

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Medway Council**  
**Thursday, 25 January 2018**  
**7.30pm to 0.22am**

**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, Chishti, Chitty,  
Clarke, Cooper, Craven, Doe, Fearn, Filmer, Franklin,  
Freshwater, Godwin, Griffin, Etheridge, Griffiths, Hall, Hicks,  
Mrs Josie Iles, Steve Iles, Jarrett, Johnson, Joy, Kemp, Khan,  
Mackness, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Osborne, Pendergast,  
Potter, Price, Purdy, Royle, Saroy, Shaw, Stamp, Tejan, Tranter,  
Turpin and Wicks

**In Attendance:** Neil Davies, Chief Executive  
Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer  
Richard Hicks, Director Regeneration, Culture, Environment and  
Transformation and Deputy Chief Executive  
Perry Holmes, Chief Legal Officer/Monitoring Officer  
Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services  
Ian Sutherland, Director of Children and Adults Services  
Phil Watts, Chief Finance Officer

**689 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gilry, Gulvin, Howard and Williams.

**690 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

Councillor Griffiths declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in any substantive reference to Medway Community Healthcare (MCH) because he is a Non-Executive Director of MCH. He stated that he would leave the meeting should there be any specific discussion on MCH.

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### Other significant interests

There were none.

### Other interests

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

Councillor Cooper declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 (Overview and Scrutiny Activity (Employment Opportunities for 18-25 Years Olds (Including Apprenticeships))) because she is a governor of Rivermead School.

Councillor Johnson stated that at the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 January 2018, following legal advice, he had declared a non-pecuniary interest in his Member's Item on Young Refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children because he was on the Steering Committee of the Medway City of Sanctuary. Whilst he withdrew from the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting for discussion on that item, he expressed the view that he should have been able to participate in the discussion of the item, which was confirmed by his subsequent discussion with the Monitoring Officer. He stated that he had now resigned from the Steering Committee of the Medway City of Sanctuary and that he would speak on the issue under agenda item 9 (Overview and Scrutiny Activity (Member's Item on Young Refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)).

Councillor Opara declared a non-pecuniary interest as her daughter was employed in the Council's Fostering team. She stated that there were references to fostering in the agenda (agenda item 8 (Leader's Report)) and agenda item 9 (Report on Overview and Scrutiny Activity) but having taken advice from the Monitoring Officer there was no need for her to leave the meeting.

Councillor Price declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 (Overview and Scrutiny Activity (Member's Item on Young Refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)) as he is on the Steering Committee of Medway City of Sanctuary.

### **691 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 12 October 2017 was agreed and signed by The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway as a correct record.

### **692 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 Ann Brochoven who sadly passed away on 5 January 2018. Ann was Councillor

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Bowler's Deputy Mayoress during his year as Deputy Mayor in 2007-2008. She served Medway with great passion and enthusiasm and provided much appreciated support to Councillor Bowler.

With support of all Members of the Council, The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway also placed on record Members' condolences to the family and friends of Colin Gardner. Colin served for ten years on the former Rochester upon Medway City Council and helped to create, amongst other things, Capstone Park and Lake, as well as Lordswood Sports and Social Club.

The Mayor reminded Members of his forthcoming charity events:

Tuesday 20 March 2018 – Charity Theatre Night at the Oasthouse Theatre in Rainham, featuring "Ladies' Night", a comedy by Amanda Whittington.

Tuesday 27 March 2018 – A second Charity Chinese Night at Confucius as the Chinese New Year Night on 13 February was already oversubscribed.

Saturday 14 April 2018 – Murder Mystery Night with a 3-course Dinner at the St George's Centre.

He stated that further information was available from the Mayor's PA.

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 top table first.

### **693 Leader's announcements**

There were none.

### **694 Petitions**

#### Public

Harrinder Singh submitted a petition containing 44 signatures which urged the Council to take appropriate, urgent, action to stop the antisocial parking at the bottom of Ordnance Street, Chatham.

#### Members

Councillor Murray submitted a petition containing 138 signatures which opposed the proposed relocation of a coach park on the Esplanade, Rochester.

Councillor Osborne submitted a petition containing 42 signatures which called on the Council to take appropriate urgent action to improve road safety on Wayfield Road, Chatham.

**695 Public questions**

**A) Lia Mandaracas of Twydall asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:**

“As the sure start proposals have been pushed through and there seems to still be no consensus on what the health and wellbeing centres will look like or what support will be available from them, what does Councillor Mackness plan to do about the fact that universal credit is set to plunge 1300 Medway children into abject poverty and potential homelessness (based on statistics from children in poverty action group), is the Council able to handle such a crisis?”

Councillor Mackness thanked Miss Mandaracas for her question. He stated that the final Children’s Centre proposals were implemented following an extensive consultation and were definitely not pushed through. He stated that he had advised the Council previously that the government had directed Local Authorities to pass on a higher proportion of funding to nursery and childcare providers, resulting in a smaller proportion of funding being available for the Council to deliver early years services. However, this shift in funding had increased the opportunities for parents to access childcare and nursery provision to enable them to return to work. This new model would provide more integrated, family centred services which were targeting the most vulnerable families.

He stated that he completely refuted the statement that Miss Mandaracas had made that there was no consensus on what the Early Help, including Children’s Centre provision, looked like. The restructured service was fully operational with services being delivered from the hubs, well-being centres and outreach services. The new timetable for each area was in place and was being shared with families. There was a dedicated workforce in place and the Council had made considerable investment in developing integrated Children and Family Hubs. The Hubs at Chatham and Strood were open and fully functional. The remaining two Hubs at Wayfield and Gillingham were currently being refurbished, with a planned completion date for the end of March 2018. In the meantime, two former Children’s Centres were being used. Eight of the nine Wellbeing Centres were open and refurbishment of a new Wellbeing Centre in Hoo was due to be completed in late February.

He placed on record his thanks for the exceptional work of the officers involved in delivering this complex piece of work.

He further stated that the transformation of Early Help services would enable the Council to target families in the greatest need, including those in receipt of universal credit, more effectively. He stated that he was pleased to advise that two members of staff from the Department of Work and Pensions had been seconded into the Early Help team to enable families to access the right advice and support. Further training would also be undertaken with frontline staff to help residents in Medway.

**B) Jasmine Ee of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:**

“As a young person living in Medway, I am highly concerned with the amount of gang activity, especially among young people. I believe that all young adults living here should be able to reach their full potential and many people's involvement in gangs is hindering this.

Does the Council have any plans to invest in youth facilities such as youth clubs and extra-curricular activities in order to keep young people off of the streets and out of gangs?”

Councillor Mackness thanked Miss Ee for her question and he stated that this was a particularly important matter for him.

He stated that one of his first actions on taking on the Portfolio was to challenge the proposal to outsource the Youth Service, in order to provide a better service, which was aligned with Early Help and targeted services in the Authority. He stated that in November 2016 the Cabinet agreed with this recommendation. This important strategic decision showed the commitment the Council was making to front line services working with young people.

He stated that Medway had a number of Local Authority and voluntary provider youth clubs which gave safe and inspiring places for young people to go in their leisure time. He now wanted to look at innovative new ways in which the Council could expand youth services throughout the community. He had asked the officer team to expand detached youth work, bringing services to the communities that most need it.

