

Medway Council
Meeting of Medway Council
Thursday, 20 July 2017
7.00pm to 9.24pm

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 Wildey)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Opara)
Councillors Aldous, Avey, Bhutia, Bowler, Brake, Carr,
Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers, OBE, Chitty, Clarke,
Cooper, Craven, Fearn, Filmer, Franklin, Freshwater, Gilry,
Godwin, Griffin, Griffiths, Gulvin, Hall, Hicks, Howard,
Mrs Josie Iles, Steve Iles, Jarrett, Johnson, Joy, Kemp, Khan,
Mackness, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Pendergast, Potter, Price,
Purdy, Royle, Shaw, Stamp, Tejan, Tranter, Turpin, Wicks and
Williams

In Attendance: Neil Davies, Chief Executive
Ann Domeney, Interim Deputy Director, Children and Adults
Services
Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer
Richard Hicks, Director of Regeneration, Culture, Environment
and Transformation
Perry Holmes, Chief Legal Officer/Monitoring Officer
Helen Jones, Assistant Director – Commissioning, Business and
Intelligence
Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services
Carrie McKenzie, Chief People Officer
Ian Sutherland, Director of Children and Adults Services
Phil Watts, Chief Finance Officer
James Williams, Director of Public Health

164 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chishti, Doe, Etheridge, Osborne, Saroy and Tolhurst.

165 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

Councillor Griffiths declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 (Report on Overview and Scrutiny Activity (Community Services

Council, 20 July 2017

Reprocurement Programme Progress Report)) because he is a Non-Executive Director of Medway Community Healthcare (MCH). He left the meeting during discussion which related to MCH.

Other interests

There were none.

166 Record of meetings

The records of the meetings held on 27 April 2017 and 17 May 2017 were agreed and signed by The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway as correct records.

167 Mayor's announcements

With support of all Members of the Council, the Worshipful the Mayor of Medway placed on record Members' condolences to the family of Molly McLaren who tragically died last month after being attacked at the Dockside Shopping Outlet. Molly was a University of Kent student based at the Medway campus. He stated that Members' thoughts and prayers were with her family at this very sad time.

The Mayor reminded Members that he would be raising money for Medway Macmillan, Medway Samaritans and MAGIC during his term of office as Mayor and he hoped that Members would support the various events that would be taking place. In particular, he reported that tickets were still available for:

- Afternoon Tea on the Mayor's Lawn at Gun Wharf (28 July);
- Rainham Oast Theatre Night – Wife after Death (19 September);
- Big Quiz Night at Lordswood Leisure Centre (22 September).

The Mayor asked Members to speak clearly into the microphones to ensure people in the public gallery could hear and he reminded those present that the meeting was being audio recorded and the recording would be made available on the Council's website. In addition, he asked Members to provide written copies of any amendments to the Head of Democratic Services and that copies were brought up to the top table first.

168 Leader's announcements

There were none.

169 Petitions

Public

There were none.

Council, 20 July 2017

Members

Councillor Price submitted a petition containing 1,274 signatures which called on Medway Council to stop the closures of 19 Sure Start Centres.

170 Public questions

A) Stephen Elvy of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

“Why have we not had a disabled post and a “no parking unless disabled badges are displayed” sign?

The reason I am asking this is because my wife is disabled and so we have had a parking bay put in outside my house.

We are now having a problem with one car that parks in the bay with no blue badge and he says that this is because we have not got the post and the disabled badge on the post to say disabled parking only.

I have spoken to this person about his parking in the bay without a badge and it seems that he does not care about old and disabled people and does what he wants.”

Councillor Filmer thanked Mr Elvy for his question. He stated that it would be inappropriate to comment on a specific case. However, he confirmed that officers worked within the direction of the Department for Transport’s Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions Manual. This had confirmed that installation of posts and plates was optional due to the requirement to cut down on signing clutter.

However, Councillor Filmer had asked officers to review what was happening on this matter and stated that he would hope to see some positive progress shortly.

B) Dr Kate Bradley of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

“What rigorous, research-based evidence is there to suggest that including family services (0-19) with early years provision (0-5) will lead to successful outcomes for Medway children and their families?”

Councillor Mackness thanked Dr Bradley for her question. He stated that this matter would be responded to as part of the response to the consultation, but in brief, research had been based primarily on two key national reports:

The all Parliamentary Group for Children’s Centres – Family Hubs: The Future of Children’s Centres and Ann Longfield’s discussion paper Children’s Commissioner and Family Hubs.

Council, 20 July 2017

He stated that a number of Local Authorities had already adopted this approach, for example, Wakefield, Nottingham, Dudley, Kirklees, Wokingham and the Isle of Wight.

