

Medway Council
Meeting of Medway Council
Thursday, 28 April 2016
7.00pm to 10.04pm

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 Iles)
Councillors Avey, Bhutia, Brake, Brown-Reckless, Carr, Chishti, Chitty, Clarke, Cooper, Craven, Doe, Etheridge, Fearn, Filmer, Franklin, Freshwater, Gilry, Godwin, Griffin, Griffiths, Gulvin, Hall, Howard, Jarrett, Johnson, Joy, Khan, Mackness, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Opara, Pendergast, Potter, Price, Royle, Saroy, Shaw, Stamp, Tejan, Tolhurst, Tranter, Turpin, Wicks, Wildey and Williams

In Attendance: Dr Andrew Burnett, Interim Director of Public Health
Neil Davies, Chief Executive
Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer
Richard Hicks, Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation
Perry Holmes, Chief Legal Officer/Monitoring Officer
Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services
Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adults Services
Phil Watts, Chief Finance Officer

960 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 25 February 2016 was agreed and signed by The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway as a correct record.

961 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Bowler, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers OBE, Hicks, O'Brien, Osborne and Purdy.

962 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

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Other interests

Councillor Cooper declared an interest in any reference to Medway Maritime Hospital because she has immediate family members who work there.

963 Mayor's announcements

The Worshipful the Mayor of Medway referred Members to the new Children's Guide to Fostering which had been developed by looked after children for looked after children. A copy had been provided to each Member at the request of the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Mayor, on behalf of all Members, congratulated Councillor Stamp who had competed in the London Marathon on Sunday 24 April. Councillor McDonald informed Members that Councillor Stamp had raised approximately £4,000 for Danny's Angels, which was part of the Clic Sargent Fundraising Group.

The Mayor reminded Members to speak clearly into their microphones to ensure that people in the public gallery could hear and he reminded Members that an audio recording of the Council meeting would be made available on the Council's website.

The Mayor also reminded Members that a written copy of amendments to any proposals must be provided to the Head of Democratic Services and that copies should be brought up to top table first.

964 Leader's announcements

There were none.

965 Petitions

Public petitions

There were none.

Member petitions

Councillor Murray submitted a petition containing 262 signatures regarding the Council's proposals to reshape the provision of Children's Sure Start services.

Councillor Maple submitted a petition containing 28 signatures which requested an increase to the level of parking in Perry Street, Chatham, by using some of the spare public land and converting this to additional car parking spaces for residents' use.

966 Public questions

A) Brian Slater of Rochester submitted the following question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:

“Please tell me how much is the total cost per annum of publishing and distributing the in-house magazine "Medway Matters"?”

As Mr Slater was not present at the meeting, the Mayor stated that he would receive a written response to his question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

B) James Chespy of Gillingham submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Councillor Brake:

“Does Medway Council plan to join the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge and if so will it consider appointing a Medway Mental Health Champion?”

As Mr Chespy was not present at the meeting, the Mayor stated that he would receive a written response to his question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

C) Sue Groves MBE of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

“Medway is currently looking at its local plan for the next 20 years. Transport will be a key element of that plan and its success. Recent major projects at both Gillingham and Rochester Station have failed to genuinely address the vital issue of accessibility especially in the parking arrangements and surrounding road networks.

Whilst I welcome the provision of blue badge provision at Rochester, the lack of a suitable drop off point means that this provision is being abused daily, often with vehicles parking across several bays to pick up passengers (I have myself even witnessed taxis parking in these bays), or with non-badge holders taking up these spaces whilst waiting to pick up or drop off passengers.

Will the Portfolio Holder consider an urgent review of Medway’s Local Plan with the following considerations:

- Urgent review of the infrastructure surrounding Medway’s five main train stations to look in detail at the accessibility and parking issues raised, and;
- Revisiting the issue of the availability of accessible taxis in Medway in light of the Department for Transport’s recent confirmation that sections 165 and 167 of the Equality Act 2010 regarding Taxis will be implemented by the end of this year?”