He stated that officers would also be looking at how the Council could improve the offer to young people through a number of channels including innovative partnerships with the private and voluntary sector and safe and modern spaces for young people to access a wide range of activities. The new approach would target young people who needed advice and support the most. He stated that proposals around this would be coming to Cabinet in due course.

He concluded by stating that the Council would continue to work closely with the Youth Council and the Children in Care Council. He further stated that the Council would be more creative in ensuring there would be a well funded and sustainable model which may include business and corporate sponsorship, as well as partnerships with the voluntary and community sector.

**C) Hazel Browne of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

“A vibrant high street economy brings more than economic benefits to an area. Gillingham High St and Twydall shopping precinct are both in a very depressed and tired state.

Can the Portfolio Holder therefore inform me how much funding and resource

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for development and maintenance is allocated to Twydall shops for the financial years 2017/18 and 2018/19 and how much to Gillingham High St for 2017/18 and 2018/19 including a specific breakdown between maintenance (including repair and maintenance of CCTV) and development / regeneration works and activities?

N.B. While I recognise that the formal budget setting process is not complete until February as this is only days away the figures to form the budget will be in draft form, therefore I expect to have a detailed and complete response.”

Councillor Chitty thanked Ms Browne for her question. She stated that in addition to the main town centres, the Council supported smaller town centres, including Twydall as well. The total town centre management budget for 2017/18 was £54,640 and was anticipated to remain broadly the same in 2018/19. This budget included staff costs, events and publicity. Operational costs for providing and monitoring CCTV cameras in 2017/18 were £25,134 in Gillingham High Street and £8,378 at Twydall shops, and here again, this was broadly anticipated to remain the same in 2018/19.

She stated that the Council organised twice-weekly markets for Gillingham and this would continue in 2018/19.

She stated that the Council also organised and supported the annual Gillingham Christmas Light-up event and the Council was working with agents to pro-actively market the Britton Farm Mall and secure new tenants. She understood that an agreement had now been made on this matter. She concluded by stating that this was quite remarkable for commercial premises because 10 months was a very short time (to be vacant) in commercial terms.

**D) Becca Hufton of Chatham submitted the following question to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe:**

“Nobody wants there to be people homeless but whilst we continue to have a crisis we need to have a far more robust approach. Over the Christmas period public buildings like Euston Station and the Brighton Centre were used to give some short term relief.

What buildings will Medway Council be making available to take a similar approach to give some much needed shelter?”

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

**E) Tricia McLaughlin of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

“Given that Gillingham’s Monday and Saturday markets have been in decline over the past few years, what specific measures is Medway Council implementing to reverse this decline and safeguard its long term future?”

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Councillor Chitty thanked Ms McLaughlin for her question. She stated that the market stallholders dictated what they were bringing to the table and that the Council would continue to support the Monday and Saturday markets. However, she stated that markets were changing quite considerably and that she hoped this would be reflected at a later stage.

She stated that one of the things that brought people to the market was for there to be something else on offer. Gillingham had been the centre of some very substantial investment over the years including work with Network Rail. £4m had been spent improving Gillingham station and when people came into Gillingham it looked so much better now.

She also stated that to encourage people to come into Gillingham, £11-£12million was spent on Medway Park, which was a facility of excellence. This was about bringing people into an area so they could use such facilities. In addition, the Universities were always well spoken of in terms of encouraging people to come into Gillingham. A town centre had to be vibrant and Medway was working to improve the offer with considerable investment which should make a difference.

She concluded by stating that where markets specifically, were concerned, they were changing and she believed that stallholders would change over time.

**F) Lily Madigan of Upper Halling submitted the following question to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe:**

“The Government has asked local councils to give their views on supporting Refuges by allowing housing benefit to be paid to those who have to move into a Refuge.

Will Medway Council prevent Refuges who provide safety and shelter in our towns from having to close by giving me a guarantee that funding will continue?”

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

**G) Ralph Allison of Gillingham submitted the following question to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Councillor Doe:**

“I would like to request that the Council provide emergency funding in order to repair and replace locks in lockers at Medway Park which were subject to vandalism and criminal damage, prior to the availability of funds in the new financial year.”

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

**H) Christopher Spalding of Rochester asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:**

“In April 2014, I and three others rented a property in Millward Court Chatham Kent. This was a three storey property and should have been an HMO licensed property. It was not. When the tenants became concerned about the property Private Sector Housing and Trading Standards were contacted and an inspection was made. Numerous safety issues were raised but because the Landlord had served notice to end the tenancy Medway Council took no action. The property was sold and has been rented out once more, again placing tenants at risk.

I subsequently rented a property in Victoria Road Chatham Kent and despite assurances from the managing agent the property was fully compliant, it was and still is a death trap.

The loft conversion and cellar conversion had been carried out without any regard to building regulations. There was no Part P electrical certificate. The gas installation did not meet regulations and most worrying of all there is no fire protection to the stairs leading to the loft.

The Landlord was aware of the lack of building regulation certification when they purchased the property but rather than make the property safe they immediately let the property to a single mother, two of whose children slept in the loft room. Had there been a fire the consequences would have been tragic.

Rather than remedy the defects in the property the landlord served notice and I now find myself homeless. I applied to Medway Homechoice but there is a delay of some thirteen weeks between submitting an application and it being dealt with so I am prevented from even trying to obtain affordable housing.

When is Medway Council going to ensure properties for rent are safe and compliant?”

Councillor Doe thanked Mr Spalding for his question. He stated that whilst it would not be appropriate to discuss the individual circumstances of either tenants or landlords, he had asked the appropriate Council officer to respond directly to Mr Spalding regarding the properties he had mentioned. He confirmed that the Council attached great importance to the issue of standards in the private sector.

He stated that the Private Sector Housing Team dealt with concerns from tenants in relation to the condition of their property. The Council always sought to work with landlords to bring properties up to the correct standards as well as undertaking enforcement action for those that were non-compliant.

He stated that the Council provided both tenant and landlord accreditation schemes, something which he had actually been very keen to push for. He



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believed that these were having some success and were helping to raise awareness of standards and responsibilities for both parties, and the Council also provided landlords with advice via the Landlords Forums that took place throughout the year.

He concluded by stating that it was important that tenants with either homelessness or private sector housing concerns contacted the Council so that the appropriate advice could be provided.

**I) Keith Poulton of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:**

“Can you please confirm how traffic flow on the Esplanade will be managed with the proposed relocation of Rochester Coach Park; especially at peak times and festival periods?”

Continuous flow needs to be ensured for residents, visitors looking for parking spaces and especially Emergency Response Vehicles.

At present during peak times, the traffic can be at a stand-still from Hathaway Court to the traffic lights on the A2. During festival periods, this congestion can be in both directions.

If coaches are to be turning into the new coach park, across the flow of traffic to the A2, this will lead to congestion behind them back to the A2 and worsen the queues trying to reach the A2 from Rochester and Borstal.”

Councillor Filmer thanked Mr Poulton for his question. He stated that the Esplanade Gardens option was no longer being considered. Having investigated 36 possible sites over the past two years, the intention remained to find a site that would keep the coach park in Rochester. This was still under review and further work was being undertaken before a final decision would be made.