C) Caroline Clark of Luton submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:

"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?"

As Caroline Clark was not present at the meeting, she would receive a written response to her question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

D) Georgina Aplin of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

"What evidence is there that the closure of 19 Children's Centres versus 4 hubs will provide better whole-life value for money; and that the £1.6m budget reduction will not be displaced to other services such as the NHS or will not create significant increased future spend to address even lower educational attainment, social issues and health problems in Medway?"

Councillor Mackness thanked Ms Aplin for her question. He stated that the consultation proposal was about a model of 4 hubs and satellites, not, as suggested in the question. He stated that her question would be addressed through the Council's response to the consultation.

He concluded by stating that, as the Lead Member for Children's Services, he had to ensure that the Council delivered Early Years services in a prudent manner and within a financial envelope.

E) Dave Brockman of Rainham asked Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

"Consultations such as the one about Children's Centres are by their very nature expected to be well publicised, so that they can attract responses from the widest possible range of stakeholders.

How are Medway residents to have any faith in the impartiality of this consultation when Councillor Jarrett has apparently already made his mind up that the responses are "skewed" and "unrepresentative" thanks to being well publicised by the Labour Group?"

Councillor Mackness thanked Mr Brockman for his question. He understood that Mr Brockman had raised this question at a public meeting. Officers had held over 42 meetings and events and had distributed 1850 questionnaires by hand to individual parents and carers. 89 people had attended public meetings, with 14 attending more than one. The Council had received 866 completed questionnaires.

Council, 20 July 2017

Councillor Mackness concluded by stating that this had unequivocally showed that the Council had conducted an open and completely unbiased consultation.

F) Gary Droscher of Chatham submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:

"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.

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 pay for via Council Tax alone."

As Gary Droscher was not present at the meeting, he would receive a written response to his question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

G) Ms Morell of Eccles asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

"The Council has not released the data upon which it has chosen to present the consultation as options to keep no more than four children's centres open, into the public domain to enable the public to take this clearly critical data into account in its responses to the consultation.

Can the Portfolio Holder please explain why the Council has not recognised the importance of including this data in the consultation and its impact upon popular response, including confirmation of when and where will this data be released and open to public scrutiny and response?"

Councillor Mackness thanked Ms Morell, as a Kent resident, for taking such an interest in the provision in Medway. He stated that this consultation was an opportunity for Medway residents to comment on broad proposals for a hub and satellite model. The business case, which would go through the democratic process, would be based on the relevant data.

H) Elizabeth Holland of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

"The birth rate in Medway has been rising over the past ten years peaking at 3,600 births per annum in the last two years. In 2010 there was a larger younger persons population (20%) and a smaller elderly population (15%)" (Medway Council figures). The last known population of Medway was 274,000 in 2014 and is projected (at a +1.14%/year rate of growth) to be 283,460 in 2017.

Council, 20 July 2017

With the above figures in mind, can the Portfolio Holder please explain what the current, proposed one year and five year ratios of Sure Start Centre staff to carers and infants are, in the super hub centres?”

Councillor Mackness thanked Ms Holland for her question. He stated that until the consultation was reviewed and the final proposals agreed, the ratio of staff to carers was something that would be unknown.

He also stated that the Council would endeavour to provide the best Early Years service possible within the revised Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget, which was constrained and determined by Government.

I) Hilda Aplin of Gillingham submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:

“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?”

As Hilda Aplin was not present at the meeting, she would receive a written response to her question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

J) Dr Eleanor Jupp of Faversham submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:

“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.”

As Dr Jupp was not present at the meeting, she would receive a written response to her question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

K) Katie Clifford of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

“You have cited that many other local authorities are using the hub model as a way of justifying that this is a beneficial method of dealing with your fiscal arrangements.

How many of these other Councils have been running this method for five or more years to gather concrete evidence that this model is beneficial to children and families and not detrimental to children starting school ready to begin the new and more challenging curriculum?”

Council, 20 July 2017

Councillor Mackness thanked Ms Clifford for her question. He stated that he could answer this in a similar way as he had to Dr Bradley's question (Question 7B).

He stated that a number of Local Authorities had already adopted this approach, for example, Wakefield, Nottingham, Dudley, Kirklees, Wokingham and the Isle of Wight.

L) Lisa Kane on behalf of the Top of the Hill Pre-School, Rochester, submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:

"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?"

Deprivation indices are not the only criteria for providing excellent early years support."

As Lisa Kane was not present at the meeting, she would receive a written response to her question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

M) Nikki Bromley of Walderslade asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

"The mindset has already changed since the first consultation to hopefully have a few satellites of low cost to run.

