

**COUNCIL**  
**4 MARCH 2010**  
**PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

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**Summary**

To set out the public questions received for this meeting.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Section 7.3 of the Council Rules, as laid out in the Council's constitution, sets out the rules for the receipt of public questions as follows:
- At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation. Members of the public who have not submitted questions before will be given priority over those who have, and second questions will only be dealt with when all first questions have been dealt with. Any questions that have not been dealt with within the time limits will receive a written reply after the meeting.
- 1.2 The questions received for this meeting are set out in below in the order they were received, allowing for the rules above.

**2. Public questions**

- 2.1 **Mr P Cumming-Benson of Rochester will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

Would the Leader comment on the removal of four mature Chestnut trees in the Paddock including three at the edge of the Paddock opposite the Brook Theatre - does this address the concerns of the Planning Committee?

- 2.2 **Mrs T Coutts of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

Will the Leader demonstrate that he has considered the views of shoppers and traders in Chatham when proposing to remove the existing bus station from the Pentagon Centre to Globe lane (Riverside Gardens).

**2.3 Ms S Fowler of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

Alliance Planning have stated in their statement to support the planning application for the Dynamic Bus Station, that River Ward has 179 hectares of space per 1000 people compared to National Playing Fields Association standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 people. Will the Leader accept that this statement is inappropriate in the context of the Waterfront Gardens and that this standard applies only to outdoor sports and play facilities and specifically excludes ornamental gardens?

**2.4 Mr A Pestell of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

The proposed bus station at Globe Lane and on the Waterfront is smaller than the current Pentagon Bus Station. What does he think about the comments of Arriva's Managing Director that they have doubts about its long term capacity and that development space should be sought in the vicinity of Chatham Station?

**2.5 Mr A Smoothy, Chair of Governors, Delce Infant School, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Les Wicks, the following question:**

Do you feel democracy has failed after your decision to amalgamate goes against the reasoning of the majority of parents, all the governors, all staff and head teachers, head of education and all the overview and scrutiny committee?

**2.6 Miss A Morris, Headteacher of Delce Infant School, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Les Wicks, the following question:**

Please can we have an apology from you for your lack of understanding when you stated at the last cabinet meeting that the two schools were 'as good as soft federated' which is in fact completely wrong and therefore potentially misled other Cabinet Members.

**2.7 Mr B Fowler of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

Work commenced on the Chatham Waterfront site of the Dynamic Bus Station by 21 January 2010. What instructions were issued to

contractors prior to the Planning Committee meeting on 27 January 2010 to start work in connection with the Dynamic Bus Station?

**2.8 Mr W Knott of Rochester will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

Would the Leader comment on the statement made by Alliance Planning in connection with the dynamic bus station, that the waterfront has high visual attractiveness and obtained reasonably high scores in an audit relating to quality and value?

**2.9 Mr A Pestell of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

Much has been said about the lack of shelter for bus passengers at the new bus station planned for Globe Lane. In what ways is the new proposal superior to the Pentagon Bus station?

**2.10 Mrs T Coutts of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

Could Councillor Chambers confirm that of today's date that the Council actually has the money not only to pay for the building of the new dynamic bus station in its entirety, but also has sufficient money to pay for the maintenance/upkeep of this facility for at least the next decade?

**2.11 Ms S Fowler of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

During the course of the last planning application process for a Dynamic Bus Station in Chatham, Arriva and Nu-Venture bus companies submitted letters of representation about the planning application.

Arriva stated: "We do have concerns that the new station will be unable to meet the potential future demand for bus services. We believe that the proposed dynamic system will assist in the immediate term. However, our concerns are for future years as the regeneration scheme comes to fruition".

Nu-Venture stated: "It is certainly the case that the facility as now proposed has a limited capacity compared to previous plans and will undoubtedly need to be extended to cope with any future expansion of bus services in Medway, such as daily Park & Ride operations and new services which are an integral part of expected developments such as Rochester Riverside".

In the light of these statements by representatives of bus companies that will be using the new Dynamic Bus Station, what assurances can

the Leader of the Council give that the Dynamic Bus Station will not be expanded at some point in the future and allowed to encroach further onto valued public open space on the river front and in the Paddock?

**2.12 Mr B Fowler of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

On Friday 19 February 2010 a Senior Manager from Medway Renaissance was observed painting orange crosses on trees in the Paddock and Riverside Gardens. This was the last date by which objections were to be received for the appropriation of that land by Medway Council. Would the Leader of the Council explain what was happening that afternoon and put his reply in the context of the process for deciding what happened to any objections?

**2.13 Mr A Smoothy, Chair of Governors, Delce Infant School, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Les Wicks, the following question:**

Even though the cabinet needed to agree the amalgamation, members will have completely relied on your 'judgement' as to whether these schools should be amalgamated. What arguments did you use to persuade members to ignore the advice of officers, and the results of the consultation, and follow your lead?

**Background papers**

None

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