Councillor Chitty stated that the Council was at an early stage of preparing a new Medway Local Plan to cover the period to 2035.

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As part of the new Local Plan, the Council would seek to promote sustainable transport options for travel in Medway. This would include consideration of the travel needs of people with disabilities. The Council was commissioning a Strategic Transport Assessment to make an analysis of the potential development in Medway, and infrastructure investments that may be required. This analysis would feed into the development of the Medway Local Plan. Appropriate opportunities to improve accessibility would be sought.

She also stated that the detailed work proposed in the question may not be appropriate for the Local Plan. The Government required Local Plans to be focused on strategic priorities, and in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012: *'Only policies that provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal should be included in the plan'*.

The Council would need to achieve a balanced approach to the Local Plan preparation, and the detailed work suggested may be better aligned to wider transport planning, with the strategic issues and opportunities being included within the Local Plan. She stated that Planning officers would make contact and seek further information on this as part of the Plan preparation work.

Councillor Chitty also stated that for any of the problems that were set out in the question, there was the opportunity to address this at a local level if regulations were not being complied with.

D) Vivienne Parker of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

"When are the Council going to remove the asbestos dumped in the service road next to 53 Concord Avenue? I gather it was first reported to the Council before Christmas and I reported it again over a month ago and it has still not been cleared. I have been in touch with the Environment Agency and they assure me that it is the Council's responsibility to remove this."

Councillor Filmer stated that the Council's contractor, Veolia, removed fly tipped waste from public highway areas. Areas of private land were not the responsibility of the Council to cleanse and maintain; this included the removal of fly tipped waste.

He stated that the service road that ran along the rear of Concord Avenue and Madden Avenue was a private road that services the properties in those roads and was the responsibility of the land owners to cleanse and maintain.

The team did remove the asbestos from the rear access road, but unfortunately a small amount at the entrance was missed, which was why it remained in situ for a bit longer. Once this was brought to the Council's attention, it was removed straight away.

967 Leader's report

Discussion:

Members received the Leader's Report and raised the following issues during the debate:

- Protecting Medway's interests
- Medway's regeneration and culture offer
- Devolution of powers to Local Government
- Academisation programme (schools)
- Rochester Riverside regeneration
- Medway's festivals
- International Workers Memorial Day
- Estuary Airport proposals
- Lower Thames Crossing
- Local Government funding
- Review of Early Years and Sure Start Children's Centres
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection of Medway NHS Foundation Trust (Medway Maritime Hospital)
- Children in Care Council
- Beacons for Queen's 90th Birthday.

968 Report on Overview and Scrutiny Activity

Discussion:

Members received a report on overview and scrutiny activity and raised the following issues during the debate:

- Draft Capital and Revenue Budgets 2016/2017
- Council Plan 2016/2017 – 2020/2021
- Portfolio Holders being held to account
- Housing (Demand, Affordability and Supply) Task Group
- Attendance of the Regional Schools Commissioner
- Dementia Gap Analysis and Joint Commissioning Plan
- Scrutiny of South East Coast Ambulance Trust / NHS 111 service
- Call in: Review of Early Years and Sure Start Children's Centre Services
- Call in: Future Integrated Youth Support Services Delivery
- Café at Rochester Adult Education Centre / Medway Norse
- University Technical College.

969 Nominations for Mayor and Deputy Mayor 2016/2017

Councillor Carr, supported by Councillor Tolhurst, proposed that Councillor Tranter be nominated as the Mayor of Medway for the 2016/2017 municipal year.

On being put to the vote this nomination was agreed.

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The Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, supported by Councillor Bhutia, proposed that Councillor Opara be nominated as the Deputy Mayor of Medway for the 2016/2017 municipal year.

On being put to the vote this nomination was agreed.