He stated that the Council had been giving consideration to these issues, and as part of the planning process for any application for new potential sites that emerge, a traffic impact assessment needed to be provided to show the impact of the scheme and provide mitigation measures for those impacts.

He concluded by stating that festival periods and events would, as always, be specially planned in terms of traffic management to seek to minimise the inevitable congestion.

**J) Natalie Poulton of Rochester asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:**

“I have recently learned of a proposal to install an 18 x bay Coach Park on the green space adjacent to the river at the Esplanade Gardens, Rochester. Is the Council aware of this project?”

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These Gardens are extensively used every day by residents and visitors to the area of all ages and demographics. They provide a green open space with wide views across the river, from both sides, of the Castle, Cathedral, Bridge and other points of interest. These Gardens are regularly used for picnics, dog walking, children's activities, exercise classes and many other activities and provide a unique local amenity. To lose even a portion of this open space would be a tragedy for Rochester's charm and unique appeal for both residents and tourists alike.

Further, the road is already heavily congested and not suitable for such a large quantity of coaches - particularly at Festival times when the road frequently becomes gridlocked due to sheer weight of traffic.

Coaches are an important part of the tourist industry, but tarmacking over existing green space is not the solution. A better idea would be to create a dedicated "Park and Ride" type Coach Park with refreshment and toilet facilities on a brownfield site in the area with a shuttle service powered by 'green' vehicles dropping off and collecting at a suitable point near the High Street."

Councillor Doe thanked Ms Poulton for her question. He confirmed that this option was no longer being considered. However, he stated there was some difficulty with this because obviously nobody wanted a coach park anywhere near them.

He stated that the Council would have to look very carefully at this as there was a time constraint on this matter. However, the Council had already looked at 36 sites and if anyone had any other ideas these should be shared with the Council.

He stated that the Council would continue to look until a site or sites were found that would cause the minimum disruption. This would have to be acceptable to the coach drivers, otherwise coach drivers would no longer find Rochester attractive and the area would lose quite a bit of trade.

He concluded by stating that the Council would need to have regard to the comfort and well being of local people whilst also keeping the tourist level increasing as it was currently increasing by 7% year on year.

**K) Michael Laws of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, the following:**

"It's unclear in the documentation provided to the public by the council whether or not Kingswear Gardens will be demolished as part of the Strood Waterfront regeneration project.

If the council plans on demolishing the estate, could you justify to the residents why you are, during a housing crisis, demolishing perfectly usable housing that was only constructed 20 years ago?"

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Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE thanked Mr Laws for his question. He stated that the Council was refreshing the 2006 Strood Riverside Development Brief, with the Strood Waterfront Development Brief, which was currently out to public consultation.

He stated that the Strood Waterfront Development Brief focused on the council-owned sites of Strood Riverside and the former Civic Centre site. Kingswear Gardens had also been included as the Council has had an open dialogue with Orbit and Moat housing associations, who were the land owners, over the possible regeneration of their site. As the housing associations were the land owners of Kingswear Gardens, it would ultimately be their decision as to whether the site would come forward for redevelopment. The existing 2006 Development Brief highlighted 'the potential for environmental improvements or redevelopment at Kingswear Gardens'.

He concluded by stating that once adopted, the guidance laid out in the Strood Waterfront Development Brief would be a material consideration when determining future planning applications. The Development Brief was not a planning application but identified a vision and opportunities for these sites, attracting investment for further regeneration in Medway, delivering "Growth for All".

**L) Diane Hughes of Chatham submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:**

"The Council should be aware of the dangerous potholes and lack of sufficient parking around Sturla Road, Glencoe Road, and Otway Street, Chatham. Cars and vans park on the corner of roads because there is nowhere else to park, but this is dangerous for vehicles turning into roads, and emergency vehicles would not be able to access many of these streets.

Could the Portfolio Holder assure residents that action will be taken to make this area safe for drivers?"

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

**M) Simon Saunders of Rochester submitted the following question to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe:**

"Please could the Portfolio Holder explain what public consultation has happened as regard any ludicrous proposals to move the coach park to the Esplanade in Rochester?"

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

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**N) Sue Alexander of Lordswood submitted the following question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:**

“Like you I am a resident of Lordswood. Unfortunately the Boundary Commission have indicated they believe this is part of Gillingham and Rainham constituency - I have written to say I believe this is incorrect and Lordswood has more in common with Princes Park and Walderslade.

I note that the current MP for Gillingham and Rainham is also a local councillor for Rainham Central ward, works for a Saudi Arabian Think Tank and this month has been made Vice Chair of the Conservative Party.

Does Councillor Jarrett, as Leader of the Council, agree with me that having all four of those roles is not sustainable and means residents in Rainham Central are not going to get the representation they need and deserve?”

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

**O) Vivienne Parker of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, the following:**

“Why is it taking at least four months for people to receive their disabled badges when they have previously held a disabled badge and this is merely an updated badge to replace one which has expired?”

Councillor Turpin answered this question on behalf of Councillor Gulvin. He thanked Ms Parker for her question. He stated that like all councils, Medway operated the Blue Badge Scheme using guidance set out by the Department of Transport (DfT). The DfT designed this to ensure a fair and consistent approach across the country.

He stated that the Council’s role was to ensure that badges were only issued to residents who demonstrated one or more of the eligibility criteria, and this was determined by proof of eligibility to certain benefits and or a mobility assessment by the Council’s qualified Occupational Therapists (OT).

He stated that the condition of an applicant who already had a blue badge may change. Therefore the Council was required to reassess eligibility rather than just reissue a badge. Every application was considered on its merits, other than where an OT had previously indicated that an applicant’s condition would not improve.

He stated that the Council aimed to process applications within eight weeks of receipt and during this time the Council would undertake checks on residency, identity and eligibility to prevent fraud and abuse of the scheme. One of the reasons why some applications took longer was because the applications were incomplete. There were also some applications where the Council had requested additional information.

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He stated that although there had been a large increase in the number of applications received towards the end of 2017, the experience of most customers would not have been a wait of four months. However, additional OT resource had been deployed because it had been recognised that waiting times were getting longer and the Council was currently working to a 10 week turnaround with an aim to be at eight weeks again by the end of February. He noted that renewal reminders were sent out 12 weeks in advance.

He concluded by stating that Blue Badge applicants could already apply online, ruling out the delay in getting paper applications to the team. This was part of the next stage of the Council's digitisation and the Council was currently looking to improve the service by allowing photographs and supporting documentation to be uploaded, together with recording card details for payment, all in one go. He further stated that he expected these changes to be implemented before the end of March. Therefore, customers applying online would have an improved customer experience and a reduced processing time.

**P) Harinder Singh of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:**

“What would the portfolio holder say to people in and around Ordnance Street whose lives have been blighted for several months by anti-social parking while less than 100 meters away the Council have a £4 million improvement programme?”

Councillor Filmer thanked Mr Singh for his question. He stated that Ordnance Street fell within a main enforcement area, which was patrolled regularly at least three times per day by parking enforcement officers. In the last six months 81 Penalty Charge Notices had been issued on Ordnance Street, which shows that enforcement is occurring at this location.

