

Medway Council
Meeting of Medway Council
Thursday, 26 April 2018
7.00pm to 11.20pm

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

In Attendance: Neil Davies, Chief Executive
Wayne Hemingway, Principal 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
James Williams, Director of Public Health

954 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rodney Chambers OBE, Godwin, Pendergast and Price.

955 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

Councillor Griffiths declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in any reference to Medway Community Healthcare (MCH) because he is Deputy Chairman of MCH. He stated that he would leave the meeting should there be any specific discussion on MCH. He left the meeting during consideration of agenda item 17A (Motion) given that MCH was now providing some NHS services to schools.

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Other significant interests (OSIs)

Councillor Doe declared an OSI in agenda item 13 (Additions to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme) because he is the Chairman of Medway Development Company Ltd. He stated that the Councillor Conduct Committee had granted him a dispensation on 18 April 2018 to speak and vote on matters relating to this OSI.

Councillor Gulvin declared an OSI in agenda item 13 (Additions to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme) because he is a Director of Medway Development Company Ltd. He stated that the Councillor Conduct Committee had granted him a dispensation on 18 April 2018 to speak and vote on matters relating to this OSI.

Councillor Mackness declared an OSI in agenda item 8 (Leader's Report) because he is the Chairman of the Medway Commercial Group Ltd Board. He stated that the Councillor Conduct Committee had granted him a dispensation on 18 April 2018 to speak and vote on matters relating to this OSI.

Councillor Mackness declared an OSI in agenda item 13 (Additions to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme) because he is a resident and commercial tenant in the Historic Dockyard area. He left the room during consideration of this item.

Councillor Turpin declared an OSI in agenda item 8 (Leader's Report) because he has a family member who is in receipt of Special Educational Needs (SEN) home to school transport support. He stated that he would leave the meeting should there be any specific discussion on this matter.

Other interests

There were none.

956 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 22 February 2018 was agreed and signed by The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway as a correct record.

957 Mayor's announcements

With the support of all Members of the Council, The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway placed on record Members' condolences to the family of Madhu Ruparel who sadly passed away a few weeks ago. Madhu served on the Council as a member of the Liberal Democrat Group representing Priestfield ward between 1997 and 2003. He sat on a range of Committees during that time including Planning and Transport and the Economic Development Committees. The Mayor stated that he would be sadly missed.

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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.

958 Leader's announcements

There were none.

959 Petitions

Councillor Maple asked that it be placed on record that he had provided assistance to Aimee Gergaghty, the lead petitioner for a petition on visitor parking permits, which had attracted 4,200 signatures.

960 Public questions

A) Sean Carter of Gillingham asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

"What is the Council's policy on the maintenance and repair of water pipes in Council owned blocks of flats?"

Response:

Councillor Doe thanked Mr Carter for his question. He stated that the Council's responsibilities were to keep in good repair the structure and exterior of the property and to keep in repair and proper working order the installations in that property. Specifically in relation to water pipes, Housing Services would respond to a repair urgently within 2 hours or 1 working day depending on the severity.

He stated that, to be classified as an emergency or urgent repair, there must be a significant risk to health and safety, a risk to buildings or a risk that other properties may be damaged. A leak from a water supply, heating pipe, tank or cistern would normally be considered an urgent repair and he stated that Members would be aware of the very high levels of satisfaction that the tenants had expressed with the repair service.

B) Christopher Rainbow of St. Mary's Island submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:

"Please can you confirm the additional income that the Council will receive initially and in 5 years' time after the introduction of a parking permit scheme on St Mary's Island?"

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

C) Jackie Gammage of St. Mary's Island submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:

“Can the Portfolio Holder please explain how parking schemes are considered, including what methods are used to identify parking need, the scope of each scheme and available options, consultation arrangements and the determination of the most appropriate solution to address the issues identified?”

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

D) Teresa Fawcett of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, the following:

“I am pleased to see that Medway Council is an authority keen to take responsibility for our environment and greenspaces, and I welcome recent measures such as the community clear ups taking place across Medway.

I would ask that the Portfolio Holder give an overall report of how successful these clear ups have been to date, as well as providing details of events planned for the coming year?”

Response:

Councillor Turpin thanked Ms Fawcett for her question. He stated that the following had been achieved during the last year:

- The Community Wardens organised 34 Community Clear ups with more than 34 tipper loads removed. They also set up and assisted with 102 litter picks. These would generally generate 4 bags per pick, so over 400 bags were collected.
- The Council had taken the lead in the Keep Britain Tidy Spring Clean in March 2017, setting up 22 Events and collecting a total of 288 bags.
- In March 2018 the Council had organised a further 15 events for Keep Britain Tidy and removed a total of 277 bags of litter. The Council had taken part in the Guardians of the Deep event with RSPB, Natural England, the Port of London Authority and Medway Norse to carry out a clean-up at Cliffe Pools, where over 80 Volunteers attended and helped to remove more than 600 bags of recyclable plastic from the shore line.
- In April 2018 the Council had completed litter picks at the Great Lines Heritage Park with 12 bags collected, Courtney Road with 15 bags collected and Lower Upnor Shore Line with 28 bags collected.

He stated that the Council was in the process of formulating a plan of events throughout 2018-19 and these would be publicised via the Council's website, Facebook accounts, Twitter and using local residents' groups and forums.

He concluded by stating that the Community Wardens provided a fantastic service by assisting the community in clearing up. He asked that local

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community champions and Councillors could be proactive and contact the Wardens Service with any requests and they would be glad to assist. He confirmed that this service was to assist members of the public who wanted to keep their environment clean and make their environment better. This was a very responsive service and there would be further events added as the need arose.

E) Rebecca Ryan of Upnor asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness, the following:

“Given the national difficulties Councils are facing with regards to the recruitment and retention of valuable social workers, what is Medway Council doing to help attract and support social workers as they carry out their crucial role in helping serve Medway children and families?”

Response

Councillor Mackness thanked Ms Ryan for her question. He stated that Medway Council was taking great steps to recruit and retain social workers and truly valued the difficult role they undertook. The Council was committed to attracting top quality professionals who understood the sector and the challenges they faced but who also wanted to make a difference to the children and vulnerable families in Medway.

He stated that the Council had always prioritised social workers in terms of providing the resources to attract them to Medway but there was a particular focus at the moment and a campaign to both attract and retain permanent and locum workers.

Before the Council had embarked on the current programme, a pay review had been undertaken and the Council had rolled out, as recently as April, a new pay and grade structure, with improved pay scales and enhancements, market premia, car allowance and significant retention payments after 2 or 4 years' service in the Local Authority.

He stated that the Council had used this significant incentive to run a campaign in market leading journals such as Community Care, Inform and The Guardian as well as various social media platforms such as Twitter, Linked In and Facebook.

