

Medway Council
Meeting of Medway Council
Thursday, 16 October 2014
7.00pm to 10.30pm

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 Kemp)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Maisey)
Councillors Avey, Bowler, Bright, Carr, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers, OBE, Chishti, Chitty, Clarke, Cooper, Doe, Filmer, Gilry, Christine Godwin, Paul Godwin, Griffin, Griffiths, Adrian Gulvin, Pat Gulvin, Harriott, Hewett, Hicks, Hubbard, Igwe, Iles, Irvine, Jarrett, Juby, Kearney, Mackinlay, Mackness, Maple, Mason, Murray, O'Brien, Osborne, Price, Purdy, Rodberg, Royle, Shaw, Smith, 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 Adults Services

443 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 24 July 2014 was agreed and signed by the Mayor as correct.

444 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baker, Brake, Colman, Craven, Etheridge, Stamp and Tolhurst.

445 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

Councillor Irvine declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any reference to the forthcoming Rochester and Strood by-election because he was the Election Agent for Mark Reckless (candidate).

Other interests

Councillor Chishti declared an interest in agenda item 14D (Motion) because one of his relatives worked in the local taxi trade.

Councillor Cooper declared an interest in any reference to Medway Maritime Hospital because some of her immediate family members worked at the hospital.

Councillor Cooper also declared an interest in agenda item 14C (Motion) because she was the Local Authority representative on the Medway Queen Preservation Society. She stated that she had been advised by the Monitoring Officer that she could speak and vote on the item.

Councillor Price declared an interest in agenda item 9 (Report on Overview and Scrutiny Activity) in relation to the Health and Lifestyle Trainers Service because he was the Chairman of the Sunlight Development Trust (the current provider of the service). He left the room for the duration of the debate on the matter.

446 Mayor's announcements

The Mayor provided details of forthcoming events in aid of the Mayor of Medway's Charity, which this year was supporting Kent and Sussex Air Ambulance, Headway, Oliver Fisher Special Care Baby Trust, Medway Young Carers and the Streetcops Trust. There would be an Italian Opera Night on 23 October 2014 and an Indian Night was planned for 18 November 2014. He informed Members that full details were available from his office.

The Mayor, on behalf of Members, wished Terry Bell, caretaker at the St George's Centre, a happy retirement. Terry had been in this role for several years and had always played an important role in making sure Council meetings ran smoothly.

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

The Mayor proposed a variation to the order of business to enable agenda item 14D (Motion submitted by Councillor Murray) to be considered after agenda item 7 (Public Questions) in light of the number of people present in the public gallery for the item. This was agreed.

447 Leader's announcements

There were none.

448 Petitions

Public

Mrs Weet, a local resident, submitted a petition, containing 509 signatures, asking the Council to save the Health and Lifestyle Trainer Service, currently provided by Sunlight Development Trust, based at the Sunlight Centre.

Members

Councillor Wildey submitted six petitions, containing a total of 1429 signatures, opposing planning application MC14/2395 (Gibraltar Farm).

Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE submitted two petitions, containing a total of 383 signatures, opposing planning application MC14/2395 (Gibraltar Farm).

Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE submitted a petition, containing 16 signatures, requesting the removal of unsuitable large trees which had been planted too close to properties on the south side of Kings Frith playing field, Wigmore.

Councillor Murray submitted a petition, containing 128 signatures, which expressed concern regarding "out of town" taxis operating in Medway.

449 Public questions

(A) James Chespy of Gillingham asked 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 towards 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".

Councillor Hicks stated that he was personally committed to the aims of the white ribbon campaign. Officers had now obtained guidance from White Ribbon UK, and would be discussing how best to take forward an application in

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consultation with Medway's Domestic Abuse Forum and the Council's Domestic Abuse Coordinator.

Mr Chespy did not have a supplementary question but stated that he was most gratified to hear this from Councillor Hicks. He hoped that Councillors would take this forward to join the white ribbon campaign and become a white ribbon authority and that he had a number of white ribbons for Councillors to wear during the month of November.

(B) Mr Howell, on behalf of Mrs M Howell of Rochester, asked the Chairman of the Planning Committee, 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?"

Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers stated that it was Medway Council's preferred option that applicants undertook public consultation with local residents prior to submitting their applications and whilst it was encouraged in the Rochester Airport Masterplan there was no statutory requirement for the applicant to consult with local residents prior to the submission of an application. The fact that Rochester Airport PLC had not carried out this consultation did not make it possible for the Planning Authority to refuse to accept and validate an application.

Page 9 of the Masterplan stated that "any planning application formally submitted would be consulted upon in accordance with the Council's adopted consultation procedures. This would include statutory consultees and local residents and businesses." Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers stated that the Council would be consulting over 7,500 local residents and businesses.

Mr Howell, on behalf of Mrs Howell stated that Medway Council and Councillor Jarrett had grossly misled the public by proffering false expectations they had no legitimacy to state, in the absence of a formal agreement with the applicant. He stated that Rochester Airport had left the people of Medway ill informed on their major contentious proposal which would be paid out by this Conservative authority, giving them £4million of tax payers' money.

He asked Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers to explain why the public had been hoodwinked and potentially lied to about the airport planning application process by Medway Council?

Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers stated that this was not a question for her as Chairman of the Planning Committee.

(C) Mrs Susan Haggerty of Chatham asked the Chairman of the Planning Committee, 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?

Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers stated that a valid planning application had been submitted for Rochester Airport on which the Council was undertaking extensive consultation; the subject of this question would be a material consideration in the determining of that application.

She stated that she had been advised by the Monitoring Officer that it would be inappropriate to comment on this question as it may prejudice her ability to take part in the determination of any application at the Planning Committee.

She stated that the application would be carefully processed by officers and a detailed report would be presented to the Planning Committee for determination. The report would include a summary of all representations received and an analysis of the planning issues. She stated that, as Chairman of the Planning Committee, it would be inappropriate for her to comment further.

Mrs Haggerty asked if Councillor Mrs Chambers could guarantee that the annual air movement cap of 40,000 proposed by the airport operator in their screening opinion and planning application could not be increased for whatever reason in the future by an application to the Council and asked Councillor Mrs Chambers to answer this question with a simple yes or no.

Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers stated that anybody could submit a planning application which would have to be determined at that time.

(D) William McLennan, on behalf of Tony Briggs of Rochester, asked 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?"

Councillor Jarrett stated that the principle of contributing towards the cost of the airport improvements was agreed at Cabinet on 18 December 2012 and it was made clear to potential bidders for the letting of the airport that the offer of a contribution of up to £4 million towards the improvements at Rochester Airport was subject to Full Council approval.

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The lease of the airport which included an obligation on the Council to contribute £4 million towards the airport improvement works was not completed until Full Council approval was obtained. Cabinet approved this matter on 18 December 2012 and Full Council gave final approval on 25 July 2013.

Mr McLennan, on behalf of Mr Briggs, stated that by not including a percentage restriction of contribution to the overall cost of the airport upgrade in the tender documents, this administration had potentially lost the public millions of pounds. Bidders could have simply maximised the Council contribution and limited their own expense. Today the public were paying essentially for the entire airport infrastructure because there was no percentage to overall cost restrictive clause.

He asked the Finance Portfolio Holder what disciplinary action he would recommend to the Council's Chief Executive for such gross incompetence against the officer who approved and released the airport tender document.

Councillor Jarrett stated that it was not for him to have a dialogue with the Head of Paid Service about what disciplinary action he may or may not take against his staff. He stated that the essence of the question was based on the premise that the money was being ill invested which he refuted.

He stated that this matter had a good way to run yet, that the investment would make a substantial return and that he anticipated a substantial return in terms of capital revenue. He stated that he was entirely satisfied as Finance Portfolio Holder that this was a wise investment of Council funds.

(E) Caroline Findlay of Lordswood asked 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?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, on behalf of Councillor Brake, stated that the Exercise Referral programme had 8% of users who described themselves as having a disability. In addition, of the 4,494 service users who had booked onto a Stop Smoking intervention, 8.7% (389) were registered with a disability.

Mrs Findlay asked whether an Equalities Impact Assessment had been undertaken regarding the loss of this service and would the findings be taken into consideration by Star Chamber?

Councillor Doe stated that he could not answer all the detail of the question because it was not in his Portfolio, but there had been a discussion about this matter at the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that this would be reviewed by Cabinet on 28 October 2014. He stated that he would expect the impact assessment to be included within the report to Cabinet.

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(F) Sam Bennett of Rochester asked 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?”

Councillor Jarrett stated that at the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 October 2014, the Chief Finance Officer had made it clear to Members that no decision had yet been made in respect of the budget for 2015/16 and that the Medium Term Financial Plan, also on the agenda that evening, set out the timetable for the budget decisions leading to the approval by Council ultimately on 26 February 2015.

The resource gap shown in that report was £12.2 million and in response to that a number of areas had been targeted for further research, amongst which is the more efficient use of Public Health grant.

Mr Bennett asked if the Council could confirm whether public health funds were ring fenced and give assurances that any requirements to ring fence funds were being adhered to.

Councillor Jarrett stated that the Public Health grant was ring fenced and that the task for him as Portfolio Holder and other Members was to ensure that Local Authority rigour was brought to the public health grant which was formerly in the health service.

The Council currently delivered a number of activities which were considered as public health activities. It was a matter of making certain that the Council used those ring fenced monies effectively for the good of Medway’s people.

He stated that this may or may not mean that the Council would continue with some existing public health programmes and prioritise other public health programmes as it saw fit but that was very much an open question. The Director of Public Health was involved in these budget setting discussions as were all other senior officers in the Council.

(G) Paul Broadbent of Strood asked 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?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, on behalf of Councillor Brake, stated that the Council was currently undertaking its annual budget setting process. This was being done in the context of significant reductions in the amount of subsidy the Council received from central government, which in turn, was related to the previous deficit.

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Therefore, difficult decisions would have to be made. However, a final decision had not yet been made regarding the Health Trainer service and officers would be submitting a report to Cabinet on 28 October 2014 following the recommendations made by the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Doe stated that Mr Broadbent had asked in his question about where would savings come from if the contract was to be continued. Councillor Doe stated that to answer this question, it had to be seen in the overall context of a very large budget and therefore savings on a “one on one” basis were not that clear to identify.

Mr Broadbent asked if the Councillor could confirm how many substantive and temporary staff were employed by Public Health at grade PO1 and above including the grade of consultant.

Councillor Doe stated that he could not answer this question as he was not the relevant Portfolio Holder but he undertook to ensure that Mr Broadbent would receive that information.

(H) Tony Jeacock of Rainham asked 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?”

Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE stated in Councils where there was a majority group, there was no requirement to appoint minority group Councillors as Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The Government issued guidance in 2001 saying that local authorities with a majority group might consider it appropriate to have all or some of those Committees chaired by members outside the majority group. Whilst Members were required to have regard to that advice it was not binding and that there would be a variable picture across local authorities. Medway was one of many Councils where majority group Members chaired Overview and Scrutiny Committees. These Committees had to be politically balanced so, irrespective of who chaired the meetings, the ruling group would have the most number of seats.

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The same Government guidance stated that Overview and Scrutiny should be constructive and Medway Council was proud of the excellent work done by its Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Task Groups. He stated that, only recently, the Council had received recognition by being shortlisted for a national scrutiny award for the work done by its Overview and Scrutiny Task Group on Fair Access to Credit.

He stated that he hoped that Mr Jeacock would agree it was more important to measure the effectiveness of Medway's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements against the very real and tangible outcomes they had delivered for local people over many years rather than the political persuasion of the Chairmen.

Mr Jeacock stated that Medway's Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee currently comprised eight Conservatives, four Labour and one Lib Dem and that both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman were Conservatives.

He asked whether the Leader of Medway Council would agree with him that this was tantamount to marking your own homework, that this made a mockery of both local democracy and proper accountability and why would he not follow his own Government's guidelines and do something about it.

Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE referred to the last part of his response in that although the Overview and Scrutiny Committees were chaired by Members of the majority group, if Mr Jeacock had seen how they worked, he would be assured they worked on a cross party basis and indeed they could at times be very critical of some aspects of the work undertaken by the administration and that was how it should be.

(I) Vivienne Parker of Chatham asked 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?"

Councillor Wicks stated that the Chief Executive currently contributed 11.4% of his salary to the pension scheme and in addition there was an employer contribution of 18.3%.

In terms of his package it was not possible to give the full detail as this would depend on when he would retire, his service from elsewhere and his future earnings. However, the scheme paid out benefits calculated by a set formula which was fully in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme and was administered by Kent County Council.

There was no supplementary question.

(J) Paul Chaplin of Rainham asked 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?”

Councillor Filmer stated that the selection of sites and the method of working was discussed and agreed prior to the works taking place. If the contractors failed to comply then action was taken against them.

The sites chosen for site compounds were chosen where impact would be reduced as much as possible, however, due to the nature of these works the spoil produced from excavations was untidy in appearance. Whilst this spoil was removed off site at regular intervals, it was usually replaced by fresh excavated material as the works progressed.

Site compounds needed to be in close proximity to the sites themselves to enable the works to be undertaken as quickly as possible and also to reduce the time spent removing material to other locations, which was impractical and would also significantly lengthen the works duration.

Mr Chaplin asked whether it would be possible when allowing contractors to choose dumpsites that these were visited regularly by highway inspectors to ensure safe working procedures were being upheld and road safety aspects were being adhered to and respected, thus ensuring that the needs of local residents were being taken into account.

Councillor Filmer stated that where works were carried out there was a risk and method statement carried out prior to the commencement of the work.

Councillor Filmer referred to the specific works in Mr Chaplin’s question in that when he had been notified that there was an untidiness about the works, he had asked an officer to visit the site promptly. In addition, he stated that he had received reports from Ward Councillors that some local residents were very impressed with the work and that they had been taking refreshments to the contractor’s staff. He stated that he appreciated Mr Chaplin’s concern and that the Council did take this issue very seriously.

(K) Mrs Mew, on behalf of Michael Mew of Rochester, asked 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.

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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?"

Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers stated that Medway Council had not received any notification from the Secretary of State or the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) regarding its decision not to require an Environmental Impact Assessment to be submitted with the planning application for Rochester Airport.

She stated that as a valid planning application had been received it was important that the application was formally consulted upon and determined in the usual way. If an application was not determined within a 13 week period the applicant had a right to appeal against non determination, and therefore in the absence of any notification from either CLG or the Secretary of State it was necessary that Medway Council, as Local Planning Authority, consult upon the application in accordance with its normal procedures and practices.

Mrs Mew, on behalf of Mr Mew, stated that Medway Council, in not requiring a formal impact assessment for the airport proposal, was neglectful in its duty to protect the community and also acting unlawfully as an Environmental Impact Assessment could not be inferred.

Mrs Mew stated that in referring the matter to Medway Council's legal department and not providing a reason, the Head of Planning had demonstrated by omission that the House of Lords' ruling was never considered in the case officer's determination. If the determination for MC14/2159 was found unlawful or unsafe for whatever reason, would Medway Council suspend MC14/2914 planning application? Mrs Mew requested a simple yes or no answer.

Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers stated that it was not possible to answer this question with a yes or no answer, and that the bottom line was that the Council had not been notified by either the CLG or the Secretary of State that such an application had been made.

(L) William McLennan of Rochester asked 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?"

Councillor Hicks stated that this reminded him of a similar question that Mr McLennan had asked in April and that he would provide a similar answer.

Individual concerns about the conduct of a Councillor or Councillors when they were acting in that capacity should be raised under the Council's Code of Conduct process, which could be accessed on the Council's website.

Advice about the process involved and about the concerns someone might have could also be discussed with the Monitoring Officer in the first instance.

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Where concerns were raised formally they were considered by the Councillor Conduct Committee, which he chaired. Decisions were made by the Committee as a whole after a vote, as was standard practice, and so he did not see how it was helpful to offer personal views on this issue, in that context, since to do so might pre-judge a decision the Committee was asked to make in the future.

