

COUNCIL

16 OCTOBER 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 Chespy of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, Councillor Hicks, the following:

The 25th of November 2014 is White Ribbon Day. The white ribbon campaign UK is about men working together to end violence toward women. The UN officially recognised 25th November as International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

The White Ribbon is a symbol of hope for a world where women and girls can live free from the fear of violence. Wearing the ribbon is about challenging the acceptability of violence – by getting men involved, helping women to break the silence, and encouraging everyone to come together to build a better world for all.

Does Medway Council intend to support this campaign by signing up to it and become a White Ribbon Authority?

B Mrs M Howell of Rochester will ask the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers, the following:

The Rochester Airport Masterplan states:

“The applicant will be expected to arrange public consultation on the proposal prior to the submission of a planning application”.

Why have Medway Council allowed Rochester Airport Limited to submit a planning application MC/14/2914 for a paved runway without prior public consultation?

C Susan Haggerty of Chatham will ask the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers, the following:

Rochester Airport have stated that on some days 400 - 500 air movements could be expected. This demonstrates that an all weather paved runway could potentially support well over 130,000 air movements per year. Far more than ever achievable on grass.

What financial evidence does Medway Council have from Rochester Airport that their "reasonable" air movement cap expectation of 40,000 is correct?

D Tony Briggs of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, the following:

How was a contribution of public funds not to exceed £4 million offered for Rochester Airport improvements in the Medway Council tender document “To Let Rochester Airport Kent” January 2013 without Cabinet or Council approval?

E Caroline Findlay of Lordswood will ask the Portfolio for Adult Services, Councillor Brake, the following:

30% of users of the Medway Health Trainer service are people with disabilities. How does this compare with other Public Health services?

F Sam Bennett of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Jarrett, the following:

Can Council confirm the saving target that has been set for Public Health for the financial year 2015-2016?

G Paul Broadbent of Strood will ask the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Councillor Brake, the following:

Is the decision to decommission the Health Trainer service based on an assessment of the health needs of the Medway population or expediency; if the contract was due to run for another 12 months where would the

savings come from?

H Tony Jeacock of Rainham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, the following:

Regarding the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee, I understand committee party members are appointed proportionately to the number of seats each party holds on the local authority.

According to a recent central government committee meeting on the 'funding of local authorities', I understand that on local authorities where one party has a very significant overall majority the chairman should be a member of the main opposition party.

Can the Leader of Medway Council please advise me as to why this is not the case on Medway Council?

I Vivienne Parker of Chatham will ask the Chairman of the Employment Matters Committee, Councillor Wicks, the following:

Could the Council please confirm the pension arrangements for the Chief Executive, Neil Davies?

J Paul Chaplin of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

During the recent gas works that have been taking place across Medway and particularly in Watling Ward Gillingham, some residents have had cause to complain about the use of dump sites used by Southern Gas Networks.

Could we have a firm assurance from officers, and the Portfolio Holder, that there can be more consultation with residents, and closer working with the contractors, when choosing dump sites?

K Michael Mew of Rochester will ask the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers, the following:

Medway Council planning have been notified that their decision not to require an Environmental Impact Assessment (MC/14/2159) for proposed changes at Rochester Airport has been raised with the Secretary of State on 2 September with a decision pending.

Can you please confirm that the Rochester Airport planning application MC/14/2914 will be suspended until the Secretary of State has made a ruling?

L William McLennan of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, Councillor Hicks, the following:

As the Chair of the Councillor Conduct Committee can you please provide your views on Councillors promoting misinformation to the public?

M Bryan Fowler of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, the following:

At a recent Planning Committee on 13 August 2014, a Senior Planning Manager reported on the high number of appeals against planning decisions made by Council members and officers which have been upheld by the Planning Inspectorate, which is based in Bristol. The figure was 61% compared to 30% in the comparable period last year. I am a local resident who, with my neighbours, has been profoundly affected by some of these appeals being allowed.

Would you agree with the contention that consideration should be given to appeals being determined by a more locally accountable authority?

N Vivienne Parker of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

Given that when I moved to my present home 30 years ago, half the street lights went out after 1am, is there any reason why we cannot reintroduce this in order to save electricity and save our valuable Council Tax?

O Paul Chaplin of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Councillor Brake, the following:

What is being done to address the obvious need for more mental health beds and facilities at Medway Hospital?

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>