970 Members' questions

A) Councillor Freshwater asked the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Councillor Brake, the following:

"Medway Council is aware that government only a few weeks ago has broken their manifesto promises to cap the £72,000 maximum amount the over 65s can pay to help with home care and nursing home costs. The amount is now unlimited so Medway Council is now posed to start taking money from pensioners' bank accounts or register loan charges on pensioners' homes for the full crippling costs of care services until they have only £23,000 left. This is devastating and unfair news for the frail and vulnerable in Medway.

Would the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services agree to write to all Medway Pensioners to:

- (i) confirm the best way they can plan for such devastating payments in the future;
- (ii) assure them that the lack of Council funds following the extra 2% Council Tax paid for additional adult care is not in anyway associated to money being invested by the Council in any offshore tax haven or foreign accounts to prevent proper amounts of tax being paid like the rest of Medway hardworking residents have to pay under PAYE and;
- (iii) state that the Council will be supporting a vote to leave the EU which is a vote for a new fair tax system that will stop tax dodging by big companies and rich conservatives and allow the Government and Medway Council to properly and fully fund home care service charges for elderly residents which are fully funded by Scotland councils?"

Councillor Brake stated that the care cap initially proposed in the Care Act for introduction from 1 April 2016 was postponed by Central Government in July 2015 with a view that it will be re-visited in 2020. Detailed information in relation to the proposed cap had not been finally agreed.

The capital limits, i.e. £23,250, taken into consideration in financial assessments related to charging for social care were defined by the Department of Health and had been used in Adult Social Care in Medway for a number of years, through both the Charging for Residential Accommodation Guide and Fairer Charging Policy, which were both now superseded by The Care Act 2014 "The Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources) Regulations 2014".

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The National Assistance Act 1948 provided Medway Council with the duty to charge adults in receipt of care and support services and the introduction of the Care Act 2014 enabled the Council to continue with this arrangement. The changes for charging introduced through the Care Act had little impact for Medway Residents as a charging policy was already in place. However, it was recognised that specific additions to charging could be made and a full public consultation was carried out in May 2015.

The outcome of the consultation enabled the changes to be introduced as outlined.

He stated that officers continued to carry out financial assessments for clients who were assessed as needing a care and support package. The financial assessment ensured that clients would only be required to pay what they could afford as calculated by the assessment; furthermore the financial assessment process allowed clear and transparent information to be provided so clients knew what they would be charged.

In relation to item 2, the Council did not invest in offshore tax havens or foreign accounts and certainly did not seek to prevent proper amounts of tax being paid.

He stated that with regard to item 3, it was not really appropriate to answer this question given the debate that would take place later in the meeting (agenda item 19B (Motion)).

B) Councillor Price asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor O'Brien, the following:

“Could the Portfolio Holder please explain why he is not prepared to give parents, Sure Start Centre workers and their professional partners such as midwives and school based family supply workers, a formal consultation opportunity to determine the future of Sure Start services in Medway?”

Councillor Mackness stated that he would respond on behalf of Councillor O'Brien. He advised that Councillor O'Brien had discussed this question with him and had been fully involved in the response.

Councillor Mackness stated that the Cabinet had decided that all of Medway's 19 Sure Start children's centres would remain open, providing services for families with babies and young children. No children's centres were being closed.

To make the necessary financial savings to keep all of the children's centres open, the Council was reorganising and reducing staff from across the Council's early years services – so that every part of the Council's available resource focused on frontline support for families.

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The Council was formally consulting with affected staff, and trades unions, which was the correct approach, agreed with the workforce and their representatives.

Midwives, health visitors and other public health professionals would continue to work in the Council's 19 children's centres, alongside teachers and family support workers to provide the local one-stop experience that was at the heart of Sure Start.

Parents, carers, and professional partners would continue to help shape the future Sure Start services, through Advisory Boards that linked to each children's centre.