The Council would also be launching an upgraded microsite in May (www.medwaysocialcarejobs.co.uk), the strapline being 'Promoting Practice', for both the Children's and Adults' Service, as well promoting as the new Temp Agency, Ocelot People Solutions.

Ocelot People Solutions was another Medway initiative to recruit and retain locum workers as well as providing a solution to combatting the spiralling costs of agency staff, particularly across social care. So for those workers who enjoyed the benefits of locum work, they could still be attracted to work at

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Medway, but any profit gained would be returned to the Council as opposed to external organisations.

In terms of retention, as well as the enhanced pay scales, Medway's social workers were supported with the Social Work Academy. This was a faculty led virtual academy where peers learned together, supported by mentors and senior managers.

The Council also had an extensive programme of quality training and a dedicated team of Organisational Development Officers to source leading trainers and industry experts.

He concluded by stating that, annually, the Council ran a programme to attract newly qualified social workers direct from University, which was just about to start again this year and they would be supported for the full year under the Newly Qualified Social Worker programme. Again, this involved mentoring by Social Work Managers, enhanced training courses and during that year they would have reduced caseloads whilst they built their experience. It was hoped by offering this immediate entry into the organisation this would encourage loyalty and a sense of belonging.

F) Agnieszka Tryburska of Chatham submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:

"I moved in July 2017 to the Horsted area of Chatham and since then no improvements have been made. Footpaths and roads are in a terrible condition. The crossing between Barberry Avenue and Watson Avenue is dangerous with limited visibility. After each rubbish collection there is plenty of rubbish "flying" on the streets. There are basic things that the council can do to improve the above but it seems as if there is no willingness. The situation is quite appalling.

Can the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services please tell me what the Council is doing to invest in this area?"

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

G) Susanne Burt of Chatham asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

"With reference to the decision to ban soft drinks and alcohol at all Castle Concerts apart from the proms, I have read your replies to this and as a group of 10 that attend every year find it disappointing and ridiculous. We always bring a picnic in the style of the proms night and we are responsible adults. This is a low income area and this was an affordable night for all. We look forward to it every year and book leave from work to attend. None of us are attending this year, and it seems thousands feel the same after seeing comments on social media and the fact that no concerts have sold out. A fantastic night for the area to be proud of has been ruined.

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Given that the Council is targeting the concerts and not the proms, as all are picnic based and no different, will the Portfolio Holder reconsider this decision for local people who are clearly disgruntled?"

Response

Councillor Doe stated that this question had been the basis of a Member's item at the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (28 March 2018). He stated that there had been several incidents over recent years at the conventional concerts which had raised concerns from security and stewards as well as police observers and that this had prompted action to be taken. No incidents had occurred in the past 25 years at the prom concerts.

He stated that this decision was following the industry practice and was on the advice of the various safety bodies. He stated that the Council would be extremely vulnerable if it ignored this advice. The Council had to be sure that, when running a public event people were safe. He concluded by stating for those reasons he was not prepared to change this decision because he believed that it had been the right one.

H) Kay Haggis of St. Mary's Island submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:

"With regards to recent and ambiguous correspondence relating to parking on St Mary's Island, including an email note stating that there is no intention to respond to questions about parking in general, which is not helpful, and in a separate letter advising that specific areas of the island will be reviewed as they may benefit from restricted parking, such as the placement of double or single yellow lines. I am left confused as to where to now go to get answers.

Would you please advise the scope of any ongoing review including full details of the Council's process and procedures which are required to be followed prior to the placement of yellow lines."

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

I) Anthony Hill of Strood asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

"Litter and rubbish are off-putting to the residents, and visitors of Medway, potentially leading to serious health, and environmental complications.

What action has the Council taken to tackle the problem of litter across the streets of Medway?"

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Response

Councillor Filmer thanked Mr Hill for his question. He stated that Veolia undertook street cleaning across Medway. Roads and land within Medway were categorised into zones dependent on the usage, traffic flow and infrastructure.

He stated that Codes of Practice set out grades of cleanliness that should be achieved after cleaning and provided timescales in which Local Authorities had to restore the standard of cleanliness should that standard fall.

Waste Services Contract Monitoring officers carried out 3,321 proactive street inspections that were at an acceptable standard. In addition to this, Waste Services were required to carry out inspections, with a total of 1,200 sites being inspected. A visual inspection of 50 metres was undertaken for the amount of litter present. For 2017/2018, the overall yearly results were 97% at a good standard.

As well as regular cleaning of Medway's streets on both a scheduled and responsive basis, the Council also undertook enforcement action against those that disrespected the environment by fly tipping or leaving litter.

In the year 2017/18, the Council had served 171 fixed penalty notices for issues including litter, fly tipping, dog fouling and trade waste. Central government had recently increased the fixed penalty for littering from £80 to £150. The Council had adopted this increase and this indicated how seriously the Council took this matter.

The Environmental Enforcement Team dealt with fly tipping proactively and most fly tips were cleared within one working day. Every fly tip was searched for evidence and would be referred for investigation if any was found.

Last year, 15 fly tipping and waste related cases were prosecuted at Medway Magistrates' Court. Fines and costs in these cases totalled over £25,000. Where appropriate, every effort was made to publicise these convictions so as to act as a deterrent to others.

There were another 21 cases with the Council's Legal Team pending prosecution and at the close of the year there were a further 50 under investigation by the Enforcement Team. He concluded by stating that the Council also dealt with those that left their refuse out early for collection.

J) Aimee Geraghty of Gillingham submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

"I'm grateful to both the Leader and Portfolio Holder for meeting with me after I submitted my petition of over 3700 signatures regarding the unhelpful parking permit policy changes.

Do you have an update on the issues we discussed?"

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

K) Simon Glover of Chatham asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:

“It is becoming increasingly difficult and sometimes dangerous to get around some areas of Medway on foot. The general deterioration of many of the pavements is an issue, as are bushes obstructing them, but the main problem is cars, vans and occasionally lorries parking on the pavement, often reducing them to a single track but sometimes blocking the path completely. It can be very frightening to have a vehicle leave the road and come towards one.

Could the Council therefore make a concerted effort to reclaim paths for pedestrians by increasing the protection where possible and by strictly regulating the areas in which some use of pavement space is now essential? Bearing in mind that signs and lines without enforcement are a waste of time.”

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

L) Nikki Pranczke of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, the following:

“As someone who has recently been involved in a hit and run in Medway in which people were injured, and which involved a perpetrator without insurance, I was told directly by the police that they ‘did not have the resources to investigate the issue’.

Can the Portfolio Holder explain why the police are unable to properly investigate a criminal offence?”

Response

Councillor Gulvin thanked Ms Pranczke for her question and he stated that he sincerely hoped anyone injured in that incident had made a full and quick recovery.

