

COUNCIL
12 AUGUST 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 Claire Friend of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:

Given Medway is a densely populated area, which will only set to increase pressure on services, will the Council help Kelly Tolhurst's manifesto and long term support of Medway Maritime by considering Rochester Airfield as a new site either full or partial for the Medway Maritime Hospital?

B Norman Carter of Walderslade will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:

The Medway Towns has a unique and longstanding relationship with the Gurkha Regiments and their families that span many years. No one on Medway Council could have not been moved by the plight of the Gurkha families and relatives in Nepal, following the devastation caused by the

recent earthquakes.

Will Medway Council make a donation to support the relief, and cement the bond between the people of Medway and our Gurkha family?

C Paul Dennis of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Mackness, the following question:

Can you explain what happened to my vote and to that of several of the constituents of Rainham North who voted for me in the Medway Council elections on 7 May 2015?

D Vanessa Roach of Strood will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:

Cycling, though increasingly popular, is currently prohibited in the Medway Tunnel. I am aware it would require an act of parliament and some restructuring to enable this.

However, in view of benefits cycling brings to the health and well-being of our community as well as the environment and transport infrastructure and considering the effects of the latest welfare cuts, could Medway Council reconsider the feasibility of opening the Medway Tunnel to cyclists? If not, why not?

E John Castle of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, the following question:

Given the following:

- Working age benefits will be frozen for years meaning 12,000 Medway residents and their families will lose an average of £260 per year
- 4,200 working people whose families will have to make up an average £280 shortfall per year in tax credits.
- 2,200 residents in the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) work related activity group, considered only temporarily too ill to work, will lose a further £30 per week as their allowance is brought down to the level of Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA).
- Reduction of the benefit cap
- Limiting child tax credits to 2 children
- Additional means testing of tax credits

It will be the local council that will have to pick up the pieces when people have nowhere left to turn. Has Medway Council estimated the additional costs these welfare changes will impose on the Council?

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

Having submitted a question in July 2013 regarding the feasibility of installing electrically-operated advance warning gantries forbidding drivers from driving through Chatham's open-air bus station, for which they would subsequently be very heavily fined, I was advised that such a feasibility study would indeed be carried out.

I have heard nothing further, so observing that no such installations have been made and noting that thousands more pounds have been taken by way of driving penalties imposed on unsuspecting out of town drivers, I assume no such feasibility study was actually executed, but if it was, can the Portfolio Holder please advise me as to what the result was and why the Council continues to rob unsuspecting visitors to the Towns who are unfamiliar with Chatham's road layout? And if the feasibility study was not actually executed, why wasn't it?

G Vivienne Parker of Chatham will ask the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following question:

Given that our two country parks contain large numbers of fruit trees, what is being done to ensure the fruit is harvested and sold to support the work of the Green Spaces team?

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

The government has announced cuts of £200 million to the public health budget for local authorities. How much has Medway's budget been cut, and what services will be stopped or reduced to meet this deficit?

I Nicholas Alderson-Rice of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:

As Leader of the Council and ward representative for Lordswood and Capstone, which of the five Medway towns do you think the people of Lordswood most closely associate with?

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

What public consultation was carried out regarding the ongoing programme of raised kerbs and specifically regarding the raised kerb on Burma Way which has left the bus stop even less accessible?

K Paul Dennis of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Mackness, the following question:

After the acknowledged errors in electoral procedures that led to an ineligible candidate being allowed to stand in Rainham North on 7 May 2015, and the unaccountable loss of several dozen votes for me as the

TUSC Candidate, can you tell me when the review promised to us by Neil Davies will be available for public scrutiny?

L Tony Jeacock of Rainham will ask the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers, the following question:

Has the Council's Planning Committee yet decided on the colour scheme for the Corporation Street facing side of the new Rochester station?

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>