This was a permanent part of the well-established engagement and consultation with the community and with professional partners, which had helped to shape the success of Sure Start in Medway.

All local authorities were having to review and reduce resources in early years. Many Councils had decided to close a significant number of children's centres. This required statutory consultation. The Council had decided not to close any children's centres, therefore, it was right that the consultation was continuing to undertake with staff groups and partners about achieving the savings whilst maintaining the operation of the centres for the public.

C) Councillor Murray asked the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Councillor Brake, the following:

"The Labour Group has persistently supported the Portfolio Holder in his efforts to tackle social isolation in Medway. Does he believe that the Council's decision to cut the budgets of a large number of voluntary organisations will help to tackle social isolation in Medway?"

Councillor Brake thanked Councillor Murray and the Labour Group for their continued support in tackling social isolation in Medway.

He stated that Medway Council had ensured that the Voluntary and Community sector (VCS) had not received a disproportionate amount of budget reductions. The grant to local government had been reduced by 27% in 2016-17. By way of comparison, the reduction to the Voluntary and Community sector had been only 9%.

The Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment chapter for Social Isolation had identified a number of recommendations that the Council was currently implementing:

- (i) The Council was planning to provide social care workers with training and information that would help them to have an increased awareness of the risks of social isolation and find ways to connect people to activities or organisations that could help;

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- (ii) The Council had jointly commissioned with the Clinical Commissioning Group care navigators to improve the interface between the community and public services in helping socially isolated people to access appropriate interventions. This was being delivered by a VCS organisation.
- (iii) In addition to the continuing support that the Council provided for voluntary organisations, the Council was developing some significant initiatives with community based organisations. The Council had supported the development of two community led Community Interest Companies across Medway and through the effective use of personal care budgets, to provide care and support to vulnerable adults in need within their local communities.

D) Councillor Stamp asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

“Given the Council’s recent announcement that it will not be introducing a charge for the use of the Great Lines and the Strand for the weekly Parkruns which take place, how does the Portfolio Holder believe that the Council can justify charging £271 for the use of Riverside Country Park to host a charity buggy push?”

Councillor Doe stated that it was Council policy to support Medway’s residents to realise their potential by promoting healthy and active lifestyles and promoting even greater use of its award winning greenspaces.

He stated that the Council did make a charge for those who wished to hire greenspaces and the buggy push was priced according to Medway’s Fees and Charges Schedule, which was agreed at Council. The cost for 2016/17 greenspace hire in this instance was £271, but registered charities would receive a 25% discount on that.

He stated that the Council considered chargers very carefully and he believed that the Council had a moderate tariff of charges for the use of greenspaces and that this was a reasonable policy, bearing in mind that the Council had 25-30 lettings a year and the Council had to maintain greenspaces.

He also stated that if further support was desired, it was always open for Members to make a contribution from their own ward improvement fund.

E) Councillor Maple asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:

“I’m sure that the Leader and I can agree that each Kent County Councillor does not represent 25 times more residents than each Medway Councillor. In light of this, does the Leader believe that it is right that Kent County Councillors currently receive Ward Improvement Funds 25 times the value that Medway Councillors do?”

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Councillor Jarrett stated that whilst this was a matter for Kent County Council he understood that for this year Kent County Council's ward improvement fund had been reduced from £25,000 to £20,000 per member. Medway Council's ward improvement fund had been reduced this year to £1,000. Kent was approximately six times the size of Medway.

He stated that this was something that Kent residents might want to think about in due course, just as it was encouraged in Medway, as to whether Councillors provided value for money. The difference between Medway Council, as a unitary, and the other strategic authorities was that Medway Council provided all of the Local Authority services, whilst Kent County Council in common with all County Councils only provided some services. He stated that who provided what, in the most cost effective way, formed part of the devolution debate.

He stated that he believed Unitary Authorities provided the most and only efficient model of local government but it was for others to ultimately decide.