In these satellites, if it is your proposal to run these with volunteers, how do you expect the expertise and professionalism of the staff already in the Sure Start centres to be run solely with Volunteers with no sure start centre background?"

Councillor Mackness thanked Mrs Bromley for her question. He stated that the satellites would not be run by volunteers. Staff in each of the area teams would continue to run a number of services in any of the facilities including satellites so long as this was within the Council's financial budget. He also stated that, as with the current Early Years model, trained, checked and supervised volunteers would continue to be available as part of the service delivery.

N) Maria Hill on behalf of the St Luke's Pre-School, Rochester, submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:

"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.

How will a hub structure accommodate these practitioners safely?"

Council, 20 July 2017

As Maria Hill was not present at the meeting, she would receive a written response in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

O) John Castle of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake, the following:

“Given that Medway's health unit was closed in 2013.

Since then KMPT has spent £5.6m sending patients from Medway out of area for treatment.

Wouldn't a fit for purpose local mental health unit provide better value for money and better patient outcomes?”

Councillor Brake thanked Mr Castle for his question. He stated that by way of background, the decision to close the Medway acute services located in A Block of Medway Maritime Hospital and provide services located in Maidstone and Dartford was recommended by KMPT. This had been subsequently discussed by the Joint Kent and Medway Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). He stated that, in short, 8 Kent County Councillors had endorsed the KMPT recommendation for closure whilst the 4 Medway Councillors had voted against the proposal. He added that as a result of this decision, all Medway residents requiring acute facilities were, in effect, out of area.

Councillor Brake further stated that the current composition of the Joint HOSC gave KCC 8 Councillor representatives and Medway 4 Councillor representatives. He informed Mr Castle that Medway Councillors would continue to lobby for a change to this arrangement to ensure parity for this joint HOSC. He stated that under no circumstances should another authority be allowed to reach a decision that affected others in the way this did, particularly when it involved the people of Medway.

Councillor Brake stated that work was currently being undertaken across Medway on an authority-wide basis for mental health. There would always be a requirement for acute psychiatric beds, but at the moment the focus, as partners, was on preventing and recovery. Medway was working on the issue of prevention as well as supporting people in their own homes and communities, which in turn would reduce the number of people requiring acute psychiatric beds.

He also stated that KMPT had been working with clinical commissioners and staff to review the pathways of care delivered within Kent and Medway as part of this arrangement. As part of this process, KMPT had focussed on seeking to reduce its reliance on out of area private beds to zero. This had historically been significant and whilst it was right that a community service should be built, as opposed to building accommodation capacity, the needs of the people of Medway were paramount.

Council, 20 July 2017

He concluded by stating that he was pleased that there continued to be a psychiatric in-patient provision in Medway for older adults who needed admission for assessment and the treatment of mental health conditions such as dementia and severe depression.

P) Paul Chaplin of Rainham asked the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake, the following:

“Since the closure of the mental health unit at Medway hospital in December 2013, the police have had to provide a place of safety for mental health patients until a suitable bed can be found for them. This can often take days.

A third of police time is currently taken up providing this additional service, despite cuts to the police service.

In summer this year the police will no longer be allowed to hold mental health patients purely on the grounds of a place of safety. Can the Portfolio Holder tell us what alternative provision will be made available for these patients?”

Councillor Brake thanked Mr Chaplin for his question. He stated that Mr Chaplin was correct in suggesting that the changes to section 136 of the Mental Health Act were happening this year. The Council had already entered into discussions with its acute provider concerning alternative provision, which could be made in the redesign of A&E. He stated that the Council was building into the new service, a specific area, which would be quiet for people who were in mental health distress. The Council was working jointly with Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group in relation to a health needs analysis specifically for Mental Health, which would also influence the Medway Multi-agency strategy. He added that whilst there would always be a requirement for acute psychiatric beds, the focus should be on prevention and recovery.

He further stated that the Council, for that reason, was developing a strategic focus around prevention, which in turn would reduce the number of people requiring acute psychiatric beds. He concluded by stating that all Members could appreciate that as little time should be spent as possible in a hospital bed for whatever reason, which was why the focus would be on supporting people in their own homes with their family and community.

Q) Vivienne Parker of Chatham asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

“Now that the Countryside Ranger Service has been taken over by Norse, does this mean the end of the Medway Urban Parks and Green Spaces Forum and its associated friends groups?”

The Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake, responded on behalf of Councillor Doe. Councillor Brake thanked Ms Parker for her question. He stated that the recent transfer of the Countryside Ranger Service to Norse on 1 May 2017 had enabled the repositioning of Medway Urban Parks and

Council, 20 July 2017

Green Space Forum into the Greenspace Development Team. The Development Team was well placed to take on this positive and valued role, and this change in responsibility complemented the transfer of the Green Flag awards to the Development Team, which had resulted in greater engagement of Friends Groups in the scheme. Councillor Brake took this opportunity to announce that the Council had recently re-secured all seven of its Green Flag sites, which represented a phenomenal achievement.

He stated that a dedicated Greenspace Partnership post would soon be filled, which would work on building stronger partnerships with Friends of Groups, supporting their work on the ground.

He concluded by stating that following a recent, very positive meeting with the Chair of the Medway Urban Park and Green Space Forum (MUPGF), the team had offered to attend future MUPGF meetings to ensure continued positive partnership working.

R) Chas Berry of Strood asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

“How is it possible to target early years help to the most vulnerable when you propose to remove access to services from local communities and place them in centralised hubs?”

Councillor Mackness thanked Mr Berry for his question. He reiterated that the proposal the Council consulted on was for a hub and satellite model. This question would be addressed as part of the Council's response in consideration to the consultation which had just been completed.

S) Bryan Fowler of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake, the following:

“The Nitrogen Dioxide levels measured at roadside throughout Medway in 2016 show that over 60% were above the permitted maximum of 40 measures. This suggests an immediate as well as long term public health impact; this particularly affects children and older people.

What measures will Medway Council take in both the short and long term to address this worsening situation?”

Councillor Brake thanked Mr Fowler for his question. He stated that prior to setting out the specific actions Medway Council was taking to address poor air quality, it was important to note that one organisation on its own, could not resolve the global causes of air pollution. Tackling Nitrogen Dioxide emissions and other airborne particulates hazardous to health, required multinational action.

However, he stated that Medway Council recognised the impact that poor air quality could have on the health of local people. The Council was particularly

Council, 20 July 2017

aware of the need to protect the health of vulnerable groups, such as children and older adults and the Council had taken action.

He stated that Council had 33 air quality monitoring sites across Medway and had established 4 specific Air Quality Management Areas in localities where the Council had identified air quality issues. Whilst 7 of the 33 sites (22%) did record levels of nitrogen dioxide above our annual average objective in 2016, the overall levels of nitrogen dioxide and other airborne particulates, were generally declining in Medway.

In 2016 the Council had introduced air quality planning guidance. The Council was working with business and commerce on active travel measures, promoting walking, cycling and car sharing. The Council was procuring low emission vehicles and working with stakeholders to improve the efficiency of existing vehicle fleets. The Council was putting in place traffic management schemes and encouraging greater use of public transport.

He concluded by stating that progress on the performance of the Air Quality Action Plan was included in Medway's 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR). He added that the Council's Environmental Protection Team would notify Mr Fowler when the 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report was available.

T) Ben Pranczke of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, the following:

"This Council meeting tonight, like every Council meeting in Medway, is not being live streamed to the public.

Many other Councils, including our neighbours at KCC, live stream their Full Council and other Committee meetings. However, Medway Council was able to live stream the fireworks which were paid for with the money that will be saved from the vicious cuts to Sure Start.

Could the Councillor explain why the Council is able to live stream fireworks but not the meetings which decide how the fireworks will be paid for?"

Councillor Turpin stated that Medway Council had commissioned Ground Zero Productions to make the film that was shown during the Medway in Flames commemoration evening on 17 June 2017. The company was asked to also record and broadcast the event live onto large screens in festival zones across the dockside area because there was only limited space for people to watch the event on the riverside walk during the evening and the Council was keen for as many people as possible to be able to enjoy the event. The Council believed that in the region of 20,000 people enjoyed the viewing of the event from their different positions across Chatham that evening.

He stated that the Council would be using the recording to show the commemorations at various heritage sites around Medway, including Upnor Castle and the Guildhall Museum.

Council, 20 July 2017

He stated that because much of the equipment needed was already in place for the streaming of the event to the large screens, the Council took the decision to livestream the event online at a small one-off additional cost of just a few hundred pounds, again to reach those people who were not able to come along on the evening. This video had now been watched 4,100 times.

Councillor Turpin stated that, with regards to live video or audio streaming of formal Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings in Medway, he understood that this would provide access to meetings for those people with an interest in Council business but who were unable to come along in person for a variety of reasons.

However, whilst there were some low cost DIY solutions for transmission of live recordings such as Periscope, Facebook Live and YouTube, it was important to recognise that provision of good quality live streaming would involve an annual ongoing revenue cost to the Council as opposed to the one-off fee associated with live streaming of Medway in Flames.

