

## Transcript of Council Meeting 18 July 2019

### Cllr Murray

Just really a kind of word to the wise or the not so wise. Cllr Jarrett has told us tonight that there is a lot going on in Medway and there is.

It has taken a long time to come to fruition but there are a whole lot of projects either in the offing or actually going on and I wanted tonight to remind him that we have to be mindful of the effect of all this development on people who live here now.

Cllr Hubbard was good enough as soon as he was elected to bring to the attention of the Regeneration Committee, the suffering that people have had from development on Strood Waterfront from noise, dust, vibration, difficulty in getting around, businesses finding that their customers are going elsewhere because its hard to access their premises and I don't want people over Medway to start to resent development and I think there is an opportunity here for the leader and for the council I've asked for the this and received welcome support from colleagues on Health and Adults to have a really serious look, we've got the Public Health Plan coming before us quite soon and have a real serious look at how we can prevent bad effects of development having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of the people who live here now.

It's a tough call if you live next to a development site there is more dust in the air so the air quality is comprised we've had terrible disruption and interruptions in the centre of Strood with the changes and improvements going on there and whilst I understand that the council has made an effort to let people know what is happening and try to give prior warning it hasn't been adequate enough to help people manage those day and day trials and challenges that development can cause while its going on.

So rather than reach a situation where people get cynical and fed up about development I hope that we can work together. I hope that the Public Health Plan will contain some serious mitigations that we want all developers to look like and I hope the Planning Department is going to be better resourced than it is now to help them keep an eye on all of the things that are going on so that where there is a Construction and Environmental Plan in place it is actually monitored properly.

We heard some really sad stories from a group of people who had been trying to get a voice from the Council for nearly 2 years before Cllr Hubbard was elected about the way they were ignored, about the way the buck was passed from one person to another and about the way their concerns just weren't listened to and I'm afraid at that meeting we even had a member of the legal team say "you ought to get yourself a Solicitor" I don't think that's a compassionate caring Council and I think we can do better than that and I hope that you as the Leader will take what I'm saying seriously and support the things that hopefully the Labour Group are trying to encourage everybody to achieve around development.

## **Cllr Chitty**

Thank you Mr Mayor I was just having an in-depth comment with my colleague.

Cllr Mrs Murray has mentioned Cllr Hubbard's comments in relation to Kingswear Garden and the development.

Now in all fairness there was a lot of consultation that took place and a lot of notification that took place now if we want housing, quite clearly you are not going to get it without any impact at all.

Now I visited Kingswear Garden on a number of occasions and I did not see evidence that I later on read in terms of dust etc , I am not saying it didn't happen what I am saying is that I went down there myself to try and clarify.

Now a lot of the other remarks in relation to Kingswear Gardens were issues for Moat and for Orbit. It is their property and it is entirely down to them to make sure that what is available down there is up to standard.

Now I did visit the pub landlord in actual fact I saw him some time before Cllr Hubbard actually went down there. We talked at great depth about the problems and the difficulties and he was very fair, he was very honest and this conversation was very much to his credit and he is looking forward to the opportunity when this new housing is in place to benefit from more customers.

Now of course he acknowledged its not been easy but he also acknowledged that offers had been made at the very beginning which had been refused and that everybody that he'd come into contact with was very responsive so I think that in terms of these allegations I think yes it is uncomfortable but if you want housing and we hear that you want housing and we try and fulfil that obligation then there is going to be some disruption.

Now quite honestly Cllr Mrs Murray I don't understand how housing can be put on the back foot in terms of the difficulty that it causes while its being developed.

You can't have both, you have to actually make a decision that short term there is going to be disruption and long term there's going to be benefits. As far as Strood roadworks are concerned there has been so much work and so much positivity from the people that actually live in Strood they have all said "God we will be so pleased when it is finished but it has made such a difference"

**Cllr Jarrett**

Just to go back to things of real substance that really do matter, Councillor Mrs Chitty talked very wisely about what has been going on in Strood and I would just like to reflect on that for a moment. In terms of the roadworks which were scheduled for 10 weeks now that was bought down substantially due to really good management by the team overseen by Councillor ..... in that situation (one of my fans over there) in that situation everyone wins because the work gets done in a timely manner and we can move onto other projects.

Of course what Councillor Mrs Chitty was referring to when she talked about building was the old saying 'you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs'. There is a mass of development and regeneration and improvements going on all across Medway, in Strood, to Rochester, to Chatham and to IPM at Rochester Airport, all of these works will create to some extent inconvenience for people living and working in those localities, and its beholden on us to mitigate those concerns as much as possible which I think that we've done to the best of our ability. Certainly only today I was with Mr Holmes and another Council officer in Chatham looking at the new Chatham Waterfront development site and talking about how we can keep businesses and residents appraised about what was happening and when and that was very useful visit even though we caught the only heavy shower of the day but nevermind.