The Council was of course committed to promoting high standards of conduct and behaviour and these were enshrined in the Code of Conduct.

Mr McLennan stated that Councillor Hicks had promoted in the “Medway Mail Summer 2014” that local Ward Councillors Trevor Clarke, Sylvia Griffin and Rupert Turpin said “we know how important retaining Rochester Airport is to residents”. He asked whether Councillor Hicks had not noticed that Medway Conservative Council’s public consultation on the contentious Rochester Airport Masterplan received 908 responses, 90% of which opposed the plan, 80% strongly opposed it and 70% asked for it to be scrapped demanding proper consultation on a full range of options for the airfield’s future use in which Medway residents could choose from a full range of options, one of which included the Medway Maritime Trust Hospital in Gillingham to move to the airfield site.

He asked Councillor Hicks to explain why he and his colleagues were peddling misinformation to residents.

Councillor Hicks stated that Council questions were supposed to be about Council business and services that the Council had responsibility for. Party political leaflets were nothing to do with the Council.

He informed Mr McLennan that the principal place where he could challenge party political comments or issues was at the ballot box. Councillor Hicks stated that Mr McLennan would get that opportunity at the forthcoming Rochester and Strood by-election.

(M) Bryan Fowler of Chatham asked 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?”

Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE stated that the Planning Inspectorate had been in existence since 1947 and he was well aware that some of its decisions

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affected residents and upset colleagues who served on the Planning Committee.

Inconsistencies in decisions were of concern and a meeting had previously been held with the Planning Inspectorate to exchange views on that subject. It was accepted that the figures quoted in the question did not make good reading and he was aware that there would be a careful analysis of those decisions by the planning department.

Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE stated that whilst the Planning Inspectorate had its faults, to move the determination of planning appeals to individual local authorities would in his view, lead to greater inconsistencies between different local authority areas.

Mr Fowler stated that decisions which had been made had caused a great deal of concern. He asked Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE if he would write to the local MPs to conduct a review of the planning process with a view to instituting a process which was much more equitable and fair for all.

Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE stated that this was a matter of concern to a considerable number of local authorities, therefore he was quite prepared to take this matter up with the authority which negotiated with government on behalf of Local Authorities, namely the Local Government Association.

(N) Vivienne Parker of Chatham asked 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?”

Councillor Filmer stated that Medway Council did not have any plans to turn street lighting off. Street lighting served far more than illuminating the street scene; a well lit environment added to the comfort experienced by residents when travelling either by vehicle but more importantly by foot or cycle during the hours of darkness. In addition the Council had to maintain a certain lighting level to ensure that the CCTV network remained operational 24/7, again adding to people feeling safe when travelling in and around Medway.

He stated that the Council was looking at utilising more energy efficient lighting such as LEDs with a number of trials being operated across Medway, the latest being those installed at the Darnley Arch refurbishment project that was completed a week ahead of programme on 5 October 2014.

He stated that the Council was sure that a more efficient and effective lighting regime would prove more favourable with residents and businesses rather than a night time switch off.

There was no supplementary question.

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(O) Paul Chaplin of Rainham asked 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?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, on behalf of Councillor Brake stated that the whole of this Council agreed with Mr Chaplin that there was a need for better health services for people with mental health needs both at Medway Maritime Hospital and in the community.

He advised that Medway Council was directly responsible for social care services and the first decision that Councillor Brake made on taking up this portfolio was to serve notice on a failing health and social care provider, KMPT, and to return the social care mental health services to Medway Council. That decision proved to be right and delivered a transformation in social care services for people with mental health needs and their family carers here in Medway.

Councillor Doe stated that Councillor Brake had tirelessly campaigned for better local health services for people with mental health needs and had taken this matter up with the responsible NHS commissioners on several occasions. Councillor Brake had been very clear in fighting for local mental health services for Medway – not just to be parochial but because there was a clear case that local mental health services could better respond to people at times of crisis, and contribute to better outcomes in terms of recovery from mental illness. A part of staying well in the community was knowing that specialist services were available and accessible should they be needed and this should not be underestimated.

He stated that Medway Council’s Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee had continuously challenged NHS commissioners and the provider KMPT on the sufficiency and the quality of health care provided to Medway people with mental health needs. The Committee referred the matter to the Secretary of State and they continued to this day to scrutinise the issue at each and every meeting.

Mr Chaplin stated that £1.3m had been spent so far in sending mental health patients out of the area because there were no beds in Medway. Other services such as the Police had to accommodate these patients, which was wholly inappropriate, therefore it was clear that the number of beds available simply was not enough.

He asked whether he could have an assurance from Councillor Brake or Councillor Doe that they would bring more pressure to bear upon the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to commission more mental health beds, and if not, why not.

Councillor Doe stated that he had made it clear in his first answer that both he and Councillor Brake did press for this with the health authorities. He stated

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that Medway Council was not in charge of this service and therefore the Council could not directly tell them to provide this money but the Council could act as the voice of the local people in making sure they were aware of concerns.

Councillor Doe stated that he agreed with the questioner that sending people out of the area for common mental health problems was quite unreasonable. Where people had very specialist mental health needs then maybe they did have to go outside of Medway and that this was unfortunate, however, for the great majority of people care provided in the communities where they lived was extremely important.

450 Motion

(A) Councillor Murray, supported by Councillor Chishti, submitted the following:

Medway Council notes concerns that private hire vehicles from outside Medway are operating in Medway.