The majority of Councils who were live webcasting their meetings had entered into a contract with a webcasting provider which could cost anything between £5,000 and upwards of £20,000 every year, in addition to initial set up costs.

He stated that as an alternative to webcasting, there was other more affordable technology for good quality live audio streaming of meetings which would cost around £5,000 per year. He stated that he had seen a demonstration of one particular product but its use would require the Council to enter into a contract involving the identification of ongoing revenue funding and at the moment the budget was extremely tight.

He concluded by stating that until such time as the Council could identify the funding, the Council would continue to provide an audio recording of Full Council meetings on the website the day after each meeting.

171 Leader's report

Discussion:

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

- Festivals and events including the Battle of Medway
- Regeneration Update
- Medway on the Map
- Education
- Transformation of Early Help Services (Sure Start Centres)
- LGA Conference
- Grenfell Tower
- Healthy Weight Summit
- Air Quality.

172 Overview and scrutiny activity

Discussion:

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

- Recommissioning of Medway Adult Substance Misuse Treatment Services (it was noted that the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed the proposed development did not amount to a substantial variation to the health service).
- Homelessness Prevention Strategy
- Thomas Aveling Library – Outcome of Consultation
- Transformation of Early Help Services (Sure Start Centres)
- Medway Safeguarding Children Board – Update Report
- Medway Youth Parliament – Annual Conference Findings
- South East Coast Ambulance Service Update
- Update Report: Medway Intermediate Care and Reablement Service
- Member's Item: Splashes Leisure Pool
- Report on the Possible Introduction of a 20s Plenty Scheme in Medway
- Procurement Strategy
- Update on Medway Norse
- Task Group on Employment Opportunities for 18-25 Year Olds
- Medway Integrated Urgent Care Redesign
- Dementia Task Group Report – How far has Medway gone in becoming a Dementia Friendly Community?
- LGA Conference
- Integration and Better Care Fund.

Councillor Carr, supported by Councillor Royle, proposed the recommendation from the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to appoint Fay Cordingley to the vacant seat on the Committee for a teacher for a two year term of office as set out in paragraph 2.1.5 of the report.

Decision:

The Council appointed Fay Cordingley to the Teacher position on the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a two year term of office.

173 Members' questions

A) Councillor Freshwater asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:

“The thoughts of all Medway Council Members will be with the families and friends of the 79 people died or are missing and feared dead following the blaze at the Grenfell Tower.

Council, 20 July 2017

Members' thoughts will also be with any injured people and their families and all emergency services and firefighters who help in very dangerous response situations.

Having regard to ongoing London investigations and limited time for answering Council questions, would the Leader of the Council be prepared to write and update all Members on the fire risk assessments and other actions being carried out in Medway following any advice from the Department of Communities and Local Government. Can the correspondence please include advice to Members on:

- a) actions being taken by Medway Council to reassure all residents living both in public sector and private sector housing.
- b) confirmation the Council is maintaining a central record of all panels and other samples sent or being sent for testing to BS or another standard from Medway Council buildings, other government buildings including hospitals, social housing providers and private landlords.
- c) confirmation that Medway Council emergency and fire contingency plans are being urgently updated and robust procedures will now be put in place to provide emergency housing and have procedures to address the long-term housing needs of residents made homeless because of any catastrophe.”

Councillor Jarrett thanked Councillor Freshwater for his question. This was obviously a hugely important issue which had concerned everyone. He referred to the figures of 79 people dying and that it was widely thought that the figure would be significantly higher once proper analysis had been finished. This was tragic by any measure.

He stated that he would write to Councillor Freshwater in detail, however, he added that immediate action had already been taken by the Council. He also stated that there was ongoing action about how the Council would respond to emergencies through its emergency planning arrangements.

He stated that in terms of immediate steps, the Council had contacted and worked with partners such as mhs homes, who were the landlords of most of the high rise properties in Medway. The Council had also worked with health partners and significant work had been undertaken with other organisations which had a building that could present a problem in the future.

He also stated that he had been very clear with the Chief Executive that the Council needed to not only continue with the current emergency planning arrangements but the Council also needed to introduce, at various times, scenario planning, to combat different issues as they arose and to learn the lessons from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) in the way that the incident had been dealt with by both politicians and officials from RBKC to make sure that Medway would not fall into the some of the same traps.

Council, 20 July 2017

He concluded by stating that Medway would not have the overbearing presence of the Mayor of London to contend with but it would be beholden on the Council to make sure it would deal with everything in a timely and appropriate manner.

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

“Medway residents, like those across the country, will be truly shocked by the tragic incident at Grenfell Tower and our thoughts tonight go to all those affected.

