**Full Council 25 April 2019 – Schedule of Written Responses to public questions not answered at the meeting**

| Agenda reference | Question | Response |
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| | **Public questions not answered at the meeting** | |
| 7K | Alexa Chatfield of Rainham submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:<br><br>"Can the Portfolio Holder please explain why Bligh Children's Centre was closed without notice or consultation?" | Thank you for your question.<br><br>The decision to end the arrangement at Bligh School was for 2 reasons:<br><br>1. The split site (with Gunn Lane) did not work to achieve the best use of resources in relation to admin support, families access to provision/ programmes and it also created challenges for staff.<br><br>2. The School needed the space regarding their capacity to meet the growing demands in that community.<br><br>This didn't need to form part of consultation as highlighted in the Cabinet report from August 2017 under decision number 80/2017. This change was made by the Director of People – Children and Adults Services in line with creating the best resources to meet the demands of the service and achieve the best outcomes for families.<br><br>The transition from Bligh to the Elaine centre was managed well and we received no formal complaints. The feedback we have received from staff, partners and families is 'this has improved the service and its offer' so we remain confident this was a good decision.<br><br>Decision 80/2017<br>The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Children and Adults Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), to decide the final location of the Children and Family Hubs and Children and Family Wellbeing Centres within the agreed capital budget. |

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| 7N | Sean Carter of Gillingham submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin:<br><br>"You state you take allegations of fraud seriously but have done nothing. Why is this?" | Thank you for your question, Mr Carter. I provided a written response to your public question on the issue of fraud at the January Council meeting.<br><br>Whilst I cannot discuss any allegations of fraud publicly, I can confirm that the Council's Internal Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service investigated your concerns and wrote to you on 28 November 2018 detailing the outcome of the investigation.<br><br>Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, I would suggest that you contact the fraud reporting line, details of which you have been previously provided with.<br><br>Finally, I would like to reiterate that that the Council treats any allegation of fraud very seriously and the Audit and Counter Fraud Service will always take the necessary action to investigate those concerns. |
| 7P | Andrew Lawrence of Hempstead submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement, Councillor Potter:<br><br>"I trust that the Portfolio Holder will join me in congratulating schools in Medway on their excellent results across all Key Stages, particularly Key Stage 2 where Medway has improved by 54 places in national league tables in just 3 years.<br><br>How is the Council, working in Partnership in Schools and other education partners, going to sustain this improvement and continue to raise standards?" | Thank you for your question, Mr Lawrence.<br><br>This Council is committed to further strengthening our education sector. In order to build upon our achievements to date, school improvement officers are working in partnership with headteachers to drive up the standards and performance within each of the four Learning Zones across Medway. There is a focus upon the effectiveness of Zones to deliver school-to-school support and system leaders with capacity across each of the four zones in Medway. The outcomes of this work will be shown in an increase in the number of good and better schools in Medway and in realising Council Priority 3, which will see more children reaching their potential.<br><br>The ways in which school improvement officers are operating are essential to sustaining performance and increasing capacity. Collaboration and co-production strongly influence the |

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| | | methods of working, recognising that there are variations in levels of pupil performance, leadership capacity and autonomy as a result of the mixed maintained / academy landscape.<br><br>To that end, we have worked with school leaders to establish the Medway Education Leaders Association (MELA). We have also established the Medway Education Partnership providing a forum for sector wide dialogue.<br><br>Colleagues in education who demonstrate best practice, are drawn upon to support the delivery of professional development. Work with the two teaching schools offers the potential to further expand local professional networks.<br><br>Furthermore, the relationship between LA school improvement officers and the Regional Schools Commissioner is well established, enabling regular dialogue and the sharing of intelligence for the benefit of all children and young people in Medway. |
| 7Q | James Chespy of Gillingham submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:<br><br>"In a statement issued in February 2019, the Leader of the Council indicated that he was not aware of something that took place in a meeting it was believed he was at in February 2016.<br><br>Could the Leader of the Council confirm whether or not he was at the budget meeting at which Councillor Maple outlined the troubling tweets of Councillor Franklin?" | Thank you for your question, Mr Chespy.<br><br>The answer to your question is "yes". |