Council believes that employment should not be discouraged, but recognises there may be safety concerns over out-of-area drivers operating in Medway.

Council resolves to work with the Medway Licensed Taxi Drivers Association in finding a sustainable and legal solution.

Decision:

Medway Council notes concerns that private hire vehicles from outside Medway are operating in Medway.

Council believes that employment should not be discouraged, but recognises there may be safety concerns over out-of-area drivers operating in Medway.

Council resolves to work with the Medway Licensed Taxi Drivers Association in finding a sustainable and legal solution.

451 Leader's report

Discussion:

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

- Thames Estuary Airport
- Lodge Hill and development in Medway
- Key Stage 2 results
- Investors in People gold standard
- Rochester and Strood by-election

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- Short Breaks Review and Policy
- Twydall Community Hub/Housing Revenue Account.

452 Overview and scrutiny activity

Discussion:

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

- Task Group on support for care leavers
- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Medway Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2013/2014
- Short Breaks Review and Policy
- Medway NHS Foundation Trust
- Emergency and Urgent Care Review and Redesign
- Wi-fi Access across Medway
- Food safety
- Medway Statement of Community Involvement
- Welfare Reform Task Group
- Key Stage 2 performance
- Works at Darnley Arches
- Health and Lifestyle Trainer Service
- Home to School Transport.

453 Members' questions

(A) Councillor Irvine asked the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers, the following:

"Following the decision by Medway Council's Planning Committee on 4 September to unanimously green light the Lodge Hill development, can the Chairman of the Planning Committee confirm to me how many of the Members of the Planning Committee present that evening have actually undertaken a site visit to the proposed development and when that visit took place?"

Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers stated that the Planning Office, in liaison with Land Securities and the MoD, arranged two trips to and around Lodge Hill site, shortly after the planning application was received, where those interested were taken around Lodge Hill and Chattenden by minibus. These took place on 14 and 21 November 2011. All Councillors were invited and whilst not all did attend the majority of the take up were from Members of the Planning Committee or those who sat regularly as substitutes on the Committee as well as the Members for the Peninsula ward.

She stated that the site was well known to Members and many had taken the opportunity over the years to visit the site.

Councillor Irvine referred Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers to an article from the Medway Conservative Group newsletter titled "No Capstone Valley

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development". He stated that Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers was jointly quoted as saying 'we have successfully fought before to keep Capstone Valley green and will do again; any developer who thinks they can develop on this most beautiful part of Medway needs to think again as we will be doing everything we can to prevent housing in the valley".

He asked that given that statement did Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers feel that it was appropriate for her to Chair the all party Planning Committee meeting which unanimously approved development at Lodge Hill.

Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers stated that it had been appropriate to do so.

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

"During the last 12 months the Splashes swimming pool in Rainham was closed for a structural survey of the roof's support pillars. However, when it rains the roof leaks bringing impurities from the roof directly into the filtered pool water and down onto users.

Can Councillor Doe tell me when the leaking roof will be repaired, and how safe is the roof?"

Councillor Doe stated that Splashes sports centre was 24 years old and over that period of time the constant humid environment caused by the leisure pool could cause metal erosion. It was therefore felt prudent last year to undertake a survey of the columns which support the roof structure. This survey did not identify any imminent risk.

He stated that there would be a need to undertake remedial works in forthcoming years. An officer project team had begun working on proposals for improvements to the centre which would incorporate the remedial works. Upon completion, these proposals would be presented to Members for their consideration. In the meantime, Norse had undertaken repairs to the roof to hopefully resolve recent problems with rain ingress.

Swimming pool water quality was continually monitored by trained staff to ensure it was of correct quality for the centre's growing number of customers. He stated that he would be visiting the centre next month to discuss future improvements to the centre as it prepared to celebrate its 25th birthday. He further stated that it could not be expected that a building of that age would not have some problems associated with it.

Councillor Hewett stated that he was aware that Councillor Doe and the Deputy Director were visiting the pool soon and that residents were hoping that it would be raining so Councillor Doe could see the flow of water into the pool from the roof, given that as of last week it was still leaking. He asked Councillor Doe for an update as to when this would be repaired.

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Councillor Doe stated that he would provide Councillor Hewett with feedback from the visit.

(C) Councillor Maple asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, the following:

“On 26 March 2013, Mark Reckless former Medway Conservative Councillor and current Member of Parliament for Rochester and Strood made the following speech in the House of Commons:

“Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to speak in this debate following my Select Committee meeting and in advance of the planning Minister’s response.

Earlier this month, Natural England declared Ministry of Defence land at Lodge Hill in my constituency to be a site of special scientific interest. In numerous plans over 18 years, the site has been clearly designated for 5,000 homes and for employment opportunities for 5,000 people. A total of £35.5 million has been spent to get to the point of planning consent being granted. After all this time and money, the council is concerned, to put it mildly, to be thwarted at the last hurdle by Natural England, which does not consider the economic impacts. The council leader, Rodney Chambers, responded as follows: “This is very disappointing news to receive from unelected quangocrats at Natural England. As a local authority we are eager for this scheme, which is on government owned land, to progress and deliver the houses and jobs we badly need. The government is constantly telling us that we should be going for growth, kick starting the economy and fighting the recession and yet here we are with a shovel ready project that would deliver 5,000 much needed homes being delayed by a government agency.”