I have requested an item to come to the next Overview & Scrutiny meeting where the various ramifications on both prevention and Medway’s capacity to deal with such an incident will be considered in great detail but in the meantime could the Leader of the Council give an update as regards any specific actions that Medway Council has taken, either alone or working with partners, in the immediate period after the incident.”

Councillor Jarrett thanked Councillor Maple for his question. He stated that his answer was broadly similar (to question 10A) in that the Council did not own or manage any tower blocks – this fell to other providers. However, this did not mean that the Council did not have an interest in terms of public safety and as such the Council had assisted with this. The Council had put in place Fire Risk Assessments for all its flatted housing stock. In addition, Members would be aware that the Council had committed over £4million over the last few years towards further improving fire safety in its own flatted stock.

He reiterated that this was an area that had concerned him greatly since the tragedy had occurred.

He further stated that the South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership had been liaising with Kent Fire Rescue Service, to determine a list of private sector buildings which may require action and the Council’s corporate building and design team were undertaking fire risk assessments of corporate buildings. He was pleased to state that officers had not identified any high rise buildings with Aluminium Composite Materials (ACMs). Officers were currently analysing the data for other corporate properties, and were developing a priority list, in order to inform new Fire Risk Assessments as they become required and that this was a sensible precaution to take.

He concluded by stating that the Council had taken care not to over react and to not unnecessarily alarm the public, but the Council was very focussed on working with partners on taking all possible steps to alleviate any sort of occurrence of this in the future in Medway.

C) Councillor Price asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

“Last year 30,000 people used Sure Start Centres in 240,000 visits. How will these numbers of people be accommodated in 4 hubs?”

Council, 20 July 2017

Councillor Mackness thanked Councillor Price for his question, He stated that he had responded earlier to Mr Berry (during public questions) on this matter and that he would like to reiterate that the proposal that the Council had consulted on was for a hub and satellite model and outreach, not as suggested in this question, on four hubs.

He stated that this question would now be addressed as part of the Council's response to the consultation, where the Council would consider thoroughly all the feedback and formulate a model within the budget for Cabinet to consider after input from the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

D) Councillor Cooper asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

“The proposals for closing 19 Sure Start centres in Medway imply that families may be asked to use other community facilities identified as satellite centres when they meet with early years staff or attend groups.

How will the Portfolio Holder guarantee public liability insurance, fire and equipment safety, personal security and access limited only to those cleared to work with children if venues not compliant with public sector health, safety and security standards are used to carry out Council functions and will they be subject to Ofsted inspections?”

Councillor Mackness thanked Councillor Cooper for her question. He stated that he would like to reiterate again, for the avoidance of doubt, the Council had not consulted to close 19 Children's Centres.

He stated that some Early Help services were already run in alternative community facilities. A few examples of this included in Grain, where the Children's Centre had burnt down, Cliffe Woods School and White Road Community Centre.

He further stated that Ofsted currently did not inspect settings where children were present with their parent/carer. However, all current venues used on an outreach/satellite basis by Children's Services staff would have a full risk assessment based upon the published regulations for the Early Years Foundation Stage standards. Similar measures would be required for any facilities used in future if these were different to current venues.

E) Councillor Craven asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

“The population of Medway has grown dramatically in the last 5 years and there are currently more than 18,000 children under the age of 5.

Does the Portfolio Holder expect the population of Medway to continue to grow and if so how will he ensure that all families have access to early years support

Council, 20 July 2017

in the future – within pram-pushing distance - if there are only four Sure Start hubs?”

Councillor Mackness thanked Councillor Craven for her question. He stated that, unfortunately, even as Lead Member, he had very little control of population growth in Medway. He added that he would like to reiterate that the Council had consulted on a hub and satellite model. This would be addressed in the Council’s response to the consultation.

F) Councillor Johnson asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member) Councillor Mackness, the following:

“To date, how much has Medway Council spent on training and recruitment for Sure Start staff?”

Councillor Mackness thanked Councillor Johnson for his question. He stated that between 2006 and 2015, most Children’s Centre staff were employed by the host schools which were commissioned to manage their local centre on behalf of the Council. The cost of recruitment and training formed part of the devolved budget provided by the Council and centres themselves chose how to spend the money. This breakdown was, therefore, unavailable.

G) Councillor McDonald asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member) Councillor Mackness, the following:

“Why have Sure Start staff been told they should not take part in the public consultation meetings?”

Councillor Mackness thanked Councillor McDonald for his question. He stated that he could rigorously assert that this was absolutely not the case. He stated that if Councillor McDonald could provide evidence otherwise, he would be happy to listen.