F) Councillor McDonald asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:

“At a time when thousands of reports were being made each year via the ‘Love Medway’ app, could the Leader please explain why he felt it appropriate to make the rather short-sighted decision to withdraw the app before a suitable replacement has been found?”

Councillor Jarrett stated that, over time, the use of the Love Medway app had fallen quite significantly. Last year there were just 1,217 reports made by 265 residents.

He stated that he wanted to make it as easy as possible for Medway's residents to contact the Council to get things done. The Council was carrying out significant work on the digitalisation agenda that would do a number of things to make it easier to contact the Council. He believed that everyone would welcome this and that this would involve the whole range of Medway's services.

Over time it would be expected that digital connections with the Council would be the contact of choice by Medway residents. That did not mean that it would be the only avenue open to residents, but the expectation was that it would be the first avenue of contact with the Council.

He stated that this would make the Council more efficient and more effective. It had the potential to save significant amounts of money, certainly in the low millions. This was the expectation and it was built in to the budget thinking. It was essential for the Council to keep channels of communication with residents open and provide the best channels of communication that it could possibly could.

G) Councillor Cooper asked the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Mackness, the following:

“Could the Portfolio Holder please inform Council what arrangements are in place, both in terms of their location and staff training for their use, should the use of defibrillators ever be required in any Council building?”

Councillor Mackness stated that the main council office, Gun Wharf and all Council sports centres had defibrillators in their reception areas. The defibrillators were configured to provide step by step instructions allowing any member of the public to be able to use it with ease; however as an extra precaution there were 30 first aiders within Gun Wharf who were all trained in the use of these.

The Council's sports centres, also as an extra precaution, trained the vast majority of staff in their use

The Visitor Information Centre did not have a defibrillator and this was something which would be reviewed.

H) Councillor Osborne submitted a question to the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, the following:

“A recent Freedom of Information request has revealed that the annual ongoing operational cost for the Chatham-based 'Medway Big Screen' is up to £30,000 per year. Does the Portfolio Holder believe that this is really a valuable use of tax-payers' money or does he agree with me that it is time to look to invest the equivalent sum to Member Ward Improvement Funds so that we can spend on real community initiatives?”

As Councillor Osborne was not present at the meeting, the Mayor stated that he would receive a written response to his question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

971 Rent Setting - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) New Build Properties

Discussion:

This report provided details of the proposed rent and service charges for 33 new build Council owned homes (32 bungalows and 1 detached house) that would be ready for advertising via the Homechoice letting system from late May 2016 onwards. It was noted that each property had had its proposed rent and service charge set in accordance with the Council's current rent setting policy.

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Councillor Doe, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, proposed the recommendation set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council agreed the proposed rent setting and service charges as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report.

972 Placing Objects on the Highway

Discussion:

This report provided details of the proposed fees for licensing and enforcement activities and proposed officer delegation in relation to the Placing Objects on the Highway Policy (the Cabinet had agreed this policy on 8 March 2016). The report set out the key objectives of the policy and it was noted that a trial was due to commence in Chatham in June 2016.

It was also noted that the findings from the Diversity Impact Assessment (Appendix 3 to the report) suggested that the licensing would have a positive impact for all members of the public, and this was reflected in the results from the public consultation.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, proposed the recommendation set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council approved:

- (i) The licensing fees as set out in paragraphs 2.3.2 and 2.5 of the report.
- (ii) The addition to the Employee Delegation Scheme as set out in paragraph 10.6 of the report.

973 Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

Discussion:

This report provided details of recommended changes to the configuration and designation of polling districts and polling places in the light of issues arising since the combined Local, Parish and General elections in May 2015 and also provided an update on the allocation of polling stations by the Returning Officer, with particular reference to the Cuxton & Halling and Strood North wards.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Mackness, supported by Councillor Fearn, proposed the recommendations set out in the report subject to the polling station for polling district GGS1 being amended to refer to the Old Blues Rock Café – Priestfield Stadium, Redfern Avenue.