The reason for this, we are told by Natural England, is that a study of some description has discovered that 84 nightingales might use the site. The comparison to be drawn is between those 84 nightingales and homes for 12,000 people and jobs for a further 5,000 people. We are told by the Prime Minister that we are in a global race, but it is not clear that that message has yet filtered through to bodies such as Natural England.

There have been similar instances locally. On the Isle of Grain, a proposal for the generation of 6,000 jobs on a site owned by the National Grid Company has been delayed for some three years because it is possibly the habitat of a certain type of bug. Near Medway, in the Swanscombe area, a proposal that would deliver 27,000 jobs has been delayed because of concerns about a breed of spider. At Dungeness, there are concerns about vegetated shingle that has to be considered in the context of the development of power generation.

It is not surprising that council leaders in the area say that we need to end the absurd situation of a non-elected Government agency dictating to national and local government on how to run things. Medway is an example of a council that is pro-development, that wants to support the Minister and that wants to show that it is open for business. Will the Minister assure me that our local council will

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be able to decide where it is best for development to go, not Ministers or their inspectors, and still less these quangos? We have heard of the bonfire of the quangos; in the case of Natural England, it appears to have fizzled out.

I understand that the executive board of the body has taken this decision, that it is going to be reviewed and that there is, as ever, some consultation process, but I am not sure whether that is a mere formality or a genuine process. We are told that in July the decision will be reviewed by the full board of Natural England, but we do not know if that will be anything more than a rubber-stamping exercise. I would appreciate the Minister's views on whether it will be a genuine exercise and whether the board will really consider the wider representations or the Government's policy. If it is not able to consider Government policy, how can democratic Ministers have their way when competing in what they call the global race? When councils such as Medway have planned to develop land for many years and have spent millions of pounds, will they be able to make the decisions that are required?"

Does Councillor Chambers agree with me that it is at best politically opportunistic and at worst completely hypocritical for Mr Reckless to then say that the decision made by Medway Council, not ministers or inspectors or non-elected government agencies, was "appalling" when it was made?"

Councillor Maple requested that it be recorded in the minutes that he had submitted this question on Friday 26 September 2014 and that this was before Mark Reckless had announced his resignation as MP for Rochester and Strood.

Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE stated that he did think it was hypocritical.

He noted that Councillor Maple had referred in the question to Mr Reckless being hypocritical. Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE stated that he wanted to take that hypocrisy a stage further.

He stated that what was perhaps not widely known was that on 9 May 2014 an officer briefing was arranged for the three Members of Parliament to appraise them of the position following the designation by Natural England of Lodge Hill, the effect of this on speculative applications and the early indications of the call for sites process as they affected Medway.

Following that briefing and in discussion with Council colleagues and Members of Parliament following that briefing, Mr Reckless stated quite clearly that he supported what was his long held view that Lodge Hill was his preferred site for development in order to defend the other areas that were now coming forward due to the designation of Lodge Hill, and that he would continue to support that view.

Councillor Maple asked whether Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE felt it was hypocritical for anyone who was concerned about the issue of the environment to not support an application which would, if not going through, lead to huge amounts of piecemeal proposals, piecemeal development which would not

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have the important infrastructure of hospital and care facilities, schools and, because Councillor Maple stated that he knew this was a massive issue when campaigning with Naushabah Khan, the issue of roads on the Hoo Peninsula. All of that would be lost without the Lodge Hill application.

Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE stated that this had been reflected in the report as one of the reasons, amongst many, to recommend approval of this application because this application came with all the supporting infrastructure that was expected with the creation of a community of this size. He stated that he did agree with the comments that were made. The piecemeal developments that would be proposed would not be accompanied with the supporting infrastructure. Therefore, this was one of the reasons, amongst many, for the support that the Planning Committee gave for this application.

Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE stated that he would like to emphasise that this (application) should not have come as a surprise as it seemed to have to some people. This was a site that had been identified for the last twenty years for development and it had been through a number of iterations as far as the various local plans were concerned and it had been included in those local plans and therefore it should not have come as a surprise. The only surprise was the advent of nightingales arriving on the site but this had been taken into account with the mitigation proposals that were encompassed in the planning applications and that mitigation would have been undertaken in consultation with Land Securities and those who were qualified to advise them.

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

“Why are we wasting taxpayers money on another ‘Pay and Display’ consultation in York Avenue, Gillingham, when the result of the first consultation was an overwhelming majority against this?”

Is this yet another example of a mock consultation when a decision has already been made?”

Councillor Filmer stated that the Council had been working in partnership with the Medway Maritime Hospital for some time to come up with a package of solutions that would assist patients attending the hospital, prevent local roads being blocked with queuing traffic and allow emergency vehicles, taxis and buses to get in and out of the site.

He referred to York Avenue and that the consultation had highlighted up to 73 spaces which could be used during the day. Therefore, this was the reason the Council was looking at it. Medway Maritime Hospital was the main hospital for Medway and Swale and the Council had a duty to the people of Medway to provide parking. He stated that the Council was working with the hospital to find a solution to the parking issues.

Councillor Juby stated that whilst he had some sympathy with the hospital on this issue, they had said at their annual meeting that they had solved the

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parking problems but it was quite obvious to him that they had not because he had been past York Avenue earlier in the week and there were no spare parking places and, in addition, there was still a traffic jam around the hospital. Therefore, he did not think this was going to solve anything.