**Q) Matt Broadley of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:**

“Residents on Wayfield Road are concerned about road safety issues, what is the Portfolio Holder going to do to allay these fears?”

Councillor Filmer thanked Mr Broadley for his question. He stated that Concerns over road safety at Wayfield Road had recently been relayed to the Road Safety Team. This location would therefore be subject to safety investigations this year. This would include investigating the road casualty history to determine any patterns. This was important to understand what may have been contributing to any crash records.

He stated that the Council carried out authority-wide road casualty investigations to prioritise where the areas of greatest needs were. This was important in the interests of preventing further casualties on Medway's roads.

At this stage it was too early to discuss what any outcomes may be, however, it should be stressed that at this stage nothing would be ruled out.

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He concluded by stating that this location was already on the schedule to have the Council's Speed Indicating Device deployed. This interactive device would shortly be placed at the site to help highlight any excessive speeds to road users.

**R) Lindsey Burke of Rochester submitted the following question to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe:**

"Why are the Council potentially considering getting rid of the children's playground on the Esplanade when for most weeks of the year the current coach park is nowhere near maximum capacity usage?"

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

### **696 Leader's report**

#### **Discussion:**

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

- Regeneration
- Outcome of the Corporate Peer Challenge
- Proposed closure of Royal Voluntary Service
- Commercialisation programme
- Local Plan including house building and affordable housing
- Sure Start Centres
- Social Isolation
- Recent death of Lindsay Robinson (Arches Local)
- Council Tax
- Proposed relocation of Rochester coach park.

### **697 Overview and scrutiny activity**

#### **Discussion:**

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

- 2018/2019 budget proposals
- Employment Opportunities for 18-25 Year Olds (Including Apprenticeships) – Task Group
- Dementia Task Group – Update
- Annual Scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership
- South East Coast Ambulance Service Update
- Kent and Medway Patient Transport Services – Performance Update

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- Challenge 25 Initiative
- Universal Credit and Welfare Reforms – Six Monthly Progress Report
- Medway Norse Update
- Kent and Medway Sustainability and Transformation Plan Update
- Young Refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- Major Incident Response Update (major emergencies)
- Rochester High Street Incident (8 January 2018)
- Perinatal Unit.

### 698 Members' questions

**A) Councillor Steve Iles asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

“Recently, I have become concerned that Strood Market appears to have seen a significant reduction in both size and footfall. Given the rise of bargain-priced stores in the surrounding area, and their potential to draw custom away from local market stalls, can the Portfolio Holder confirm that Strood Market continues to remain viable by offsetting the potential income that is lost from the closure of Commercial Road Car Park on market days?”

Councillor Chitty thanked Councillor Iles for his question. She stated that Strood Market continued to remain viable by offsetting the potential income that was lost from the closure of the Commercial Road car park on market days.

In 2017, the income from the Tuesday Strood market exceeded the income from potential parking, being £25,507 compared to £18,991. The income from the Saturday Strood market was on a par with the income from potential parking; this was £18,382 compared to £18,991.

She stated that there was another consideration where the market was concerned and this was also relevant to the questions that were put about Gillingham market (under public questions). There was a need for constant change and one of the proactive things that the market people asked for in Strood was a number of things that would actually potentially improve the offer.

She concluded by stating that there was a very large regeneration programme in place for Strood. Some of this was at the market site and this work would start shortly. This would reflect what the Strood market holders thought would improve the market offer.

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

“The By-Election in Rochester West will focus on the failing services of Medway Council including the abysmal action by Kelly Tolhurst MP to address the ever-increasing housing crisis in Medway. Medway Members will also be aware of the grotesque greed of directors of independent house builders which Medway Council relies upon to meet the Council's housing policy and the majority of the needs of Medway residents. One Chief Executive alone

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celebrated being paid over £110 million - sufficient to build over 700 new homes.

Such actions would appear to be directly related to the very worrying and unexpected monitoring trends set out in the Cabinet report dated 19 December 2017 - Local Plan: Authority Monitoring Report. The report shows unexpected increases in population from internal migration from London coming to live in Medway which is a particularly worrying trend for many Medway residents desperately saving £70,000 to get on the housing ladder and currently forced to pay ever-increasing rents. The report also shows an ever-increasing trend whereby 7,632 homes have been given planning permission but remain unbuilt.

From the trends reported, can the Leader of the Council confirm that should the likely number of homes to be built against the new Local Plan 29,950 target needed to meet the increasing population needs of Medway residents not be achieved, that it will have no alternative but to take on board UKIP's recommendation whereby the Council borrows money against its assets and instructs the new Medway Council Housing Company to build any shortfall on brownfield sites?

Clearly, it is not possible for more people to be squashed into local communities without proper investment in housing and infrastructure.”

Councillor Jarrett thanked Councillor Freshwater for his question. He stated that the Council had commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan. The report published in 2015 considered a range of criteria, including migration rates, in determining the number of homes and types of homes needed in Medway up to 2035.

He stated that the Council monitored a range of data to ensure that the evidence base for planning policy and decisions was up-to-date. The 2017 Authority Monitoring Report published in December 2017 noted an increase in the levels of migration into Medway from London. Similar increases had been seen in neighbouring boroughs, particularly Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone. It was not unusual for trends to show variation between individual years, and projections use longer term averages.

However, the increased growth resulting in the housing need identified was not just from migration into Medway from London. It was also representative of the increased birth rate in Medway and people thankfully living longer. The Local Plan currently being prepared would include policies to deal with the housing for all; young, old, single and families.

He stated that the government had recently announced a high-level independent review into the gap between the number of planning permissions being granted and those built in areas of high demand. There were 7,500 homes for which there was planning permission granted but not delivered. He welcomed this move and the Council was taking action on this matter, working with land owners and developers to deliver on the permissions being granted.



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In addition the Council had representation on the Kent Developers Group, working with developers to assist them moving through the planning process, to deliver housing and crucially encourage the growth of (Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The Council regularly met with developers to try to unlock barriers to development on appropriate and sustainable sites. He referenced that the Chief Executive and he had met with a group of developers only the previous evening.

Regeneration and the use of brownfield land were core to the Council's plans for Medway. In addition to the established regeneration programme, the new Local Plan would seek to bring forward further redevelopment opportunities on vacant and underused land. The Council had published a Brownfield Land Register to promote sites suitable for development. Many of the sites identified already had planning permission, or policy support, showing that Medway had been successful in directing development to brownfield sites.

He concluded by stating that a demonstration of the importance of brownfield regeneration could be seen with the recent permissions for such waterfront sites as Rochester, Strood and Chatham. The Local Plan would have an emphasis on regeneration and use of brownfield land and will deliver the Council's aspiration of "Growth for All".

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

"Could Councillor Jarrett please update council on the incident that took place on Monday 8th January in Rochester High Street with specific focus on:

- Any immediate changes in policy or procedure
- The health and wellbeing of the individual and staff involved in the incident
- The likely timescale of any report from the Health and Safety Executive
- Any changes to the procurement process which is due to report to Cabinet on 6th March."