He stated that this was obviously a matter for Kent Police. However, the Council worked very closely with Kent Police and they had advised that they would require more information from Ms Pranczke in order for them to fully investigate this matter.

He concluded by stating that he would be happy for Ms Pranczke to contact the Community Safety Partnership and that he had provided her with contact details to facilitate this. They would then be able to liaise with Kent Police so that this matter could be fully investigated.

M) Mark Prenter of Gillingham asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

“Local families in Twydall have raised concerns about the poor condition and inadequate cleansing and maintenance of the children’s play area at Beechings Playing Fields.

How often is the play area currently inspected by Medway Norse and what funding - if any - has been allocated for making improvements to the play area in the current financial year?”

Response

Councillor Doe stated that the improvement needs of Beechings Playing Fields had been reviewed to provide an evidence base for future potential section 106 contributions. These improvements included additional seating in the play area estimated at £4,500 and an increase in the equipment within the older children’s play area, which was estimated at around £70,000.

He stated that Medway Norse, the Council’s agent, ensured the maintenance and cleanliness of Medway’s play areas. All play areas received a daily inspection each morning, including the sweeping and blowing of paths, the emptying of bins and removal of litter from the rest of the fenced play area. Daily litter clearance outside of the play area was restricted to a 10 metre zone around an individual bin. In 2017-18, Medway Norse’s site maintenance budget funded a new children’s roundabout and a youth shelter.

N) Sean Varnham of Strood asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

“I am extremely proud of the opportunities and attractions in Medway - such as Eastgate House, Upnor Castle and Fort Amherst, to name but a few - provided to visitors to explore the rich military and cultural heritage intrinsic to the character of Medway. We are fortunate to have many important historic buildings across Medway that all play their own part in the telling of Medway’s story.

As it is so crucial these buildings continue to be honoured and preserved, will the Portfolio Holder outline his plans for future investment in the maintenance of our historic and heritage buildings?”

Response

Councillor Doe thanked Mr Varnham for his question and he stated that he was very pleased that Mr Varnham also shared the pride that he felt in Medway’s rich heritage, not only for its historical importance, but also for the economic and social benefits it brought, as part of the great future being created for residents and visitors.

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In recent years, millions of pounds of external funding had been brought into Medway, as national organisations recognised the importance of Medway's military and cultural heritage.

In the past year, the Council had opened the doors of the newly conserved and refurbished Eastgate House, which was a £2.1m project, jointly funded by the Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore this Grade 1 listed 16th Century building, which not only had historical importance, but also featured in the works of Charles Dickens and the history of Chatham Dockyard.

The Dickens' connection would continue as the Council now sought to identify external funding to help with the restoration of Dickens' writing chalet, currently situated in Eastgate Gardens, in which he wrote many novels and actually acted them out, including, arguably, his most popular one "Great Expectations".

With landmark anniversaries, such as last year's Battle of Medway and the coming 400th anniversary of the Historic Dockyard this year and looking forward in 2020 to the 150th commemoration of Dickens' death, promoting Medway's heritage would continue to play a hugely important role in the cultural regeneration of Medway.

He concluded by stating that much of the Council's work on cultural heritage buildings was dependent on bidding and that the Council would continue to take opportunities to bid for funding as they arose.

O) Bryan Fowler of Chatham submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:

"The Portfolio Holder should be aware of the financial impact on families living in Central Chatham, who may be £654 a year worse off, as a result of the decision to abolish visitor car parking and replace them with daily vouchers.

Can the Portfolio Holder explain what impacts on Medway's residents were taken into account when Councillors considered this decision at the budget setting Council meeting in February 2018?"

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

P) Sue Groves MBE of Chatham asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

"I am sure Councillors are aware of the Medway Independent Police Advisory Group (IPAG)/community led project launching Third Party Reporting Hubs across Medway by a number of community led groups. These hubs are run by volunteers and the resources involved for such a valuable service have been surprisingly minimal utilising existing online reporting tools such as True Vision to facilitate reporting at the hubs.

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Will the Portfolio Holder consider helping to widen the availability of this initiative for the Medway residents through exploring the use of Community Hubs as another avenue for third party reporting?"

Response

Councillor Doe stated that this was a very interesting suggestion and that he would ask the relevant officers to look into it and liaise with Mrs Groves MBE. He stated that he was supportive of it in principle but the Council would have to look at how it would work in practice.

Q) Lindsey Burke of Rochester submitted the following question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:

"A number of conflicting figures have been circulated on social media about the total cost of the Battle of Medway events last summer following several Freedom of Information requests.

Can the Leader of the Council give a definitive breakdown of exactly how taxpayers' money was spent and provide some outcome-based evidence about the tangible lasting benefit of this expenditure to the community?"

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

R) Hazel Browne of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

"Medway Council has removed a number of local recycling facilities across Medway during the past year. Since the popular bottle bank at the Bowater's Tesco in Gillingham was removed, the remaining recycling banks at Twydall Green regularly overflow, causing litter problems in the surrounding car park.

Can the Portfolio Holder both increase the frequency of recycling collection, and ensure that the appropriate CCTV is in place in this area in order to prevent antisocial and unsightly fly tipping?"

Response

Councillor Filmer thanked Ms Browne for her question. He stated that Tesco's recycling site was removed at the request of Tesco due to redevelopment of their site. The Council would continue to monitor the volumes in the car park at Twydall Green and collections would be increased if necessary. He also stated that the Council would look at the safety and CCTV issues.

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S) Harinder Singh of Chatham submitted the following question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:

“Do you feel that having just 30 minutes to scrutinise the work of the Leader of the Council is adequate and democratic, as was seen for the first time ever at the recent Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting?”

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

T) Ben Pranczke of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

“I have asked this question previously at Full Council and found the response vague and disappointing, so I ask again in the hopes that the Portfolio Holder has had adequate time to reflect on the issue and will now be able to provide a satisfactory answer. The Section 106 money that came from the construction of Tesco on Courtney Road, Gillingham, was promised by the Council to improve Gillingham High Street, but was instead used for a Japanese Garden Roundabout on the A2.

Could the Portfolio Holder explain how the roundabout, which is nowhere near Gillingham High Street (and which seems to be a vanity project, rather than something that contributes to our lives in a meaningful way) has helped to regenerate Gillingham High Street?”

Response

Councillor Chitty thanked Mr Pranczke for his question. She stated that the basis of her reply was on how section 106 contributions were made.

She stated that this question formed the basis of a similar query raised by Mr Pranczke on 23 April 2015 details of which were on record. The section 106 contributions from Tesco had covered a wide range of projects, which related to assisting town centres, including Gillingham.

