

COUNCIL

23 APRIL 2015

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

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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 Della Averley of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Councillor Brake, the following question:

Care Homes in Medway have not received all of their yearly inflationary increases since the 2006 contracts were invoked. Also, any inflationary increase has been well below the rate of inflation. New contracts were due in April 2012, they are now overdue by nearly three years (two years was an extension but this has been exceeded by 10 months).

My question is: Are care homes in Medway being starved of cash and thus becoming the scapegoats for Medway Council's austerity measures?

B David Skinner of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:

A resident's parking permit in Medway costs about £25.00 and a business permit over £130.00, why is there such a differential? Surely the cost to administer the service is similar.

C Robert Pitt of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Councillor Brake, the following question:

Working in healthcare, I am concerned about the continuous unnecessary pressures put on Medway's A&E department, do you feel that enough is being done by the Council to help improve the health and wellbeing of the community, given recent cuts in public health services such as the popular healthchecks minibus, which has now been withdrawn from service?

D Mark Jones of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty, the following question:

Are you concerned as I am about the negative impact of Tesco leaving Chatham Town Centre, both as regards the impact on employment but also for the community who use this as their main shopping venue?

E Mike Smith of Twydall will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, Councillor Hicks, the following question:

Could the Portfolio Holder specify what measures Medway Council have in place to carry out the necessary checks on out-of-town private hire vehicles that may be operating in Medway without proper insurance cover, as I understand that some companies insure these vehicles only to operate in their local area?

F Robert McCulloch Martin of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, Councillor Hicks, the following question:

With reference to the lead article in Medway Messenger's paper of Friday 10 April, can the Portfolio Holder confirm how many people have been arrested, cautioned or fined for "Bin Raiding" here in Medway since you have held the Portfolio position for Community Safety?

G Paul Chaplin of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty, the following question:

Given the heavy investment in Chatham, Strood and Rochester, when will Gillingham and its High Street benefit from regeneration?

H Rajah Miah of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Councillor Brake, the following question:

Age UK state as part of their Warm Homes Campaign one elderly resident needlessly dies every seven minutes in the UK due to the temperature in their home. Do you think Medway Council has done enough to tackle the issue of fuel poverty?

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

Could you explain how the £30,376 from Tesco designated specifically for "Town Centre Improvements" that was part of the £135,000 spent on a Japanese Garden on a roundabout will help improve our town centres?

J John Jones of Brompton will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:

What consultation was carried out with residents or businesses for the change to make Batchelor Street no right turn onto the Brook?

K Alan Higgins of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:

At a recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, a report into local bus fares clearly shows Medway residents are getting a raw deal. I don't think this Tory administration has done enough to tackle this, what do you think?

L David Skinner of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:

I understand that some large companies operating in Medway purchase parking permits at a greatly discounted price whereas small businesses and sole traders do not get a discounted price, do you think this is fair?

M Mark Jones of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Councillor Chitty, the following question:

The Medway Messenger reported on the 20th March of the problems of Chatham Town Centre - do you feel Chatham Town Centre has got better or worse in the last 10 years?

N Robert McCulloch Martin of Gillingham will ask the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers, the following question:

Following Medway Messenger's articles on 8 April 2015 and 15 August 2014 regarding Gillingham Football Club building a 24,000 seater multi-purpose stadium along with 300 houses and shops on Mill Hill in Rainham North, can the Chairman confirm whether or not this fits in with Medway

Council's development plans following the Council's discussions with the Club.

O Ben Pranczke of Gillingham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, the following question:

Which do you think is more important, Medway Councillors retaining their full current Special Responsibilities Allowance or Medway Council paying the living wage to its lowest paid council staff?

P John Jones of Brompton will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact, Councillor Hicks, the following question:

There are a mixture of views regarding the recent rapid expansion of on-street activity in Chatham High Street, some residents saying it has brought vibrancy whereas others feel it has further brought the High Street down and has a negative impact on people with limited mobility and visual impairment.

With strong views and no clear position from the Council, at the moment nobody feels their view is being listened to by the Council.

When will the Council consult with residents and traders to seek their views on both what the future direction of Chatham High Street should be and what levels of enforcement of current policies and guidelines should take place?

Q Alan Higgins of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:

Many residents in Princes Park have raised with me concerns around the finish time of the 169 bus. Have Medway Council considered extending the finishing time of this service, if so what dialogue with Arriva has happened to date?

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>