Councillor Jarrett thanked Councillor Maple for his question. He stated that this had been a very traumatic incident, not just for the person involved but those who had to deal with it as well. This had been a horrifying incident but he provided assurance that Veolia crews followed procedures for bin emptying as set out in Health and Safety guidance approved by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

However, to ensure that extra precautions were in place following the incident, Veolia had conducted a safety briefing to all crews to remind them, again, to be extra vigilant and to follow the existing procedures in place when emptying all bins.

He stated that, additionally, an email was being sent to all landlords and Housing Associations advising them of Health and Safety best practice, to limit opportunities for unauthorised people entering bin storage areas.

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He stated that the staff involved in the incident were understandably considerably shaken and had been offered counselling. All of the crew had now returned to work on normal duties, and Veolia were maintaining a watching brief. He stated that the latest update he had received advised that the injured person had life-changing but not life-threatening injuries to his legs. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) had been informed at the time of the incident, but Veolia or Medway had not received any formal notification from the HSE of any further investigations.

He concluded by stating that he did not see this incident affecting the procurement process and report due to Cabinet in March.

**D) Councillor Stamp asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

“The former Budgens supermarket in Gillingham High Street’s Britton Farm Mall has now been empty for more than 10 months. The Mall is dark, dirty, unwelcoming and run-down and the car park underneath is smelly, full of graffiti and barely used.

Under these circumstances, how does Medway Council expect to attract a high profile retailer which will add value to the High Street offer, increase footfall and help to reverse the fortunes of our struggling High Street?”

Councillor Chitty stated that she could offer some positive news on this matter. She referenced her response to an earlier question and stated that the unit was now under offer to a national retailer, which had instructed solicitors to agree a lease. Under the terms of the previous lease of the unit, the tenant was responsible for cleaning the Mall. Unfortunately, since the lease had finished, the Council had had to step in with only a limited budget to spend on cleaning the Mall. Once the unit was let, the car park and Mall would be used far more, which would reduce any anti social behaviour in the area. Also the Council will arrange for more regular cleaning, funded by the new tenant’s service charge payments.

She stated that Britton Farm car park was being monitored closely whilst the main shopping unit remained empty. There had been a slight increase in anti-social behaviour, which the Council had responded to by locking the car park earlier in the evening. She stated that Council also had recourse to a security company, who could attend on a rapid call-out basis should any reports of anti-social behaviour taking place be received.

The car park remained on the cleansing schedule and any adhoc cleansing and graffiti removal that was required would be reported directly to the Waste Services team. A new LED lighting scheme had been installed within the car park last year making this much brighter and energy efficient.

She stated that the car park was still regularly utilised during the day with almost £80,000 of income from pay and display being used up until December of the current financial year. She referred to this property being taken up during

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a 10 month period was quite unusual for commercial properties and she believed that this showed a definite recognition that Gillingham had something to offer and that this particular company would be looking forward with confidence to moving into Gillingham, which would also help footfall.

**E) Councillor Osborne asked the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, the following:**

“Can the Portfolio Holder provide a year-by-year breakdown of Council tax increases for hardworking Rochester West taxpayers; including the percentage increase, Band D charge and the political control of the Council at the time of the increase since 2002/2003.”

Councillor Turpin thanked Councillor Osborne for his question. He tabled the information requested in the question and provided a commentary. He stated that in addition to the political control of Medway, he had also provided details of the national government control because when setting Council Tax the Council had been set limits by national governments or given inducements to keep the rise of Council Tax low.

In summary, the top ten years of the highest increases in Council Tax included 8 years where a Labour Government was in power. This year was the seventh highest increase of Council Tax and the five years before this had been the lowest rises. It could be quite clearly seen that Council Tax had risen more when there had been a Labour government.

He stated that Chris Williamson had been sacked from Labour’s front bench recently after he called for Council Tax to rise by 100% and Conservative Party Deputy Chairman James Cleverly had said that he had been fired by Labour for letting the cat out of the bag. He stated that a lot of people thought that the Labour Party, if they did get in to power would be using Council Tax as a cash cow. This was a word of warning for people that might be thinking of voting for Labour. He concluded by stating that Labour Governments always lead to more debt, higher tax and fewer jobs.

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**Table:**

Financial Year	MEDWAY COUNCIL - BAND D	KENT & MEDWAY FIRE&RESCUE AUTHORITY	KENT POLICE AUTHORITY / POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR KENT	ADULT SOCIAL CARE	TOTAL	%increase (overall)	Medway Council Political Control	National Government as at 1 April	Comments	Medway Council Tax Cap
2002/03	743.74	NA	73.64	NA	<b>£817.38</b>		Conservative Group	Labour		
2003/04	824.49	NA	94.95	NA	<b>£919.44</b>	12.49%	Conservative Group	Labour		
2004/05	851.22	55.35	105.66	NA	<b>£1,012.23</b>	10.09%	Conservative Group	Labour		
2005/06	899.73	57.15	110.88	NA	<b>£1,067.76</b>	5.49%	Conservative Group	Labour		
2006/07	949.23	59.40	116.37	NA	<b>£1,125.00</b>	5.36%	Conservative Group	Labour		
2007/08	991.89	61.65	122.18	NA	<b>£1,175.72</b>	4.51%	Conservative Group	Labour		
2008/09	1,041.48	63.81	128.25	NA	<b>£1,233.54</b>	4.92%	Conservative Group	Labour		
2009/10	1,092.33	66.06	134.65	NA	<b>£1,293.04</b>	4.82%	Conservative Group	Labour		
2010/11	1,119.15	67.95	138.68	NA	<b>£1,325.78</b>	2.53%	Conservative Group	Labour		
2011/12	1,119.15	67.95	138.68	NA	<b>£1,325.78</b>	0.00%	Conservative Group	Conservative/Lib Dems	Council Tax freeze scheme in operation	
2012/13	1,119.15	67.95	138.68	NA	<b>£1,325.78</b>	0.00%	Conservative Group	Conservative/Lib Dems	Council Tax freeze scheme in operation	3.50%
2013/14	1,141.47	67.95	141.47	NA	<b>£1,350.89</b>	1.89%	Conservative Group	Conservative/Lib Dems	Council Tax freeze scheme in operation	2.00%
2014/15	1,164.24	69.30	144.28	NA	<b>£1,377.82</b>	1.99%	Conservative Group	Conservative/Lib Dems	Council Tax freeze scheme in operation	2.00%
2015/16	1,187.46	70.65	147.15	NA	<b>£1,405.26</b>	1.99%	Conservative Group	Conservative/Lib Dems	Council Tax freeze scheme in operation	2.00%
2016/17	1,211.14	72.00	152.15	23.75	<b>£1,459.04</b>	3.83%	Conservative Group	Conservative		4.00%
2017/18	1,235.76	73.35	157.15	60.80	<b>£1,527.06</b>	4.66%	Conservative Group	Conservative		5.00%

**F) Councillor McDonald asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, the following:**

“Crime and anti-social behaviour is a significant concern for many businesses in Gillingham Town Centre, and the problem has grown considerably over the past year.

Could the Portfolio Holder explain why access to Medway Council’s CCTV system was withdrawn from the Safer Medway Partnership when CCTV responsibilities – and their corresponding budgets - were transferred to Medway Commercial Group?”