She stated that the prosperity of a retail area was also dependent upon the visual amenity of the traffic routes into the retail areas, such as Gillingham. As a result, it was agreed with Tesco that part of their S106 contribution would be spent on roundabout improvements to assist with this regeneration aim. This also highlighted an important place making link, as Will Adams, who came from Gillingham, became a Samurai in Japan. This was celebrated every year via the 30 free festival and events programme, which contributed towards putting Medway on the Map; a key objective of the Council, but more importantly focussing on Gillingham.

U) Matthew Broadley of Rochester submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

“Residents and shop owners have expressed concerns over the raising levels of pollution towards the Luton Arches along Luton Road.

Given the proximity to two schools and their associated catchment areas, can the Portfolio Holder identify what plans are in place to curb these levels of toxic pollution?”

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

961 Leader's report

Discussion:

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

- Military heritage
- Regeneration
- Medway place branding
- Rochester Riverside
- Innovation Park Medway
- Bid for infrastructure funding
- Housebuilding targets
- Memorial event for James McCudden VC
- English Festival and other events
- Medway 20 Celebrations
- Rochester West By-Election
- Rochester Airport
- Affordable housing
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- Consultation on Improving Urgent Stroke Services in Kent and Medway
- Corporate Peer Challenge
- Condition of the road network
- Japanese Garden Roundabout
- S106 contributions
- Medway Tunnel
- Community Safety.

962 Report on Overview and Scrutiny Activity

Discussion:

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

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- Call-in and Petition Referral: Closure of Deangate Ridge Golf Course
- Draft Capital and Revenue Budget 2018/2019
- Council Plan Refresh 2018/2019
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Home to School Transport Consultation and Policy Review
- The Social Isolation Scrutiny Task Group
- Annual Report on School Performance 2017
- Universal Credit and Welfare Reforms – Six Monthly Progress Report
- Corporate Peer Challenge
- Condition of road network
- Rochester Airport
- Future of the RVS Older People's Centre
- Attendance of the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources at Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

963 Nominations for Mayor and Deputy Mayor 2018/2019

Councillor Kemp, supported by Councillor Chitty, proposed that Councillor Steve Iles be nominated as the Mayor of Medway for the 2018/2019 municipal year.

On being put to the vote, the nomination of Councillor Steve Iles was agreed.

Councillor Mackness, supported by Councillor Brake, proposed that Councillor Tejan be nominated as the Deputy Mayor of Medway for the 2018/2019 municipal year.

On being put to the vote the nomination of Councillor Tejan was agreed.

964 Members' questions

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

“Whilst out speaking to residents in Rochester West, the organisation ‘Refill’ was brought to my attention. Refill is an app sponsored by Ordnance Survey, which shows people where they can refill a water bottle free of charge. I am personally engaging with traders within my ward about how they can support this scheme, as it not only encourages a reduction in the use of plastic, but also helps save people money.

Will the Portfolio Holder join me in helping to explore this scheme and the potential benefits it can bring for the whole of Medway?”

Response

Councillor Chitty stated that she was fully aware of this particular initiative and that it should be encouraged and supported. She stated that it would be very

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advantageous if it took off across the towns and everything that the Council could do to encourage this initiative would be valuable.

She stated that she was pleased to hear on the news that four of the major retailers had now undertaken to eliminate these damaging plastics, so anything that the Council could do to encourage matters at a local level was absolutely vital. She concluded by complimenting Councillor Tranter on the way he had become involved in this initiative.

B) Councillor Bhutia asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

“I am disheartened that Members of the Opposition Group persist in their attempts to talk Medway down and continually claim that Medway’s roads suffer from an excessive number of potholes. This is certainly not my experience of driving in Medway, and I was proud of the Council’s swift action taken to fix nearly 500 potholes in the wake of the recent ‘Beast from the East’.

For the avoidance of all doubt, will the Portfolio Holder give detail of how much has been spent on potholes in Medway over the course of the last year, and how much he intends to spend over the coming months?”

Response

Councillor Filmer thanked Councillor Bhutia for his question. He stated that this question had asked for clarity on what money had been spent so far because there had been a suggestion that the Council had not spent any money or done any work. In the financial year 2017/18, a total of £424,489 had been spent on repairs to the road network in Medway. In addition to this, the Council had spent £216,172, which was provided by the Department for Transport (DfT), from the “pothole” fund, on large scale patching.

He stated that for 2018/19 this funding would continue and would be used for responsive repairs to the network on a continuous basis, responding to the Council’s statutory inspection regime and in response to customer reports. In addition, the Council had £406,045 allocated from the DfT “pothole” fund and had identified a list of sites which would benefit from large scale patching. The Council was currently working on a programme, which would be completed within the financial year.

The total figures following the snow event at the end of February/beginning of March 2018 were:

- 731 carriageway defects, made safe by the Council’s Contractor, Volker, in the week immediately following the snow;
- 113 further carriageway defects were made safe, by the Council’s Highway Inspectors, in the 2 weeks following that.

He stated that this was where the temporary material had been used.

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

“Many of my friends and colleagues will know of my passion for football and my involvement with the local football clubs and leagues, both within my ward and across Medway. I am pleased to enjoy a very positive working relationship with members of this community, listening and responding to any concerns they may have.

Given the need to encourage more members of the public to participate in sports, can the Portfolio Holder outline what investment is taking place in sporting facilities across Medway to ensure we maintain our sporting offer to the very highest standard and are continuing to persuade more people to participate?”

Response

Councillor Doe thanked Councillor Joy for his question. He stated that Medway had an excellent record in delivering high-quality sporting facilities for the community.

He referred to the £11.1m transformation of Medway Park into a regional centre of sporting excellence, which had succeeded in bringing world sporting events here and had firmly put Medway on the sporting map. In the past year there were more than 800,000 visits to Medway Park, which he believed was a record.

He stated that a further £2m had been spent on the renovation and development of Strood Sports Centre, which was now a bright, modern and welcoming centre for the community.

He also stated that the Council was now committed to providing a modern multi-sports centre for the Hoo Peninsula, as well as enhancing sporting provision to the east of the borough. Funding had been approved for two feasibility studies into these projects which would identify what best served the needs of these communities.

He referred to Councillor Joy’s particular interest in football and stated that the Council was in detailed discussions with the football community at a local, regional and national level to investigate the opportunity to increase the number of artificial grass pitches in Medway. This would enable them to be more intensively used and would offer increased opportunities to play throughout the year on modern top-class pitches.

He also stated that the Council was working with Sport England to produce a new Playing Pitch Strategy which would help identify the best way of meeting future needs. He concluded by stating that this represented a reasonable and growing service to the football community.

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

"I was delighted that last year Medway Council's Cabinet gave the go ahead for the development of a capital programme to utilise £1.377 million of government funding to expand SEN provision in Medway.

Can the Portfolio Holder offer further detail of how the service is facilitating greater levels of inclusion within Medway's schools and communities?"