Councillor Filmer stated that the hospital was now bussing in their staff from the Historic Dockyard and that he was sure that the spare spaces (York Avenue) and the potential usage of matrix signs indicating empty spaces on the car parking, would assist parking at the hospital.

(E) Councillor Juby asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

“Does the Portfolio Holder actually have any long term plans for traffic management in and out of the Medway City Estate? If so, just how long will it be before workers on the estate can get home on time?”

Councillor Filmer stated that further to the Leader’s reference to this issue earlier in the meeting (Leader’s Report), the problems with the works on Station Road had shown up a weakness on the access and usage of Medway City Estate which was very well used. He stated that the Council was aware of the problem and he referred to the Leader’s comments about the funding and that the Council was on the case.

Councillor Juby asked whether the ex Member of Parliament for Rochester and Strood had raised this issue with Councillor Filmer.

Councillor Filmer stated that the ex Member of Parliament sent him an email around three weeks ago regarding the traffic around Strood but not about the traffic around Medway City Estate as far as he could recall.

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

“At the 21 August meeting of the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee I raised with the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services the serious concerns I had about the proposed programme of highway works at Darnley Arch, Strood. I requested that the work be delayed and that the works be carried out overnight. After the meeting those requests were politely considered and then dismissed. The works at Darnley Arch started on 1 September, as did my prediction of traffic chaos and the resultant downturn in business activity for Strood Traders. This prediction was based on the knowledge of the week long closure of the Arch back in 2012.

Following the fiasco of the recent Darnley Arch (Strood) highways works it is now clear that there is an urgent need to establish a robust protocol for the communication/engagement with Ward Councillors and shadow portfolio holders on proposed programmes for major transport projects. Ward Councillors should be defined as Members, irrespective of political group, from those Wards directly affected by the proposed project, not just the Ward where

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the project is located. The issuing of the Medway weekly major roadwork list is simply not fit for purpose. Will the Portfolio Holder pursue this?"

Councillor Filmer stated that in the run up to the commencement of the Darnley Road scheme there were a number of email briefings sent to all Strood South Ward Members. The briefing for Strood North Members was not as complete as he would have liked and the Assistant Director for Frontline Services had apologised for this at the most recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee as it was recognised as an oversight.

He stated that it had been agreed to provide a written update shared via the Spokespersons for political groups within Medway Council. The intention was to share information with affected Ward Councillors regardless of where the scheme was located.

The issuing of the weekly roadwork list was intended as a signal that works were to be carried out but it did not go into great detail. Councillor Filmer referred to Councillor Griffiths's earlier comments (Overview and Scrutiny activity report) about apologising to the people of Strood, and Councillor Filmer stated that he was quite happy to apologise to local residents on the basis that this work could not have been undertaken when previous works were being undertaken by Network Rail (as the original intention was do all of the works at that time).

Councillor Hubbard asked whether Councillor Filmer agreed with him that the result was a cosmetic makeover of the original road and pavement layout with just one new aspect, namely the new pedestrian crossing on Darnley Road. Councillor Hubbard also asked whether Councillor Filmer felt confident that he could fully explain to the residents and traders of Strood who suffered during the works the benefits of the near identical highway layout?

Councillor Filmer stated that there had been a lighting upgrade and there was a new pedestrian crossing which would be safer for pedestrians. He referred to the limitations of the site given the location of the bridge and railway line, as well as optic fibre cables running through the site.

He stated that there was an outstanding team working in Highways and the Integrated Transport Team. He stated that the National Highways and Transport (NHT) Conference had been held earlier in the week and the Council had won an outstanding performance award for improvement in a range of services as well as finishing in second place for efficient use of resources on road maintenance.

He stated that he was confident that the team had done their best under the circumstances.

454 Council Tax - Empty Homes Premium

Discussion:

This report provided details of the proposal to introduce a council tax empty homes premium from 1 April 2015 resulting in council tax of 150 per cent for properties that have been empty and unfurnished for more than two years, as prescribed by the Local Government Finance Act 2012 and associated regulations.

The report provided details of the consideration of the matter by the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee (26 August 2014) and Cabinet (30 September 2014).

It was noted that the penultimate example set out in scenario 1 on p105 of the agenda should have read "...31/07/17".

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

Decision:

The Council agreed to set a Council Tax rate for long-term empty properties (dwellings that have been left empty and unfurnished for two years or more) at the maximum permitted 150% of the normal liability, so to encourage owners to bring their property back into use.

455 Additions to the Capital Programme

Discussion:

This report provided details of two schemes for inclusion in the Capital Programme, namely the Smarter working @ Gun Wharf Project and semi-independent accommodation at the Old Vicarage children's home.

Smarter working @ Gun Wharf Project would enable the better, more space efficient use of Gun Wharf, including the co-location of Adult Social Care teams and allow the vacation of expensive third party accommodation. The development of semi-independent accommodation at the Old Vicarage children's home would enable two care leavers help prepare for transition to semi-independence whilst they are living in their own accommodation.

The report provided details of the consideration of the matter by Cabinet on 30 September 2014.

The Mayor informed Members of an inadvertent reference to an exempt appendix on page 110 of this report. This related to the Cabinet report from 30 September and did not form part of this report.

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

Decision:

The Council approved the following additions to the capital programme, both of which are to be funded through virements from the Adult Social Care Transformation budget:

- (i) Transfer £400,000 from Adult Social Care Transformation to fund the Smarter Working @ Gun Wharf project;
- (ii) Transfer £120,000 from Adult Social Care Transformation to fund the construction of additional provision on the Old Vicarage site.

