secondary Schools in Medway?

**Lead officer contact**

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**Background papers**

Council Rules, Constitution (Part 1, Chapter 4):

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/thecouncilanddemocracy/council/constitution.aspx>