Response

Councillor Mackness thanked Councillor Saroy for her question. He stated that the £1.377m Special Educational Needs (SEN) capital programme provided an excellent opportunity to improve SEN provision across Medway through a variety of projects aimed at improving, extending or creating new facilities.

These projects would benefit children with Education Health Care Plans and at the same time help to promote inclusion by providing mainstream schools and units with the appropriate facilities to cater for children with disabilities. In addition, these projects would provide additional capacity at mainstream and special schools to reduce the numbers of pupils placed in out of area provision away from their friends and families.

Confirmed projects to date to increase the support and places available in mainstream schools included 8 new secondary school places this year for children with a profound hearing loss at Thomas Aveling Academy. He stated that this would rise to 18 places by the end of the academic year 2020-21 and it was his ambition to see all those young people with profound hearing loss educated in Medway, rather than out of area.

He stated that there would also be an increase in the number of places for secondary pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at The Hundred of Hoo Academy.

These were exciting projects which would result in specialist provision for children with disabilities, but within settings where they would have the opportunity to be integrated with peers.

He stated that the Council intended to improve and extend facilities at Bradfields Special School, which would increase the number of places and improve the learning experience for children. It would also provide resources and facilities for Bradfields to extend their excellent outreach provision to mainstream schools. The outreach service provided specialist advice and training to mainstream schools so they were better able to meet the needs of those children.

He concluded by stating that these projects would cover the first year of three in the programme. Subsequent years' projects were currently being developed and scoped, but the aim of the projects being considered would be to increase

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the number of local SEN places, to improve inclusion and reduce the reliance upon out of area provision, both of which could only benefit the children and their families in Medway.

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

“Medway residents are aware that Medway Council’s Leisure Services have failed to provide safe access to all residents of Medway to Deangate Leisure and have only provided safe access to all leisure facilities at Deangate to 'only car users' which is contrary to the equal opportunities policy of the Council. Such actions would indicate that the income and trading figures supplied to Cabinet were unreliable and could be substantially uplifted where all the these hidden away services (closed 18 hole golf course, 11 bay floodlit driving range 6 lane athletics track with 200 seat stadium, 6 lane indoor bowls centre, 2 football pitches and 3 all weather tennis courts), were properly available to all residents including those without access to car transport.

Medway Council is aware that residents without a car can only currently gain access to Deangate by walking along Dux Court Road and there are no pavements or safe pathways in large parts of the road and residents and young people have no choice but to walk on narrow and busy country roads to gain access to the Deangate entrance. This road, without pavements, narrows drastically and is very dangerous because of speeding cars in parts. Consequently, very few parents, or families or single people, or disabled people without access to a car are prepared to try and walk to these leisure facilities, fearing the unsafe road and associated dangers. It is estimated that such restrictions have substantially reduced income by a very high percentage and that the income figures provided to Cabinet cannot be regarded as safe, reliable or fair.

Medway Council is also aware they can provide safe access for all residents and the general public to Deangate if the Council actioned minor changes and extended the Bells Lane Arriva 191 bus service a very short distance before resuming its normal bus journey along the A228 towards Grain. Such a decision would have been warmly welcomed by many families in Hoo Village who do not let their children go to Deangate for the safety reasons outlined above. Additionally, there are already section 106 monies available for a safe road crossing over the Peninsula Way opposite Dux Court Road which could provide even more safe access for substantial numbers of residents and young people wishing to walk to Deangate.

Will the Leader of the Council confirm these failures have led to unreasonable access to Deangate contrary to the equal opportunities policy of the Council and agree that urgent works and changes will be put in place as soon as possible to rectify the matters outlined?

This would, importantly, allow the Cabinet to review the correctness of their decision to close Deangate primarily made having regard to income figures that should be uplifted and reflect the levels of services to all the community.”

Response

Councillor Jarrett thanked Councillor Freshwater for his question. He stated that the Road Safety Team did not have a record of any accidents at this location. The Road Safety Team had a limited budget to make improvements around Medway and had to prioritise spend in areas where there was an existing record of incidents.

He stated that, in terms of access to the site, from a cursory examination of Dux Court Road, there did not appear to be the width to add footpaths and to do this would therefore involve land acquisition on one or both sides of the road. This would require a significant amount of investment, if indeed the land owners would be favourably disposed to selling the land in question.

He concluded by stating that the 191 bus route was a commercial service run by Arriva and as such this was a matter for them to consider.

F) Councillor Carr asked the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin the following:

“As the end of the Mayoral term approaches, I would like to place on record my thanks to the outgoing Mayor and Mayoress and Deputy Mayor and Consort for their tireless work serving the people of Medway.

Would the Portfolio Holder be able to summarise the activities of the Mayoralty so that the Council might acknowledge the achievements of the past year?”

Response

Councillor Turpin thanked Councillor Carr for his question. He stated that the civic office of Mayor brought with it over 800 years of tradition and loyalty to the Crown – and a direct link to the monarch through Parliament. In this Council Chamber, the Mayor’s role was observed as chairing these meetings as being governed by complicated rules, regulations and official procedures. However, as First Citizen of Medway the Mayor had a duty and privilege to support local initiatives aimed at providing benefit to the Council area and its diverse communities. In this role, the Mayor would speak and act as ambassador, facilitator, promoter and encourager and may involve highlighting relevant causes and assisting members of the local community to receive the recognition they deserve.

He stated that it was in the ceremonial role that most people would be familiar with and this year, Councillor David Wildey and Councillor Gloria Opara, with their spouses Denise and Richard, had between them attended over 330 engagements in the community, such as openings and fundraising events organised by voluntary and charitable organisations. They had also, unfortunately, had to decline a further 200 invitations. They had attended a diverse range of events and he noted that the Mayor would take great pleasure in telling the Council his highlights at the Annual Council meeting.

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He stated that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had visited or supported organisations across a broad range of faith groups represented in Medway, charities providing a range of services to the people of Medway, all the Armed Forces, schools, Academies and the Universities in Medway, other voluntary groups supporting and celebrating the great history of Medway, ensuring that Medway's people and businesses, large and small and their successes were properly celebrated.

He stated that the Mayor had also welcomed at least one royal visitor to Medway, along with a Chinese delegation from Foshan with whom the Council had a long-standing sister city agreement, and some Japanese exchange students.

He stated that both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor had informed him that they had found the experience of being Mayor and Deputy Mayor very fulfilling and that they now had a much greater understanding of the depth of the local community. He stated that it was a tremendous privilege for them but that the Council was also very grateful to them for the hard work done.

He concluded by stating that the Mayor had also hosted 9 charity and civic fundraising events for the Mayor's chosen charities, Macmillan, MAGIC and The Samaritans, and were on target to have raised at least £8000 by the end of his term.

G) Councillor Aldous asked the Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement, Councillor Potter, the following:

"Like many Councillors, one of the most common questions my residents raise with me is how the Council is providing for the increasing population in Medway. For many, the first issue that springs to mind when one thinks of population growth is the availability of school places for the younger generation.