Councillor Mackness answered this question on behalf of Councillor Gulvin. Councillor Mackness thanked Cllr McDonald for his question. He stated that CCTV had never been withdrawn. It was the Town Centre’s Radio that had been suspended due to inappropriate use.

A lack of communication by the Safer Medway Partnership had further delayed a resolution.

He stated that discussions had now taken place between the Council’s CCTV provider and the Safer Medway Partnership to place the relationship on a more sustainable footing. This new agreement which had been reached and a new protocol would be implemented from 1 February.

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

“When does the authority plan to commence building the secondary provision at Abbey Court School?”

Councillor Mackness thanked Councillor Johnson for his question. He stated that the Council had invested in excess of £13 million capital funding into the new primary phase provision at Abbey Court school, which everyone should be

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very proud of. It had been acknowledged widely that this had provided new excellent facilities, which had impacted very positively on teaching and learning for the pupils.

He stated that Abbey Court school already had an outstanding secondary school provision and that it was outstanding across all of its education.

He stated that the Children and Adults (C&A) Capital programme addressed a broad range of priorities and as such, use of the funding must be prioritised accordingly. He concluded by stating that there was not sufficient funding within the C&A programme to provide for any new secondary school at Abbey Court and this was not a priority in the programme.

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

“Is he aware that the changes to Medway’s SEN transport policy have resulted in a severe reduction in the use of the outstanding, brand new, and fully equipped SEN nursery at Abbey Court School, and what he intends to do to remedy the situation?”

Councillor Mackness thanked Councillor Cooper for her question. He stated that the Council had a statutory duty to provide Home to School Travel Assistance for children aged 5-16. The Council had a clear policy based upon the statutory responsibility and worked within that. The needs of any child, however, who had a special educational need or disability, were always considered over their age or the distance they live from their school as part of the assessment on whether or not a child would be eligible to receive travel assistance to school. Officers had verified and advised him that no children under 5 who had applied for SEN transport had been assessed as not eligible or had been declined a place at Abbey Court School Nursery because they had been unable to secure transport.

He stated that this indicated there was no link between the take up of places and SEN transport. The greater take up of high needs SEN funding to allow children to attend their local mainstream nurseries, irrespective of need, may account for the reduction in the numbers of children attending this nursery as they now had a broader choice. Parents had the right to an inclusive nursery education for their child which was local to them and personal to them to choose. He concluded by stating that officers were working with Abbey Court School to look at this issue more broadly, and the Council would consider a review of commissioned places.

**I) Councillor Murray asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:**

“The Council has recently been asked to take part in a national consultation about whether or not to continue paying housing benefit to claimants who have had to move to a Refuge to protect their safety.

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Can the Portfolio Holder assure me that in its response to the consultation Medway Council has committed to and will support the continuation of this vital funding?"

Councillor Doe stated that there were two refuges, comprising 14 individual units of supported accommodation, which were commissioned in Medway. They were part-funded by grants from the Council's Strategic Housing Service, and partly through Housing Benefit. This was in addition to a variety of Domestic Abuse services for Medway which were currently recommissioned in the same way. The Council was actively seeking to pursue funding opportunities to enhance the Domestic Abuse service.

He referred to the present consultation on the potential changes to benefits, and stated that whilst he was not the Portfolio Holder for Revenues and Benefits, it did actually cross into two areas. The government's stated aim was to remove the burden of claiming housing benefit from people needing short term supported housing (and that definition meant under 2 years) and this would be replaced by funding to Local Authorities to provide grants direct to the provider to cover housing costs. The aim of that was to reduce the pressure on people and the administrative workload of the support provider so they could focus on work with the vulnerable person and a further element of that approach would be that people in short term supported housing could enter the workforce without risk to the tenancy.

He stated that the Council had been asked to participate in the consultation on this. This was something to which the Council gave a very high priority and the Council had supported those schemes for many years. He concluded by stating that he personally believed that this would continue.

**J) Councillor Bowler submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:**

"We now have confirmation that Medway has the worst record on fly tipping in Kent. Does the portfolio holder agree with me that by stopping free bulky waste collection and reducing the size of the community enforcement team he has made the problem worse?"

**K) Councillor Price submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty:**

"The recent closure of Superdrug and Gilberthorpes in Gillingham High Street follows a long line of other national retailers and small independents who have withdrawn from the town in recent years. Many retailers in Gillingham Town Centre feel that Medway Council is focusing all of its resources on Chatham and Rochester, while neglecting Gillingham.

Can the Portfolio Holder therefore justify why Chatham and Rochester's Town Centre Forums are organised and administered directly by Medway Council, while Gillingham receives no such support?"

**L) Councillor Khan asked submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin:**

“There is a growing perception amongst shoppers and traders that Gillingham High Street is unsafe.

Given that last year there were 148 instances of violent crime, sexual offences and anti-social behaviour reported in Gillingham with further incidents unreported, what action is the Portfolio Holder going to take to tackle the fears of Medway residents that Gillingham High Street is an unsafe place to shop, work and visit?”

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

“Can the Portfolio Holder confirm whether or not they will meet the legal transfer deadline of the 31st March for transferring all statemented children to EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plans) in Medway?”

**N) Councillor Godwin submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE:**

“Residents are raising serious concerns about the proposal to move the existing coach park from its current location to the Esplanade. Could the portfolio holder explain the rationale behind this suggestion which is not likely to carry the support of the community?”

**Note:** The Mayor stated that since the time allocation for Members' questions had been exhausted, Members would receive written responses to questions J-N.

**Note:** In response to a question from a Member, the Monitoring Officer advised that he would further consider outside the meeting whether the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, should have answered question F on behalf of Councillor Gulvin, given his role on Medway Commercial Group Ltd.

**699 Medway Youth Justice Partnership Strategic Plan 2017-2020 (Policy Framework)**

**Discussion:**

This report provided details of the Medway Youth Justice Partnership Strategic Plan 2017-2020, which set out how youth justice would be delivered locally within available resources.

The Plan had been considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 August 2017 and Cabinet on 5 September 2017

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in accordance with the Policy Framework rules, details of which were set out in sections 7 and 8 of the report respectively.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been carried out on the proposals, as set out in Appendix B to the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement, Councillor Potter, proposed the recommendation in the report.

### **Decision:**

The Council approved the Medway Youth Justice Partnership Strategic Plan 2017-2020, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

## **700 Community Governance Review - Proposed Establishment of Rochester Town Council**

### **Discussion:**

This report provided details of the results of the consultation exercise and deliberations of the cross-party working group with regard to the conduct of the Community Governance Review in respect of the proposed establishment of a Rochester Town Council.

The report provided details of the outcome of consultation, as summarised in section 6 of the report and in the working group's findings set out in Appendix 1 to the report. A Diversity Impact Assessment was also included in the working group's report.

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

Councillor Murray, supported by Councillor Stamp, proposed the following amendment:

"Replace 12.1.3 with: Notes the enthusiasm and commitment shown by the people in Rochester, detailed in the report, and seeks to build on this across Medway to increase participation in decision making and demonstrate that the views and ideas of local people are valued and can influence the development of our towns. The Council therefore instructs officers to produce a feasibility study and recommendations to Full Council including consideration of:

- Implementing Area Committees for each of our five main towns and the Peninsula
- Review and refresh the existing town centre forum structure and investigate the introduction of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to strengthen our town centres.