H) Councillor Khan asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member) Councillor Mackness, the following:

“During the public consultation on the future of Sure Start the Cabinet have decided to commence formal redundancy negotiations with staff who work at the Centres. The staff consultation is based only on the Cabinet’s proposals for four hubs.

Can the Portfolio Holder explain why, by doing this, he has chosen to predetermine the outcome of the public consultation and whether he is prepared to extend the staff consultation beyond the statutory 30 days in order to demonstrate that the views expressed by the public will be taken into account?”

Councillor Mackness thanked Councillor Khan for her question. He stated that the consultation with staff was being undertaken in line with the Council’s Organisational Change Policy. The Council was consulting with staff at the

Council, 20 July 2017

same time for exactly the reason Councillor Khan had raised within her question, which was to ensure that the views of staff would be considered before a final decision was taken.

I) Councillor Stamp asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

“Since the implementation in April of the more than doubling of charges at the Croneens / Rainside commuter car park in Gillingham, usage has reduced considerably and income has actually fallen. While commuters are far worse off, the principal beneficiary is the Station car park across the road which is now 10% cheaper than the Council's and is now regularly full when before it was half empty.

Will the Portfolio Holder apologise to those commuters for making both them and the Council poorer?”

Councillor Filmer thanked Councillor Stamp for his question. He stated that the Council had rationalised the tariffs across all its car parks, which meant that some car parks had seen more of an increase than others. The Council did not know in advance the tariffs Network Rail were planning to apply for 2017/18 and therefore the Council could not have guaranteed to set a lower tariff.

He further stated that the car parks Councillor Stamp had referred to had been reduced in capacity by 31 spaces to accommodate development on the site and so a straight comparison in terms of use was not straightforward. He added that it was only 3 months into the new financial year and the Council had anticipated a slight dip in use. Further analysis would be undertaken during the year.

J) Councillor Murray asked the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake, the following:

“There are currently proposals to reduce the number of social workers working in Adult social care at a time when it is widely acknowledged amongst professionals and politicians that there is a national crisis in Adult Social Care provision. In this context, the Prime Minister has recently stated that the outcome of the general election has motivated her to seek greater political consensus on how to resolve the Social Care crisis.

In keeping with the renewed spirit of consensus, does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that Medway Council should also refresh our approach, seek political consensus here and instead of continuing to cut services and staff, consider how to increase resourcing of Adult Social Care and by doing so ensure that our service users and their relatives can be confident about receiving an improved service?”

Councillor Brake stated he totally agreed with Councillor Murray in that it was time to refresh the approach in Adult Social Care. With the implementation of the Care Act, the rising demands for services and increasing public

Council, 20 July 2017

expectations the Council could not stand still. The current service was performing to a good standards and he highlighted recent successes:

- Consecutive weeks with no delayed discharges from Medway Hospital, this meant the Council was amongst the best performing Councils in the South East;
- The number of people on self-directed support was rising;
- The number of people in residential care was reducing.

He stated that this showed that the Council was promoting independence and choice, but it was recognised that the Council could do more.

He stated that the Council had been running an innovation site to test new approaches to how the Council could engage with people over a 13 week period across post codes ME4 and ME5. There had been conversations with 388 people. The Council had supported 29 people who were in a crisis and out of the 388 only 19 went on to need long term support. 100% of people had said they were satisfied with their outcomes and in addition this had resulted in cost avoidance savings of £188,000 over the 13 week period.

He further stated that people's lives did not stop at 5pm on Friday, unlike the Council's current services. He stated that not only did the Council plan to roll this approach out across Adult Social Care, the Council would be doing this in addition to increasing service availability across seven days per week. Increasing opportunities for all people requiring support, stopping the current silo approach to people based on their age and disability meant that someone could be assessed by three different people to meet their needs.

He stated that this new approach was that one person would take a holistic approach to meeting the whole of a person's needs, therefore, reducing hand offs. It also provided staff with increased opportunities for development through joint working in localities and had the potential of full year savings of £650,000, which would make a total saving for 2017/2018 of £838,000.

He concluded by stating that the Council was not cutting services but was improving its response to individuals, delivering better outcomes for people and improving opportunities for staff, and delivering efficiencies moving from good to great.

K) Councillor Gilry asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

“During the public consultation on closing Medway's Sure Start centres, private nursery providers and childminders have attended public meetings and explained the vital inter dependency between the public and private sector and made it clear that they are struggling to meet commitments now given the low level payments they receive for free childcare places.

Council, 20 July 2017

What will the Portfolio Holder do to increase capacity for the government's planned expansion of free childcare if Sure Start Centres close and local private providers cannot provide places?"