Therefore I would ask the Portfolio Holder to outline what outcomes have been delivered recently that are enabling the Council to meet the rising demand for school places across Medway?"

Response

Councillor Potter thanked Councillor Aldous for her question. He stated that since 2013, the Council had added over 3,000 additional primary school places across Medway through a programme of new schools and expansions. This represented £45m of investment in Medway schools which had placed Medway, joint first nationally, as a provider of good and outstanding places.

He stated that, in terms of current and future projects in the primary sector, the Council was spending several million pounds on expanding Riverside School, St Mary's Island School and Halling Primary School, all for September 2018. A new Primary school would also be delivered as part of the developer's

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commitment on the Rochester Riverside project. It was currently expected that the new school would open in September 2021.

In the secondary sector, the Council had embarked upon an expansion programme to meet rising demand for grammar school places. There were three separate projects underway which would provide another 600 places over time, over the course of the project

He stated that the Council was currently working closely with the Department for Education, the Education and Skills Funding Agency and Academy Trusts in planning a secondary free school in Rainham and an all-through free school in Strood, which between them would create an additional capacity for 2,460 non-selective children by 2022. This would ensure that the demand into secondary education from the increasing primary school rolls would be met as those cohorts moved through into those later years.

He concluded by stating that the Council would continue to anticipate growth with robust planning for the provision of additional school places when and where they were needed. In addition, he stated that he was pleased to announce that the latest School Sufficiency Strategy would be launched later this year and that it would be submitted to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June.

H) Councillor Tejan asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

“Can the Portfolio Holder confirm the total cost of the regeneration of the Corporation Street car park in Strood?”

Response

Councillor Chitty thanked Councillor Tejan for his question. She stated that the car park improvements in Strood which was more well known as Tolgate Lane Car Park (Commercial Road) would cost in the order of £566,000 and formed part of the £9 million Local Growth Fund regeneration project underway in Strood. She thanked Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE for securing the £9million funding from the Local Growth Fund for Medway. This investment would provide significant improvements to surfacing and lighting, new soft landscaping, street furniture and power points.

The new car park would provide a focal point for residents to shop, park and enjoy events such as the lighting of the Christmas tree each year. The wider project would complement this new community facility by providing better access for pedestrians, improvements to traffic flows and feature lighting of the railway arches. She stated that there had also been a lot of private investment within Strood over the last few years. She considered that this would regenerate and give people in Strood an opportunity to enjoy a community space.

I) Councillor McDonald asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

“Local Labour Councillors received assurances from officers in 2015 that the pedestrian footbridge linking Balmoral Gardens with Gillingham High Street would be replaced imminently following health and safety concerns.

When can residents expect to see a replacement footbridge in place that is fit for purpose, or has the funding initially allocated for it now been spent elsewhere?”

Response

Councillor Chitty thanked Councillor McDonald for his question. She stated that funding for the footbridge had to be found from the existing structures budget and that a commitment was in place.

She stated that at this stage she was not able to give a definitive timetable for the outstanding consent stages to be completed with Network Rail. This always complicated matters and defined the time element involved but the Council would continue a dialogue with Network Rail on an ongoing basis around the installation of the new footbridge. She concluded by the Council would only be able to act as fast as permitted by Network Rail.

J) Councillor Paterson submitted the following question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:

“According to internal documents released under the Freedom of Information Act, in an email titled "Decision Made!!!", Councillor Jarrett reportedly called plans to tarmac Rochester Esplanade Gardens “the only viable option” for the new coach park. However, this folly was hastily reversed in the middle of the Rochester West by-election campaign.

Now that he has apparently seen the error of his ways, can he guarantee to residents in my ward that the Esplanade Gardens have not simply had a stay of execution, but will now be protected, cherished and improved in a way which reflects the views of the thousands of people who signed the petition to save them?”

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

“In view of the recent Sutton Trust's ‘Stop Start’ report, and its endorsement of the importance of adequately funded Children's Centres for all families and their concern over the closure of centres during the past eight years, would the Portfolio Holder recognise that Medway Council's strategy of focusing on higher levels of parental need, rather than universal services, is the result of cuts in government funding rather than a real attempt to improve the lives of Medway children?”

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L) Councillor Bowler submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake:

“14th-20th May is national Mental Health Awareness week for 2018. Patients' groups, the voluntary sector and many practitioners are clear that despite the efforts of providers, available funding for community mental health services does not meet the needs of those in Medway who need this support.

Will the Portfolio Holder join the Labour Group in writing to the Prime Minister to inform her of this and remind her of the commitment she made to improve funding for mental health services?”

M) Councillor Murray submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake:

“I welcome the Cabinet's change of heart on the future of the RVS Centre in Chatham.

Will the Portfolio Holder commit to a full impact assessment during the year, to demonstrate value for money, and help secure the Centre's future?”

N) Councillor Stamp submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:

“Cabinet recently made the decision to transfer the Waste Collection and Cleansing Contract to Medway Norse from October 2019.

Can you confirm that the existing refuse and recycling collection service will continue to be provided to Medway's residents on a weekly basis, for the entirety of the next municipal term (i.e. until at least May 2023)?”

O) Councillor Khan submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:

“Does the Portfolio Holder recognise the serious impact on residents caused by cutting the Visitors' Permit in Controlled Parking Zones, particularly those with lower incomes, those who are vulnerable and those who require high levels of support from carers and family with their annual parking costs for vital support potentially increasing by over 2,000%?”

P) Councillor Cooper submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:

“Residents who use the Chatham Dynamic Bus Facility are becoming frustrated that the real-time bus schedule screens have not functioned for the last few weeks. The totem screens at Chatham Bus Station work intermittently, and can sometimes be difficult to read due to glare, but they are not a sufficient replacement for the other malfunctioning screens. I have been in touch with a Senior Transport Officer at the Council who informed me that the IT system is

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not working, but the spending moratorium has prevented officers from getting the screens fixed (please see email below).

Considering that the bus station is new and forms part of Medway's regeneration programme, not to mention the inconvenience to passengers, it is not just important but also symbolic that Chatham Dynamic Bus Facility is maintained to a high standard. As this is a new financial year, the moratorium has been lifted, please could the portfolio holder give some indication of when the screens will be fixed?

Dear Cllr Cooper

Thank you for your enquiry re the summary screens at Chatham Bus Station. Unfortunately we have ongoing hardware issues with the screens. We met with Infotec, our screen supplier, last year and discussed the possibility of replacing the screens but due to the spending moratorium being imposed we were unable to pursue that course of action.

We have made some advances since, such as repowering the non-responsive screens. We are now working with Medway Council's IT department to try and remedy the data problem that remains.