456 Special Urgency Decisions

Discussion:

This report provided details of a decision made by the Chief Executive under the urgency provisions contained within the Constitution, in relation to the acquisition of premises in Chatham for sexual health services, following consideration of the matter by Cabinet on 5 August 2014. The Cabinet had agreed to recommend the Chief Executive using urgency powers to add the scheme for the refurbishment and moving costs to the Capital Programme.

The report provided details of the consultation process the Chief Executive undertook prior to using urgency powers, as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

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

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

457 Motions

(A) Councillor Irvine originally submitted the following:

“This Council notes the decision of the Airports Commission to rule out any form of Thames Estuary Airport.

This Council praises the hard work, dedication and commitment of council officers, residents and partner organisations in leading the fight against a Thames Estuary Airport.

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This Council calls on the Mayor of London to apologise to the residents of Medway for his near constant pursuit of an Estuary Airport and the stress, worry and concern that has been caused locally. Furthermore, the Council requests that the Mayor reimburses the Council for the money used to successfully defeat his pie in the sky proposal and that the Chief Executive write to him requesting this.”

When called upon to propose the motion, Councillor Irvine informed Members that he was resigning as a Councillor with immediate effect and he provided the Chief Executive with his letter of resignation. Councillor Irvine left the meeting.

The Monitoring Officer advised Members that because the proposer of the Motion had left the meeting without formally proposing the motion, it was not possible for the motion to be debated and voted on.

(B) Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers, supported by Councillor Carr, submitted the following:

“This Council welcomes the Government's intention to reform the planning laws under the Localism Act 2011, and the more recent statement with regard to the possibility of freeing up local authorities from having maximum parking standards. Thus hopefully reducing so much on street parking in new developments.

However, the erosion of local government's powers in relation to certain areas of planning is to be regretted particularly in relation to the changes to the Use Class Orders and Prior Notification, which at this time are due to end in May 2016, but which it is proposed under the current government consultation could be made permanent.

The Council asks that the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Local Government and the Planning Minister to convey this and that copies are sent to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee and the three Medway MPs.”

Councillor Osborne, supported by Councillor Christine Godwin, proposed the following amendment:

Retain original motion and add new paragraph following the end of the second paragraph:

“Council also notes the creation of the community asset register scheme through the Localism Act. Council notes the weaknesses in the community assets register, as the issue of the Medway Queen pub has shown. This element of the law requires a review to help improve the effectiveness of the scheme for local communities.

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

The substantive motion was put to the vote and was carried.

Decision:

This Council welcomes the Government's intention to reform the planning laws under the Localism Act 2011, and the more recent statement with regard to the possibility of freeing up local authorities from having maximum parking standards. Thus hopefully reducing so much on street parking in new developments.

However, the erosion of local government's powers in relation to certain areas of planning is to be regretted particularly in relation to the changes to the Use Class Orders and Prior Notification, which at this time are due to end in May 2016, but which it is proposed under the current government consultation could be made permanent.

The Council asks that the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Local Government and the Planning Minister to convey this and that copies are sent to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee and the three Medway MPs.

(C) Councillor Cooper, supported by Councillor Chishti, submitted the following:

“Medway Council notes the special contribution made by the Medway Queen Paddle Steamer to the history of the UK.

Council believes that the Medway Queen deserves recognition and support as an important part of our Maritime Heritage.

Council requests Cabinet to receive a report setting out details of any funding streams and other support available to the Medway Queen Preservation Society to:

- enable the ship to participate in Operation Dynamo in Ramsgate in May 2015 and to
- help restore the Medway Queen to full operational use again in the longer term.”

Decision:

Medway Council notes the special contribution made by the Medway Queen Paddle Steamer to the history of the UK.

Council believes that the Medway Queen deserves recognition and support as an important part of our Maritime Heritage.

Council requests Cabinet to receive a report setting out details of any funding streams and other support available to the Medway Queen Preservation Society to:

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- enable the ship to participate in Operation Dynamo in Ramsgate in May 2015 and to
- help restore the Medway Queen to full operational use again in the longer term.

(D) Councillor Carr, supported by Councillor Harriott, submitted the following:

“This Council recognises the service and sacrifice of the crews of the Chatham based cruisers HMS Cressy, HMS Hogue and HMS Aboukir lost on 22 September 1914 with the loss of 1459 men and boys and the outstanding humanitarian efforts of Dutch seafarers and people in caring for the survivors and the remains of those who were lost.

This Council also recognises and celebrates the continuing remembrance of their service, sacrifice by the hundreds of descendants of those affected by this tragedy, British and Dutch who attended the "Live Bait Squadron Society" commemorations and Drum Head Service at Chatham and at the Hague in the Netherlands, between 21 and 24 September 2014.

This Council believes that the most fitting way Her Majesty's Government could mark this centenary, which clearly still means so much to so many people, would be to designate the three wrecks under the Protection of Military Remains Act and the Council requests that the Chief Executive writes to the Secretary of State for Defence asking that such a designation is made as swiftly as possible.”

Decision:

This Council recognises the service and sacrifice of the crews of the Chatham based cruisers HMS Cressy, HMS Hogue and HMS Aboukir lost on 22 September 1914 with the loss of 1459 men and boys and the outstanding humanitarian efforts of Dutch seafarers and people in caring for the survivors and the remains of those who were lost.

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Mayor

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