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

For – Councillors Bowler, Cooper, Craven, Godwin, Griffiths, Johnson, Khan, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Osborne, Price, Shaw and Stamp (14)

Against – Councillors Aldous, Avey, Bhutia, Brake, Carr, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers OBE, Chishti, Chitty, Clarke, Doe, Etheridge, Fearn, Filmer, Franklin, Freshwater, Griffin, Hall, Hicks, Mrs Josie Iles, Steve Iles, Jarrett, Joy, Kemp, Mackness, Opara, Pendergast, Potter, Purdy, Royle, Saroy, Tejan, Tranter, Turpin, Wicks and Wildey (36)

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

### **Decision:**

- a) The Council noted the comprehensive report by the informal cross-party Member and officer working group attached at Appendix 1 to the report and the summary of its conclusions set out in the report.
- b) The Council agreed that in the light of the evidence and consultation exercise responses set out in the working group's report, the existing community governance arrangements in the proposed area for the Rochester Town Council, remain unchanged – that a town council is not created in Rochester.
- c) The Council noted that officers will take the necessary steps to inform the electors and organisations affected by the proposal of the Council's decision as set out in paragraph 7.2 of the report.

## **701 Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

### **Discussion:**

This report provided details of proposed revisions to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, following consultation and consideration by the Cabinet on 19 December 2017. Details of the proposals were set out in paragraph 2.7 whilst the outcome of consultation was set out in section 3 and Appendix 4 to the report.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been carried out on the proposals, as set out in Appendix 5 to the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, supported by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, proposed the recommendation in the report.

Members placed on record their thanks to Jon Poulson, Revenues and Benefits Manager, who was retiring at the end of the month after 38 years' service with Medway Council and its predecessor authorities.

**Decision:**

The Council approved the revised Council Tax Reduction Scheme, as set out in appendix 6 to the report.

**702 Strood Waterfront - Addition to the Capital Programme**

**Discussion:**

This report provided details of the proposed addition to the capital programme with regards to the Strood Flood Management Works scheme, following consideration by the Cabinet on 16 January 2018.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, proposed the recommendation in the report.

**Decision:**

The Council agreed to add the supplementary project costs in respect of the Strood Flood Management Works scheme, as set out in section 2 of the report, to the Capital Programme.

**703 Contract Letting - Exceptional Circumstances**

**Discussion:**

This report provided details of contracts awarded in accordance with the provisions of Contract Procedure Rule 1.8.2. This allowed the letting of contracts in exceptional circumstances where it was considered to be in the best interests of the Council to do so, as approved by the Monitoring Officer, provided that the exemption did not breach any EU or UK Directive, Statute or Regulation.

The report stated that there were three exemptions approved by the Monitoring Officer in 2017.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, supported by Councillor Tejan, proposed the recommendation in the report.

**Decision:**

The Council noted the contents of the report.

**704 Parent Governor Representatives - Appointment to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Discussion:**

This report provided details of the proposed appointment of two parent governors from local authority maintained schools to the Council's Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as recommended by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 January 2018.

Councillor Royle, supported by Councillor Joy, proposed the recommendation set out in the report.

**Decision:**

The Council agreed the appointment of Mr Akinola Edun and Mr David William Lane as Parent Governor Representatives on the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a four year term.

**705 Schedule of Meetings 2018/2019**

**Discussion:**

This report provided details of the provisional programme of meetings for the 2018/2019 municipal year, as set out in Appendix A, for recommendation to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 16 May 2018.

Councillor Kemp, supported by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, proposed the recommendation, as set out in the report.

**Decision:**

The Council agreed a provisional programme of Council and Committee meetings for 2018/2019 as set out in Appendix A to the report for recommendation to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 16 May 2018.

**706 Use of Urgency Provisions**

**Discussion:**

This report provided details of the recent usage of urgency provisions contained within the Constitution.

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 set out in the report.

**Decision:**

The Council noted the report.

**707 Motions**

**A) Councillor Maple, supported by Councillor Murray, submitted the following:**

This council notes that Universal Credit (UC), the single monthly payment which replaces the six current working age benefits, is to be fully implemented in Medway in May having already been delayed in implementation.

This council also notes that, within our area, the number of people who will be affected by these changes is likely to be in the tens of thousands.

Council notes with concern that the move to a Full Service Universal Credit in other parts of the country has caused considerable financial hardship for many of those people moving onto this new system of benefit payments. Before a full roll out of Universal credit the following problems need to be fully addressed:

- The six week wait for claimants to receive their benefits. The idea that all workers are in jobs where they are paid a month in arrears ignores the reality for the 1.5m workers who struggle on zero hours, insecure jobs or forced self-employment. Claimants need to be paid from day one.
- Payments going to one named member of a household. Many claimants struggle to budget and payments should be paid to the separate claimants within a household and on a fortnightly rather than monthly basis. With the present policy there is a real danger that if the whole benefit goes to one named individual there is no guarantee that the money will be distributed fairly within the household.
- Claimants need to have their rent paid directly to landlords to avoid the unacceptably high levels of arrears and homelessness that have occurred in the areas where UC already exists. Pushing claimants into debt adds to the stress and insecurity for claimants.
- An end to benefit sanctions as there is no evidence that sanctioning helps people into work. In fact taking away claimant's ability to feed themselves and their families prevents them from focusing on finding employment as they are too busy trying to survive. The evidence of the harm that sanctions cause is growing – they are an unnecessary cruelty in our benefits system.
- Allow all new claimants to apply for Universal credit in jobs centres with the support of trained job centre staff. Forcing new claimant to apply on-line causes real problems for many people who don't have either access or the IT skills to cope with the complex online application. The use of a paid helpline also needs to be abandoned as claimants cannot afford the

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expensive rates charged. The planned job centre closures also needs to be reversed as claimants need face to face support to help them back into work and to deal with the complexity of Universal Credit.

- Abandon the in-work conditionality for part-time or low paid workers – the idea that there are extra hours or higher paid work for the large numbers of these affected workers is simply not the case. This clause of UC places the emphasis on individuals who often want greater number of hours of work – and not on the employers who benefit from short hours and insecurity.
- The overall level that UC is funded needs to be urgently increased. The rate at which some claimants will lose benefit is set at 63p in the pound which when compared with the top rate of income tax of 45% on incomes over £150,000 a year, demonstrates just how unfair UC is for the lowest income households.

This council notes with concern, therefore, that the implementation of a Full Service Universal Credit in Medway is likely to prove seriously detrimental to the health and wellbeing of thousands of its local residents.

Council therefore resolves to:

Request all its political group leaders to jointly write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions asking that the system of Universal Credit is redesigned in such a way that it removes the inherent risks that this council has expressed its concerns over.