Decisions:

- (a) The Council approved the scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places as set out in Appendix 1, including the designation of a Polling District as the Polling Place in respect of Parliamentary elections and to designate the Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places as the Polling Districts and Polling Places for Local Government elections subject to the Polling Station for GGS1 being amended to refer to the Old Blues Rock Café – Priestfield Stadium, Redfern Avenue.
- (b) The Council authorised the Chief Executive to designate an adjoining Polling District as the Polling Place where no suitable polling station is available within the original Polling Place.
- (c) The Council noted the designation of polling stations recommended by the Returning Officer as set out in Appendix 2 to the report subject to the Polling Station for GGS1 being amended to refer to the Old Blues Rock Café – Priestfield Stadium, Redfern Avenue.

974 Review of the Council's Constitution

Discussion:

This report provided details of recommended changes to the Council's Constitution, following completion of a review commissioned by the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services. The report stated that the review has concluded that Medway's Constitution was in good shape with only two specific areas which required revision (the procedures for land and property acquisitions and disposals (which were corrected at Cabinet and Full Council on 21 January 2016) and the need to clarify that licensing of scrap metal dealers was an executive rather than non-executive function. The exercise had, however, provided an opportunity to bring forward revisions intended to improve presentation and to elaborate on, or clarify, the meaning of some provisions.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Mackness referred to a typographical error on page 381 of Supplementary Agenda No.1, specifically that the reference to the DSS should be amended to DWP.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Mackness, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

- (a) The Council agreed that Rule 16.2 of the Council Rules be suspended, to enable the proposed minor revisions to the Council Rules to be agreed at this meeting of the Council.
- (b) The Council approved the proposed revisions to the Constitution as set out as tracked changes in Appendix B to the report.

975 Establishment of Committees, Appointments and Schedule of Meetings 2016/2017

Discussion:

This report provided details of the overall allocation of seats on committees and set out recommendations to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 18 May 2016 regarding the committees and other bodies to be appointed for 2016/2017 and a programme of meetings. The report also set out recommendations to the Joint Meeting of Committees on 18 May 2016, immediately following the Annual Meeting of the Council, in respect of the establishment and membership of sub-committees and task groups.

The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway, Councillor Kemp, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

The Council agreed to recommend the following to Annual Council and the Joint meeting of all Committees on 18 May 2016:

- (i) the establishment of committees, sub committees and task groups, their size and the allocation of seats to political groups as set out in paragraph 3.5 above and in Appendix A, together with terms of reference as set out in the Council's constitution;
- (ii) the establishment of an ad hoc committee to consider the removal of Council appointed school governors as and when necessary and to waive political balance in respect of this Committee;
- (iii) that appointments should be made to Joint Committees, outside bodies and other bodies as set out in Appendix B (with nominees to be reported at the Annual Council meeting);
- (iv) the timetable of meetings for the 2016/2017 municipal year as set out in Appendix C to this report incorporating the changes set out in paragraph 4.1 of this report.

976 Addition to the Capital Programme - Use of Urgency Powers

Discussion:

This report provided details of the recent use of Council side urgency powers by the Director of Children and Adults Services to add to £313,020 to the capital programme, for the purchase of a new IT system to replace the Council's current education database.

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The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, proposed the recommendation in the report.

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

977 Rochester Riverside Regeneration

Discussion:

This report provided details of the recent decision by Cabinet to award a contract, or series of contracts, for the Rochester Riverside regeneration. It was noted that this report complied with constitutional requirement to report any land and property transaction over £500,000 to Council for information.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, proposed the recommendation in the report.

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

978 Motions

A) Councillor Price, supported by Councillor Gilry, submitted the following:

“This Council places on record its thanks to all those who give time across Medway in carrying out the voluntary role of school governor.

This Council is extremely concerned at the proposal by Nicky Morgan to stop schools from having parent governors who make a massive positive contribution to schools.

