

**COUNCIL**  
**22 JANUARY 2015**  
**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 Martin Potter of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor O'Brien, the following question:**

I understand that some 10 babies are born each day at Medway Maritime Hospital, can the Lead Member assure us that adequate provision is being made for both Primary and Secondary School places for these children in the future?

**B Chris Ferguson of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:**

Medway Council has stated that they will not be turning the streetlights off, even though only c. 20% of the lights are LED energy efficient;

- Would the Council consider using passive infrared (PIR) switch

control from midnight to dawn on street and public car park lighting?

- Is there a technical reason why this could not be introduced as it covers the safety of illuminations and cuts back on light pollution?

**C Joe Murray of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Educational Improvement, Councillor Tolhurst, the following question:**

Sadly Medway primary schools are once again bottom of the league. Parents and teachers feel let down by this Conservative administration by the lack of support it has shown to schools.

Why should we trust this administration in addressing poor performance given the lack of urgency they have shown to try to improve primary schools in Medway?

**D James Chespy of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Educational Improvement, Councillor Tolhurst, the following question:**

In light of the recent OFSTED report which showed that only 53% of pupils of primary school age were attending good or outstanding schools, what does the Council intend to do to raise the educational standards in the primary schools of which the other 47% of pupils attend, many of which require improvement or are in special measures?

**E Paul Chaplin of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor O'Brien, the following question:**

How much did the Government give to Medway to improve school kitchen facilities, and how was this distributed? How is it that some schools are struggling to cope and have not been able to access any of this money?

**F Rachel Garrick of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, Councillor Hicks, the following question:**

During the recent by-election, the political group Britain First attempted to hold two rallies in Rochester High Street. At the time, requests were made to the police by residents to enforce the Public Order Act which was set in place to prevent the activities such as Ian Mosely's Black Shirts marching the streets of this good country.

In light of Britain First Leader Paul Golding's recent conviction under the Public Order Act in Essex, please can the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety explain why he did not work with the Kent Police to ensure that the Public Order Act was enforced to prevent fascists marching in political uniform up our high street but instead left it to community action by Medway residents to block the march, thereby risking public disorder, violence and riots on two occasions.

**G Tony Jeacock of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Educational Improvement, Councillor Tolhurst, the following question:**

With the unenviable reputation of having, overall, the worst performing Primary schools in the whole of England, can the Portfolio Holder please advise me as to how they intend to reverse the situation and by when?

**H Derek Munton of Rochester will ask the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers, the following question:**

Residents who are worried about plans to build a huge concrete runway at Rochester airport now have the chance to see the impact at a site meeting on 31 January.

Is the Chairman of the Planning Committee prepared to ensure that at the site visit the area the new runway will cover is clearly marked out and that proper arrangements for residents to share their views with members of the planning committee are made by using an indoor venue at the site after the runway has been viewed?

**I Sue Groves MBE of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:**

In light of Medway Council earmarking £4.4 million pounds to hard pave Rochester Airport's runway, could the Portfolio Holder provide any credible reason as to why the shop mobility scooter service will now require users to book a scooter at least 24 hours in advance due to cost-cutting in the service?

This policy, imposed without consultation, will only lead to further restrictions to service user spontaneity and could increase the likelihood of social isolation for many of those who find the service to be a valuable part of their day-to-day lives.

**J Ben Pranczke of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:**

Could the Portfolio Holder please describe the decision making process which led to Medway Council agreeing to spend £135,000 on a memorial Japanese Garden on the middle of a roundabout?

**K Robert Heathfield of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following question:**

When is Rede Common going to receive Nature Reserve Status?

**L Mrs Rita Mew of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Educational Improvement, Councillor Tolhurst, the following question:**

As the Portfolio Holder for Educational Improvement and someone publicly committed to the Rochester Airport Masterplan, have you not considered the distraction, noise, and potential increased danger for an increase in thousands of flights per year over nearby schools?

Why have you not demanded an "Educational Environment Impact" study for the four schools directly affected by the proposed concrete runway and concentration of flights at Rochester Airport?

Do you not care about our children's learning environment?

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

The NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) requires planning authorities to consider and mitigate accidents and dangers. Can you please tell us why there has been no:

- Societal risk study or report
- Third party risk analysis or report
- Community danger mitigation study or report

for a potential increase in thousands of flights near to or over crowded worship halls, care homes, school assemblies and hundreds of homes commensurate with the proposed reconfiguration and construction of a concrete runway at Rochester Airport?

**N William McLennan of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

This Conservative Medway Council "Rochester Airport the future" leaflet distributed to 6,500 homes near to the airfield stated that their would be "less noise."

It has now been interdependently verified by specialist noise consultants there will be nearly double the noise for hundreds of homes near to the airfield.

The "less noise" statement was and is untrue.

This Conservative Medway Council and councillors are implicated by association in lying to the public.

When is this Conservative Medway Council going to publish in the media and distribute an apology to those you have deceived?

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

Does the Leader of Medway's Conservative Council agree with Councillor Tolhurst's claims, that Rochester and Strood have been badly and heavily impacted by immigration and very much to the detriment of local employment particularly, or does he believe that immigration has brought increased prosperity to the Medway Towns as a whole? Which is it, and why?

**Lead officer contact**

Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer

T: 01634 332509

E: [wayne.hemingway@medway.gov.uk](mailto:wayne.hemingway@medway.gov.uk)

**Background papers**

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

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