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

**B) Councillor Johnson, supported by Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers, submitted the following:**

**James McCudden VC, DSO and Bar, MC and Bar, MM (28th March 1895 - 9th July 1918)**

In this centenary year of the end of the First World War and as we recognise and remember all who served and who gave their lives in defence of their country in that war, this council recognises the exceptional service of Medway's James McCudden who died in 1918. James Thomas Byford McCudden was born in Brompton barracks to a local services family and he lived his early years in Gillingham. He enlisted in the Royal Engineers in 1910, transferred to the Royal Flying Corps in 1913, training first as an observer and subsequently as a pilot. In his service he achieved more awards for gallantry than any other British airman of the First World War, and is the most highly decorated airman in British military history. He rose to the rank of Major in command of 60 Squadron RAF, having enlisted originally as a bugler.

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This council resolves to mark the service of James McCudden in the centenary year of his death by a permanent memorial in an appropriate form to be decided subsequent to this meeting.

On being put to the vote, the motion was agreed.

**C) Councillor Stamp, supported by Councillor McDonald, submitted the following:**

This Council notes:

- An estimated 9 million tonnes of plastics enters our seas and oceans every year, causing immense damage to marine life and the environment;
- The success of the Government's introduction of the 5p plastic bag levy in England in 2015, which has led to an 85% reduction in the number of plastic bags used;
- The Government ban on microbeads from most cosmetics, which is due to be implemented from July 2018.

This Council further notes:

- a huge proportion of the plastic entering our oceans is 'single-use plastic' (SUP) and plastic bags and microbeads make up only 2% of SUPs.

This Council therefore requests the Cabinet to:

- become a 'single-use plastic-free' council by phasing out the use of unnecessary 'single use plastic' (SUP) products such as bottles, cups, cutlery and drinking straws in all Council buildings and at all Council events by June 2018;
- to encourage our facilities' users, local businesses, stakeholders and other local public agencies to do the same, by championing alternatives.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, supported by Councillor Joy, proposed the following amendment:

"Line 18 – Delete "by June 2018" and replace with "as soon as is reasonably practical".

In accordance with Council Rule 11.4.1 and with the consent of the Council, Councillor Stamp agreed to alter the substantive motion as set out in the amendment proposed by Councillor Chitty.

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

## Council, 25 January 2018

### Decision:

This Council notes:

- An estimated 9 million tonnes of plastics enters our seas and oceans every year, causing immense damage to marine life and the environment;
- The success of the Government's introduction of the 5p plastic bag levy in England in 2015, which has led to an 85% reduction in the number of plastic bags used;
- The Government ban on microbeads from most cosmetics, which is due to be implemented from July 2018.

This Council further notes:

- a huge proportion of the plastic entering our oceans is 'single-use plastic' (SUP) and plastic bags and microbeads make up only 2% of SUPs.

This Council therefore requests the Cabinet to:

- become a 'single-use plastic-free' Council by phasing out the use of unnecessary 'single use plastic' (SUP) products such as bottles, cups, cutlery and drinking straws in all Council buildings and at all Council events as soon as is reasonably practical;
- to encourage our facilities' users, local businesses, stakeholders and other local public agencies to do the same, by championing alternatives.

### **D) Councillor Khan, supported by Councillor Osborne, submitted the following:**

This council notes that there are increased concerns around knife crime in Medway.

Council further notes positive action taken by both other local authorities and community and voluntary groups to tackle this issue.

Council recognises local concerns regarding this matter and resolves that a report will be brought forward to the Full Council meeting in July 2018, exploring the potential options and solutions for this issue, having considered best practice from other organisations.

The Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement, Councillor Potter, proposed the following amendment:

## Council, 25 January 2018

“Line 1 – Insert “whilst” after “Council notes that”

Line 2 – Delete “.” And replace with “, Medway remains a very safe place in which to live and raise a family”.

Insert after existing first paragraph – “The Council further notes the importance of partnership working with regard to any issues of crime, and recognises that all new challenges in the crime and safety landscape are best met by proactively working together to build stronger and more resilient communities.

The Council resolves to continue its successful working with local and national partners, which include Kent Police and the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, the Medway Community Safety Partnership, Community Wardens, residents and other community partners.”

Line 3 of existing paragraph 2 – Delete “both other local authorities and”

Line 4 of existing paragraph 2 – Delete everything after “groups to tackle” And replace with “local issues, and would like to place on record our thanks to frontline Police, Council officers and staff for their service to our community and their contribution to making Medway a safe and pleasant place to live”.

Delete existing paragraph 3.

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

For – Councillors Aldous, Avey, Bhutia, Brake, Carr, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers OBE, Chishti, Chitty, Clarke, Doe, Etheridge, Fearn, Filmer, Franklin, Freshwater, Griffin, Hicks, Mrs Josie Iles, Steve Iles, Jarrett, Joy, Kemp, Mackness, Opara, Pendergast, Potter, Purdy, Royle, Saroy, Tejan, Tranter, Turpin, Wicks and Wildey (35)

Against – Councillors Bowler, Cooper, Craven, Griffiths, Johnson, Khan, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Osborne, Price, Shaw and Stamp (13)

Note: Councillors Godwin and Hall were not present for the recorded vote.

The amendment was carried.

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

### **Decision:**

This Council notes that whilst there are increased concerns around knife crime in Medway, Medway remains a very safe place in which to live and raise a family.

The Council further notes the importance of partnership working with regard to any issues of crime, and recognises that all new challenges in the crime and



## Council, 25 January 2018

safety landscape are best met by proactively working together to build stronger and more resilient communities.

The Council resolves to continue its successful working with local and national partners, which include Kent Police and the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, the Medway Community Safety Partnership, Community Wardens, residents and other community partners.

Council further notes positive action taken by community and voluntary groups to tackle local issues, and would like to place on record our thanks to frontline Police, Council officers and staff for their service to our community and their contribution to making Medway a safe and pleasant place to live.

**E) Councillor Jarrett, supported by The Worshipful the Mayor of Medway, Councillor Wildey, submitted the following:**

The Royal Navy has an important place in the heart and memories of everyone in Medway. The historic links date back to the first recorded use by the Navy of the River Medway in 1547 and reached their peak with establishment of the Dockyard in Chatham.

The River Medway also plays a vital role in the success of Medway the place.

There have been eleven ships and ashore establishments named HMS Medway after the River Medway with the last vessel to be named HMS Medway being a submarine depot ship between 1959 and 1970.

The links with HMS Medway have more recently been re-established with the Royal Navy announcing plans in February 2017, to build a brand new Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) training unit in the centre of Rochester.

Similarly, it was with great honour and pride that the Worshipful the Mayor of Medway recently attended the naming ceremony for HMS Medway, one of three 90 metre Offshore Patrol Vessels which the Royal Navy has commissioned.

In recognition of the proud shared history, the Council on behalf of the people of Medway are keen to strengthen the existing bonds and would like to place on record its intention to further recognise the strong links between the people of Medway and HMS Medway by holding a Special Meeting of the Council later this year to award the Freedom of the Borough to the Captain and ships' company. In so doing, the Council also notes and supports the intention of Lieutenant Commander Hugh JL Harris of the Royal Navy to use and display the Council's motto - 'Forward Together' as a prominent and lasting reminder of our affiliation.

On being put to the vote, the motion was agreed.

**Council, 25 January 2018**

**Mayor**

**Date:**

**Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services**

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