Councillor Mackness thanked Councillor Gilry for her question. He stated that the sufficiency duty for free childcare place was not delivered through Children's Centres and this function would remain. The Council would work with the private sector as normal as it did so currently.

L) Councillor Osborne submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:

"Figures for 2014-15 showed Medway was the 14th worst local authority in the country for secondary school permanent exclusions and worst in the South East. However a Freedom of Information request for the 2015-16 figures by the education campaigner Peter Read (Fol request MFOI001173) has been met with obstruction and a bizarre refusal on the grounds that the information now belongs to the Department for Education.

Does the Portfolio Holder share the Labour Group's concern that this reply looks like an attempt to bury bad news and agree that officers should provide the information as requested - broken down by school and year group - and do so without further delay?"

As Councillor Osborne was not present at the meeting, he would receive a written response in accordance with Council Rule 9.1.

M) Councillor Shaw asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

"The "Dynamic Bus Facility" in Chatham currently has no public toilets and cannot sell tickets for around 97% of Medway bus journeys – what is the Portfolio Holder doing to solve both those problems?"

Councillor Filmer thanked Councillor Shaw for her question. He stated that Arriva had removed the ticket system from the Bus station, and that the Council and Arriva were looking at an online solution to overcome this.

He also stated that with regards to the public toilets, the existing toilets were really there for staff and were not fit for purpose. He further stated that he had worked hard with Medway Norse and to overcome this, a block with multiple toilets would be put in at the rear of the bus facility, which should overcome the problem.

174 Additions to the Capital Programme

Discussion:

This report provided details of a number of schemes which require Full Council approval to be added to the Capital Programme, namely:

Council, 20 July 2017

- Local Growth Fund (LGF) Round 3;
- Civic Centre Demolition and Decant;
- Chatham Fire Station.

This report had been considered by the Cabinet on 11 July 2017, details of which were set out in paragraph 7 of the report.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, proposed the recommendation in the report.

Decision:

The Council agreed to add the schemes set out in section 2 of the report to the Capital Programme.

175 Integration and Better Care Fund: Update and Section 75 Budget Arrangements

Discussion:

This report provided details of the Integration and Better Care Fund together with details of the additional financial support to local authorities to support the local health and social care system.

The Cabinet considered this report on 6 June 2017, details of which were set out in paragraph 6 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake, supported by Councillor Purdy, proposed the recommendation set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council agreed that the additional Adult Social Care funding of £3,962,308 be added to the revenue budget.

176 Code of Corporate Governance

Discussion:

This report provided details of the revised Code of Corporate Governance, following a review of the current Code as a result of the publication of CIPFA and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) revised 'Delivering Good Governance' framework that "defines the principles that should underpin the governance of each local government organisation" in December 2016.

The revised Code was considered by the Audit Committee (29 June 2017) and Cabinet (11 July 2017), details of which were set out in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the report.

Council, 20 July 2017

The Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement, Councillor Potter, proposed the recommendation in the report.

Decision:

The Council approved the revised Local Code of Corporate Governance, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, for incorporation into the Constitution.

177 Motions

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

“This Council notes the pressure placed on Medway’s invaluable Sure Start Centres and their vital services by the current budget and the proposals that are subject to public consultation.

The Council calls on the Cabinet to recognise the value of Sure Start to our communities and to ease the financial pressure by reversing the budget decision to remove the £55,000 from the Sure Start budget to fund the additional £1,000 Ward Improvement Fund allocated to each Councillor. This would help facilitate the transition to any new delivery model which may emerge after the consultation”.

Councillor Kemp, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement, Councillor Jarrett, proposed the following amendment:

“This Council notes the pressure placed on Medway’s Children’s Centres and their important services by budgetary constraints. This Council further notes that Medway Council has conducted extensive public consultation in relation to the provision of Sure Start centres in Medway.

This Council calls upon the Cabinet to carefully evaluate the outcome of the consultation, and to respond in a way which takes account of the needs of service users.”

In response to questions from Members’ relating to the validity of the amendment, the Chief Legal Officer advised that the amendment was valid in accordance with Council Rules.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, proposed that the vote be taken (Council Rule 11.6.2). This was agreed.

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

On being put to the vote, the substantive motion was carried.

Council, 20 July 2017

Decision:

This Council notes the pressure placed on Medway's Children's Centres and their important services by budgetary constraints. This Council further notes that Medway Council has conducted extensive public consultation in relation to the provision of Sure Start centres in Medway.

This Council calls upon the Cabinet to carefully evaluate the outcome of the consultation, and to respond in a way which takes account of the needs of service users.

Mayor

Date:

Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services

Telephone: 01634 332760

Email: democratic.services@medway.gov.uk