This Council is also extremely concerned at the proposal by Nicky Morgan to force all schools to become academies by 2020. This is an affront to local democracy and to the key role that LEAs have played for over 100 years in supporting the education of all our children.

This Council asks the Chief Executive to write to Nicky Morgan to highlight our concerns on these two issues”.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, proposed the following amendment:

“Paragraph 2, line 1: delete “is” and replace with “would be”.

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Paragraph 2, line 1: delete “the” and replace with “any”.

Paragraph 2, line 1: delete “by Nicky Morgan” and replace with “that might emerge”.

Delete all text in paragraph 3.

Paragraph 4, line 1: add “the Rt Hon.” before Nick Morgan and add “MP” after Nicky Morgan.

Paragraph 4, line 2: delete “these issues” and replace with “this issue”.

This Council places on record its thanks to all those who give time across Medway in carrying out the voluntary role of school governor.

This Council would be extremely concerned at any proposal that might emerge to stop schools from having parent governors who make a massive positive contribution to schools.

This Council asks the Chief Executive to write to the Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan MP, to highlight our concerns on this issue”.

In accordance with Rule 12.4 of the Council Rules, a recorded vote on the amendment was taken.

For – Councillors Avey, Bhutia, Brake, Carr, Chishti, Chitty, Clarke, Doe, Fearn, Filmer, Franklin, Griffin, Gulvin, Hall, Howard, Iles, Jarrett, Joy, The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway, Councillor Kemp, Mackness, Opara, Potter, Royle, Saroy, Tejan, Tolhurst, Tranter, Turpin, Wicks, Wildey and Williams (31)

Against – Councillors Brown-Reckless, Cooper, Craven, Freshwater, Gilry, Godwin, Griffiths, Johnson, Khan, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Pendergast, Price, Shaw and Stamp (16).

The amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

Decision:

This Council places on record its thanks to all those who give time across Medway in carrying out the voluntary role of school governor.

This Council would be extremely concerned at any proposal that might emerge to stop schools from having parent governors who make a massive positive contribution to schools.

This Council asks the Chief Executive to write to the Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan MP, to highlight our concerns on this issue.

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B) Councillor Maple, supported by Councillor Murray, submitted the following:

“This Council notes that that the Prime Minister has announced the Government's intention to hold a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the European Union on Thursday 23rd June of this year.

Medway Council supports the United Kingdom's continued membership of a reformed European Union; a union which has brought peace and prosperity to Europe since the end of the Second World War

Therefore, this Council requests the Leader and the Chief Executive of the Council write to the Prime Minister to give the support of Medway Council to achieving his objective of remaining within the European Union as:

- (i) Jobs in Medway are more secure with Britain remaining part of Europe – the biggest trading market in the world – a vote to leave the EU could result in the loss of over 7,000 jobs in Medway;
- (ii) Prices are lower than they would be if we were outside Europe – meaning households in Medway save on average £450 a year;
- (iii) Our police can make our streets safer by being part of a wider European arrest warrant scheme that tackles cross border crime;
- (iv) Medway's four universities, the University of Kent, the University of Greenwich, Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Creative Arts, would suffer immeasurably if the UK were to withdraw from the EU”.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, proposed the following amendment:

“Delete all text after the first paragraph and substitute said text for the 2nd and 3rd paragraphs below.

This Council notes that that the Prime Minister has announced the Government's intention to hold a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the European Union on Thursday 23rd June of this year.

This Council supports the right for every eligible citizen to have their own view and to vote accordingly.

This Council does not believe it is appropriate for the Council to give its support to either side, but encourages all residents to get involved in the debate, learn as much as they can about the issues and to vote from an informed perspective.”

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In accordance with Rule 12.4 of the Council Rules, a recorded vote on the amendment was taken.