Please be assured we are continuing to work on a solution to the issue, but it is proving to be rather a difficult one to solve. Thankfully the individual totem screens are operating, giving passengers real and scheduled bus time information.

Regards

Senior Transport Officer"

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

"Channel 4 have announced they are looking to relocate and create creative hubs outside of London. This would be a fantastic opportunity for Medway.

Would the Portfolio Holder be prepared to support a bid by Medway, based on our new broadcast capabilities at the University of Kent and our expanding creative industries in Medway?"

R) Councillor Shaw submitted the following question to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe:

"A close reading of the Medway Messenger article 'Game's up for golf course as closure is supported again' (Thursday April 5th, 2018) revealed a significant error. It is important that the people of Medway are aware that, despite the words of Councillor Howard Doe, libraries are in fact a statutory service. I am concerned that the Tory Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services seems unaware of this fundamental policy that falls under his remit, and am concerned that Councillor Doe has been operating under this falsehood during his time managing Community Services.

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Can the Portfolio Holder confirm that they are aware that libraries are a statutory service, and that he has been treating them as such in his capacity as Portfolio Holder?"

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

"I was pleased to hear at my recent visit to Abbey Court Primary School that they will by September this year have their excellent new school at maximum capacity, ensuring the most vulnerable children in Medway develop and thrive.

In order to ensure that children who need these facilities can continue to develop at secondary level, will the Portfolio Holder co-sign a letter with the Labour Spokesperson for Children's Services, writing to the Secretary of State for Education calling for funding to be made available to complete the original plan to build new secondary school facilities at Abbey Court school?"

T) Councillor Osborne submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin:

"The Luton Millennium Green has recently been bought back into Council ownership and is now a highly popular community resource with a recent event held on the 14th April securing over 500 people.

Will the Council support the anticipated bid from the community for the Green to become an Asset of Community Value (ACV), as well as organise a meeting with the Arches Local Project and Ward Members to secure additional play facilities for the community?"

U) Councillor Gilry submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer:

"Can the Portfolio Holder provide for each year between 2007-2017, the following three sets of figures:

- (a) the number of people convicted or sanctioned as a result of parking permit fraud in Medway
- (b) the percentage increase in parking permit charges
- (c) the related CPI inflation rate?"

V) Councillor Godwin submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake:

"Does the Portfolio Holder share my concern that the retrograde step of scrapping visitor permits, and the inhibitive price increase for daily tickets, will lead to an increase in social isolation?"

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

965 Licensing Act 2003 - Review of the Council Statement of Licensing Policy

Discussion:

This report provided details of the proposal for a revised Statement of Licensing Policy following the public consultation on the draft Statement of Licensing Policy together with the comments of the Licensing and Safety Committee.

Details of the consultation were set out in section 3 of the report and the comments of the Licensing and Safety Committee were set out in section 4 of the report.

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

The Chairman of the Licensing and Safety Committee, Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers, supported by Councillor Carr, proposed the recommendation as set out in the report.

Members placed on record their thanks to Alison Poulson, Licensing and Local Land Charges Manager, who was retiring at the end of the month after 39 years' service with Medway Council and Gillingham Borough Council.

Decision:

- a) The Council noted the comments of the Licensing and Safety Committee, as set out in section 4 of the report.
- b) The Council approved the draft Statement of Licensing Policy for use from 1 May 2018, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

966 Additions to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme

Discussion:

This report provided details of a number of proposed additions to the Capital Programme and Revenue Budget:

Capital programme	Medway Development Co. Ltd.	£120,000,000
Capital programme	Medway Growth joint venture	£1,352,000
Capital programme	Loan to Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust – Fitting Rigging House	£800,000
Capital programme	Hot Water System – Salix Loan	£164,000
Revenue budget	Innovation Park Medway – Master Plan	£563,500

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

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

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

Against – Councillors Bowler, Cooper, Craven, Gilry, Griffiths, Johnson, Khan, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Shaw and Stamp (14)

Abstain – Councillor Freshwater (1)

Note: Councillor Mackness was not present for the recorded vote.

Decision:

The Council agreed to add the schemes set out in sections 3 to 6 of the report to the Capital Programme and to add the scheme set out at section 7 to the Revenue Budget.

967 The Council's Petition Scheme - E-petitions

Discussion:

This report provided details of a reference from the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee (30 January 2018), which asked the Council to consider amending the Council's Petition Scheme to accept e-petitions which did not include all of the personal details currently required by the scheme. The report provided an update on discussions between the Council and mod.gov, the organisation which supplies the Council's e-petitions system, about the possibility of developing the facility so that it could provide some of the functionality provided by other e-petition platforms.

The Chairman of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Carr, supported by Councillor Etheridge, proposed the following:

"9.1 Council is requested to note the discussion and recommendations from the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and agree the following:

- a) That Council notes that, as outlined in paragraph 5.3 of the report, officers have explored the potential to develop the Council's e-petition facility so that it may incorporate some of the functionality of other e-petition platforms to become petitioners' preferred e-petition platform,

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and have found that the cost of doing so is outside of current budget restraints. This matter to be reconsidered in six months' time.

- b) That Council resolves only to accept e-petitions which fully comply with the existing requirements of Medway Council's constitution, i.e. where an e-petition hosted on an alternative platform is received by the Council, the petition will only be accepted when the Council is able to see a name, postal address, a valid postcode and email address for the lead petitioner as well as each signatory.
- c) That Council instructs the Head of Democratic Services to include clear advice on the Council website that e-petitions hosted on external websites cannot be accepted under the Council's current arrangements for handling petitions unless the information required by the Petition Scheme is supplied".

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

"9.1 - Delete all text after the word "Council" and replace with "approves an amendment to the Council's Petition Scheme to accept e-petitions which do not include all of the personal details (name, address, postcode and email address) currently required by the scheme. This should only be permitted where there is evidence that an organisation hosting the e-petition requires the lead petitioner and any signatories to register this information.

The wording for the amendment to the scheme is as laid out on page 4.6 of Appendix A to the report."

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

For – Councillors Bowler, Cooper, Craven, Freshwater, Gilry, Griffiths, Johnson, Khan, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Shaw and Stamp (15)

Against – Councillors Aldous, Avey, Bhutia, Brake, Carr, Mrs Diane Chambers, Chitty, Clarke, Doe, Etheridge, Fearn, Filmer, Franklin, Griffin, Gulvin, Hicks, Howard, Mrs Josie Iles, Steve Iles, Jarrett, Joy, Kemp, Mackness, Opara, Potter, Purdy, Royle, Saroy, Tejan, Tranter, Turpin, Wicks, Wildey and Williams (34)

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

Decision:

- a) The Council noted the discussion and recommendations from the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- b) The Council noted that, as outlined in paragraph 5.3 of the report, officers have explored the potential to develop the Council's e-petition

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facility so that it may incorporate some of the functionality of other e-petition platforms to become petitioners' preferred e-petition platform, and have found that the cost of doing so is outside of current budget restraints. This matter to be reconsidered in six months' time.

