

Full Council 20 July 2107 – Schedule of Written Responses

Agenda reference	Question	Response
7C	<p><b>Caroline Clark of Luton will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:</b></p> <p>Can you tell me all these years you have had money for sure start, all of a sudden, the young are kicked in the teeth, I believe in money well spent but MPs getting a extortionate pay rise, can this not get spent on sure start?</p>	<p>It is not for a Lead Member to determine the pay rise of MPs. As we have clearly said through the consultation, changes to Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) regulations introduced from April 2017 require local authorities to pass to providers (nurseries and schools) a minimum of 93% of the early years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).</p> <p>From 2018, the minimum will be 95%. This leaves the centrally retained spend within Medway’s Early Years, including Children’s Centres, at £1.982m. The current service cost is £3.584m, presenting a £1.602m budget gap.</p>
7F	<p><b>Gary Droscher of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:</b></p> <p>I’m very interested how the Council feels it can justify cutting the funding for Sure Start Centres to stage a firework display that was over and done with in one evening. I know the importance of the sure start centres to families in Medway and the devastating effect it will have on an awful lot of people on low incomes.</p> <p>If you believed that the Dutch raid on the fleet was so important, why did the Council not seek business sponsorship and leave the services the people of Medway</p>	<p>This question has been repeatedly responded to throughout the consultation. Commemorations are an investment in Medway’s future – to put Medway on the map to drive economic growth, which positively impacts on the future of our young people in Medway.</p> <p>The changes to Children’s Centres have been driven largely by a change to the funding arrangements from Central Government which means the Council has to pass more of our funding to private providers.</p>

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	pay for via Council Tax alone?	
7I	<p><b>Hilda Aplin of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:</b></p> <p>How are the Council assuring that mental health and wellbeing of Medway's new parents and children will not be adversely affected by the closure of the 19 Sure Start Centres and that longer term costs for the NHS, the Council and society are not increased due to later interventions that may be required?</p>	<p>I would like to refer Ms Hilda Aplin to the response I gave Ms Georgina Aplin at the meeting. Specifically, that I would like to point out that the consultation proposal was about a model of 4 hubs and satellites, not as you suggest.</p> <p>Your question will be addressed through the Council's response to the consultation. The reality is that as Lead Member for Children's Services I have to ensure that the Council delivers early years services within the financial envelope.</p>
7J	<p><b>Dr Eleanor Jupp of Faversham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:</b></p> <p>Given the level of existing usage of centres by families, and the need to avoid adverse impacts on protected groups including pregnant women under the Equalities duty, please explain how 'need' will be defined in determining access to the proposed new service and how this relates to the existing system of thresholds in use in Children's Social Care services in Medway.</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, but the model will be clearly explained in the Council response to the consultation. It should be noted that universal services such as midwifery and health visiting will continue to be delivered through the hubs and satellites with contributions from health and other partners.</p>

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7L	<p><b>Lisa Kane on behalf of the Top of the Hill Pre-School, Rochester, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:</b></p> <p>You propose to have 4 hubs only. Why is there going to be 2 in Chatham, whereas the Hoo Peninsula and Grain will have no Hub apart from Strood which is miles away and vulnerable families will not be able to afford to get to the hub let alone be in a position to drag their under-fives with them?</p> <p>Deprivation indices are not the only criteria for providing excellent early years support.</p>	<p>I would like to refer Ms Kane to the response I gave Georgina Aplin at the meeting. Specifically, that I would like to point out that the consultation proposal was about a model of 4 hubs and satellites, not as you suggest. Your question will be addressed through the Council's response to the consultation.</p> <p>The Council's response to the consultation will evidence how families on the Peninsula and in Grain will have good access to services.</p> <p>The reality is that as Lead Member for Children's Services I have to ensure that the Council delivers early years services within the financial envelope.</p>
7N	<p><b>Maria Hill on behalf of St Luke's Pre-School, Rochester, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:</b></p> <p>If Universal Health Services, for example, Midwifery and Health Visitor Services are not in the general locality of the vulnerable families, this will have a much wider impact on children's health.</p> <p>How will a hub structure accommodate these practitioners safely?</p>	<p>Officers have been having meetings with health providers and commissioners to ensure they continue to provide universal health services across Medway. This will be part of the Council's response to the consultation.</p>

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10L	<p><b>Councillor Osborne will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:</b></p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Osborne.</p> <p>I do not agree with Mr Read's assertion that our response was "bizarre and obstructive." In answering the numerous Freedom of Information requests we receive we endeavour to provide a consistent response. Our approach is to signpost requests to the owners of data, who are best placed and the proper organisation to respond to requests about it.</p> <p>To be absolutely clear, our response to Mr Read was <i>"As the Department of Education is the proper owner of this information requests for school level data should be made to them."</i> The schools, of which less than half are Local Authority maintained, and the DfE have always been the owners; the Local Authority is not the owner of this information.</p> <p>Council Officers are acutely aware of the pressure on resources and for this reason requests on resources are dealt in a way that considers our legal obligations and our recourses. As such signposting Mr Read to the proper owner of the data was both appropriate and professional.</p> <p>There is regular and challenging oversight of exclusion performance by Members whilst the Inclusion Team works very closely with maintained schools and as closely as individual Academies permit, to train School Leadership teams, support parents and challenge</p>

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		decisions in this area, and this remains a high priority for the Council.