For – Councillors Avey, Bhutia, Brake, Carr, Chishti, Chitty, Clarke, Doe, Etheridge, Fearn, Filmer, Franklin, Griffin, Gulvin, Hall, Iles, Jarrett, Joy, The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway, Councillor Kemp, Mackness, Opara, Potter, Royle, Saroy, Tejan, Tolhurst, Tranter, Turpin, Wicks, Wildey and Williams (31)

Against – Councillors Brown-Reckless, Cooper, Craven, Freshwater, Gilry, Godwin, Griffiths, Johnson, Khan, Maple, Murray, Pendergast, Price, Shaw and Stamp (15).

Abstain – Councillors Howard and McDonald (2)

The amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

Councillor Freshwater, supported by Councillor Brown-Reckless, proposed the following amendment:

“Delete everything after paragraph 1 and insert:-

Medway Council does not support the United Kingdom’s continued membership of the European Union.

The Council requests the Leader and the Chief Executive of the Council to write to the Prime Minister to give the support of Medway Council, unreservedly, for leaving the European Union because:

We, the elected Members of Medway Council demand to be in control of our own destiny and reclaim British sovereignty. We refuse to let 27 other EU countries gang up together to make the lives of Medway residents and the people in Britain far worse. We know from the threats of France about 'consequences' and there will be a price to pay to leave the EU. But we also know if we stay in the EU they will make Britain pay the same or higher price later anyway and it will be worse as the EU will have total control of our lives under the flag of the United States of Europe.

This Council believes that residents of Medway should vote to leave the European Union because:

Unlike Medway Council democratic system, Medway residents cannot sack the unelected and privileged EU Commissions from 27 foreign countries who have majority votes and therefore controlling UK lives behind closed doors through EU laws and regulations. The Prime Minister failed to get any meaningful changes through recent negotiations with the EU.

EU decisions being made behind closed doors are controlled by big EU businesses to provide cheap labour for EU businesses . EU Commissioners will continue to gang up together and 'horse trade' decisions affecting British lives,

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which are not in the best interests of hardworking British people or Medway residents.

The housing crisis in Medway has been caused by the EU forcing the UK to accept unlimited migration and 8 million net people from the EU and elsewhere have been squashed into our communities, making Medway and British lives worse. No explanation has been given to the residents of Medway on the advantages of mass migration or having no border controls. Another 3 million people, equivalent to building a new town the size of Coventry or Aberdeen each year, will be arriving over the next 10 years needing homes and jobs and will also be squashed into our communities.

Medway residents are also worried about housing, jobs and public services when the following countries with populations shown are currently preparing to join the EU. Turkey 77 Million, Serbia 7 Million, Macedonia 2 Million, Montenegro 1 Million, Albania 3 Million.

When we leave the EU the £55 million a day membership fee can be spent on homes NHS, GP surgeries, roads, universities, police, public services and jobs. EU exit will make British households £933 richer because of lower taxes, cheaper food and clothes - these are just some of the benefits of life outside the EU.

Free trade agreements would greatly benefit Medway residents by leaving the EU. A free trade agreement with all countries of the world will increase jobs, careers and salaries. Such agreements are currently held back by tariffs set up behind closed doors to protect big EU business and farms. The EU political experiment is failing because it is rooted in the past and incapable of reforming to meet new world and big global trading opportunities. This is the reason why 19 million Europeans are unemployed".

Councillor Godwin, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, proposed that the vote be taken in accordance with Council Rule 11.6.2. This was agreed.

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

Decision:

This Council notes that the Prime Minister has announced the Government's intention to hold a referendum on the UK's continued membership of the European Union on Thursday 23rd June of this year.

This Council supports the right for every eligible citizen to have their own view and to vote accordingly.

This Council does not believe it is appropriate for the Council to give its support to either side, but encourages all residents to get involved in the debate, learn as much as they can about the issues and to vote from an informed perspective.

Council, 28 April 2016

Mayor

Date:

Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services

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