- c) The Council resolved only to accept e-petitions which fully comply with the existing requirements of Medway Council's constitution, i.e. where an e-petition hosted on an alternative platform is received by the Council, the petition will only be accepted when the Council is able to see a name, postal address, a valid postcode and email address for the lead petitioner as well as each signatory.
- d) The Council instructed the Head of Democratic Services to include clear advice on the Council website that e-petitions hosted on external websites cannot be accepted under the Council's current arrangements for handling petitions unless the information required by the Petition Scheme is supplied.

968 Review of Allocation of Seats on Committees

Discussion:

This report provided details of a review of the allocation of Committee seats to political groups following a by-election in Rochester West Ward on 8 March 2018. The report asked the Council to agree revisions to the allocation of Committee seats to reflect the current political balance of the Council.

Councillor Kemp, supported by Councillor Carr, proposed the recommendation in the report.

Decision:

- a) The Council reviewed the allocation of seats on Committees and agreed the revised allocation set out in Appendix A which complies with the principles set out in paragraph 3.1 in this report, in so far as this is practicable.
- b) The Council agreed to appoint Councillors to places allocated to the Labour and UKIP Groups as set out below:

Committee	Entitlement	Nomination by Political Group
Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee	One additional seat for the Labour Group	Councillor Khan to replace Councillor Hall
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	One additional seat for the Labour Group	Councillor Alex Paterson (with removal of vacant seat currently allocated to the

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		Conservative Group)
Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee	One additional seat for the UKIP Group	Councillor Freshwater to replace Councillor Steve Iles

969 Establishment of Committees, Appointments and Schedule of Meetings 2018/2019

Discussion:

This report provided details of the overall allocation of seats on committees and set out recommendations to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 16 May 2018 regarding the committees and other bodies to be appointed for 2018/2019 and a programme of meetings. The report also set out recommendations to the Joint Meeting of Committees on 16 May 2018, immediately following the Annual Meeting of the Council, in respect of the establishment and membership of sub-committees and task groups.

Decision:

- a) The Council agreed an increase in the size and membership of the South Thames Gateway (STG) Building Control Joint Committee from three to four seats to reflect the addition of Canterbury City Council to the STG Building Control Partnership (which currently comprises Medway Council, Gravesham Borough Council and Swale Borough Council).
- b) The Council agreed to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to agree any consequential changes to the constitution of the South Thames Gateway (STG) Building Control Joint Committee arising from the extension of the partnership and the increase in the size of the committee.
- c) The Council agreed to add the terms of reference of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Kent County Council, Medway Council, East Sussex County Council and Bexley Council and the terms of reference of the Joint Kent and Medway Health and Wellbeing Board to the Council's Constitution.
- d) The Council agreed a reduction in the size of the Kent and Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 12 to 8 Members with equality of representation by both local authorities, i.e. four seats each.
- e) The Council agreed to recommend to Annual Council and the Joint meeting of all Committees on 16 May 2018 as applicable:
 - i) the establishment of committees, sub committees and task groups, their size and the allocation of seats to political groups as set out in Appendices A and B to the report, together with terms of reference as set out in the Council's constitution.

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- ii) the establishment of an ad hoc committee to consider the removal of Council-appointed school governors as and when necessary and to waive political balance in respect of this Committee.
- iii) that appointments should be made to Joint Committees, outside bodies and other bodies as set out in Appendix C (with nominees to be reported at the Annual Council meeting).
- iv) the timetable of meetings for the 2018//2019 municipal year as set out in Appendix D incorporating the change set out in paragraph 4.1 of this report.

970 Motions

A) Councillor McDonald, supported by Councillor Murray, submitted the following:

“This Council recognises that children in Medway, in much the same way as those from across the United Kingdom, are suffering from period poverty as a result of being unable to afford menstrual products. This has far reaching effects; research from the charity Freedom4Girls has shown that thousands of young women are missing school every month and a survey by Plan International UK showed that one in ten women or girls aged 14 to 21 in Britain cannot afford sanitary towels.

This Council wishes to place on record its clear and unwavering commitment to tackling and ending period poverty in Medway. No girl should be marginalised or made to suffer because they cannot afford menstrual products.

As a result, this Council will:

1. write to The Right Honourable Damian Hinds MP, Secretary of State for Education, to express our support for the Government providing free menstrual products for all school girls who are in receipt of free school meals;
2. conduct a review of the Council’s budget with the aim of providing funding for all of Medway’s schools and academies to provide menstrual products for all school girls who are in receipt of free school meals.”

The Portfolio Holder for Adults’ Services, Councillor Brake, supported by Councillor Purdy, proposed the following amendment:

“Paragraph 1, Line 1: Delete ‘in Medway, in much the same way as those from’

Paragraph 2, Line 1: Insert ‘This Council thanks the Medway Public Health Department for taking action in 2017 to see if this was an issue locally. Whilst no schools in Medway have requested assistance,’ before ‘This Council wishes to place...’

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Paragraph 2, Line 2: Delete 'tackling and ending' and replace with 'continuing to prevent'

Paragraph 3, Line 1: Delete everything after 'As a result, this Council will' and replace with 'refer this issue for further in depth discussion at the earliest opportunity to the Medway Health and Wellbeing Board, as the most appropriate forum for any action as appropriate.'

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

Decision:

This Council recognises that children across the United Kingdom are suffering from period poverty as a result of being unable to afford menstrual products. This has far reaching effects; research from the charity Freedom4Girls has shown that thousands of young women are missing school every month and a survey by Plan International UK showed that one in ten women or girls aged 14 to 21 in Britain cannot afford sanitary towels.

This Council thanks the Medway Public Health Department for taking action in 2017 to see if this was an issue locally. Whilst no schools in Medway have requested assistance, this Council wishes to place on record its clear and unwavering commitment to continuing to prevent period poverty in Medway. No girl should be marginalised or made to suffer because they cannot afford menstrual products.

As a result, this Council will refer this issue for further in depth discussion at the earliest opportunity to the Medway Health and Wellbeing Board, as the most appropriate forum for any action as appropriate.

B) Councillor Khan, supported by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, submitted the following:

Celebrating 100 Years of Women's Suffrage

2018 marks 100 years since women secured the right to vote for the first time in the UK. The Representation of the People Act was passed on 6 February 1918, while it did not include all women, it was a landmark moment in the fight for women's rights and furthering gender equality. This year is also the 90th anniversary of women gaining equal voting rights to men by the Equal Franchise Act.

Council resolves to mark this important anniversary, through an appropriate commemoration, the particulars of which are to be decided subsequent to this meeting.

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

Council, 26 April 2018

Mayor

Date:

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