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| 7R | Harinder Mahil of Chatham submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty:<br><br>"Attached is a map used by Uber to arbitrarily demarcate an area they believe to be London.<br><br>Does the Portfolio Holder reject the boundary of Greater London on the attached map and in doing so, agree that Medway should not be included?" | Thank you for your question. It is assumed that this question relates to Uber's 'geofencing' of areas.<br><br>To provide some context: In March 2018, Uber created 9 'geo-fenced' (or virtual) regions covering most of the country.<br><br>My understanding of the effect of this is that licenced drivers using the Uber app are still free to choose where they want to drive, but they are only be able to receive requests from the Uber app in the virtual 'geo-fenced' region in which their licensing authority is.<br><br>One of the 9 areas is referred to by Uber as Greater London, which includes Medway. Consequently, drivers licenced by Transport for London are able to received work via the Uber app anywhere within this virtual area.<br><br>Whilst the geographic area of Greater London clearly does not include Medway, it is important to remember that a geo-fenced area is nothing more than a virtual area, that could be given any name (it could, for example, instead be called 'The South East'), and it need not be the same as, or accurately reflect, an established geographical area. |
| 7S | Mark Jones of Rochester submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mackness:<br><br>"For over thirty years, until it was closed by Medway Council in 2018, Woodies Youth Centre in Arethusa Road, Rochester, provided activities for hundreds of young people that came through its doors in this period and had a main hall and cafe area with the capacity to accommodate large numbers at one time, with diverse needs. | Thank you for your question, Mr Jones.<br><br>I can confirm that there are currently 5 pupils who have Thomas Aveling Hearing Impairment Unit named in their Education, Health and Care Plans and who are currently attending this unit. This is in line with anticipated admission numbers of which we are increasing gradually over the next two years. |

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| | The centre was closed to enable a new school/unit for SEN children on the Thomas Aveling school site, to be established.<br><br>Please can the Portfolio Holder advise how many students are currently enrolled at the unit and in doing so confirm whether it has ever reached its anticipated admission numbers?" | |
| 7T | Jordan Hartley of Gillingham submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin:<br><br>"Since MCG took control of CCTV services in 2016, at some points more than half of Medway's CCTV cameras have not been working. The Council has stated that CCTV replacement will happen in 'key locations' – what are those key locations, including the criteria used to designate them as 'key'?"<br><br>Note: Jordan Hartley withdrew this question ahead of the Council meeting. | |
| 7U | Ravinder Jassal of Chatham submitted the following to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe:<br><br>"I'm concerned about the living conditions of many of our social housing tenants, some of whom are living in properties hazardous to their health.<br><br>I have spoken to hundreds of Princes Park residents over the last year, many of whom have serious complaints about the main social housing provider in the area. These complaints range from untreated asbestos to | Thank you for your question Ms Jassal.<br><br>We maintain close links with all of our housing providers and are keen to ensure that Medway's Housing Stock is of good quality and that tenants are safe.<br><br>We have discussed your question with the largest landlord on Princes Park. They assure us that they are investing in their stock to ensure that they continue to provide safe and secure homes for their tenants.<br><br>In all cases we would encourage tenants to discuss their concerns with their landlords in order to seek a resolution; the Council will support residents when a satisfactory conclusion cannot be reached. |

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| | condemned mains electric which has been left exposed since 2013.<br><br>Residents have complained to the housing provider and then later the Council, but have been unable to secure vital repairs within a reasonable time frame.<br><br>What can Medway Council do to ensure that its leading social housing provider in Princes Park deals with their tenants in a responsible and compassionate manner?" | I am also pleased to say that this organisation has offered to meet with you to discuss these cases, to ensure that they have addressed all of the issues you have raised. |
| 7V | Oluseyi Obadare of Chatham submitted the following to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe:<br><br>"Grass verges around Medway now have unsightly yellow dead grass around trees and street furniture.<br><br>Can the Portfolio Holder tell me why he has allowed Medway Norse to start using herbicide instead of strimming, confirming whether or not the chemicals used are safe for wildlife, domestic pets and people who use the verges?" | Thank you for your question Mr Obadare.<br><br>Medway Norse, like most local authorities, undertakes spraying of tree bases and fence / wall lines as a way of reducing the risk of damage from strimming, from stones being flicked up damaging windows or posing a risk to passing pedestrians.<br><br>Medway Norse has some newly-qualified staff who have sprayed outside of the standard 3 inches, and for this Medway Norse has apologised. Medway Norse will ensure staff adhere to these standards in future.<br><br>Medway Norse regularly reviews any chemical spraying in line with Regulations to ensure we are working safely. The chemicals used have an extremely low toxicity to animals and pose minimal risk to anyone who may accidentally come into contact with them. |

**Democratic Services**

**1 May 2019**