

Medway Council
Meeting of Medway Council
Thursday, 23 January 2020
7.00pm to 11.27pm
Record of the meeting

Present: The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway (Councillor Tejan)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Aldous)
Councillors Adeoye, Barrett, Bhutia, Bowler, Brake, Browne, Buckwell, Carr, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers, OBE, Chitty, Clarke, Cooper, Curry, Doe, Etheridge, Filmer, Sylvia Griffin, Gulvin, Hackwell, Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard, Mrs Josie Iles, Steve Iles, Jarrett, Johnson, Kemp, Khan, Lloyd, Mahil, Maple, Murray, Opara, Osborne, Paterson, Pendergast, Potter, Prenter, Price, Purdy, Sands, Andy Stamp, Chrissy Stamp, Thompson, Thorne, Tranter, Mrs Elizabeth Turpin, Rupert Turpin, Wildey 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 People - Children and Adults Services
Phil Watts, Chief Finance Officer
James Williams, Director of Public Health

598 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ahmed, Fearn and McDonald.

599 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

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Other significant interests (OSIs)

Councillor Price declared an interest in agenda item 10 (Report on Overview and Scrutiny Activity) with particular reference to paragraph 10.1.1 (Gillingham and Chatham GP Surgery Proposals Update and Response to Patient Concerns) as he was the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Sunlight Development Trust, which owned the building that the Sunlight Centre GP surgery was located in. He stated that he would leave the meeting should there be any discussion on the location of GP surgeries in Gillingham.

Other interests

Councillor Cooper declared an interest in agenda item 10 (Report on Overview and Scrutiny Activity) with particular reference to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 January 2020 as she was a Governor at Rivermead School.

600 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 10 October 2019 was agreed by the Council and signed by The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway as correct.

601 Appointment of Deputy Mayor

Councillor Kemp, supported by Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, proposed the nomination of Councillor Aldous to the Office of the Deputy Mayor of Medway for the remainder of the 2019/2020 municipal year.

Councillor Howcroft-Scott, supported by Councillor Curry, proposed the nomination of Councillor Adeoye to the Office of the Deputy Mayor of Medway for the remainder of the 2019/2020 municipal year.

On being put to the vote, Councillor Aldous was duly appointed.

The newly appointed Deputy Mayor made the declaration required by law and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

Decision:

The Council appointed Councillor Aldous to the Office of the Deputy Mayor of Medway for the remainder of the 2019/2020 municipal year.

602 Mayor's announcements

The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway, on behalf of all Members, placed on record the Council's condolences to the family of Peter Hicks who had sadly passed away in November 2019. He welcomed Mr Hicks' wife, Councillor Diane Marsh, to the meeting.

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The Mayor stated that Mr Hicks had represented Strood from 2003-2019, firstly at Strood South and then from 2007-2019 in Strood Rural. He had served as the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Customer Contact in the Cabinet from 2013-15. He had also served as Chairman of the Councillor Conduct Committee from 2013-2019 and Vice Chairman of the Development Control and Planning Committees between 2004-2009, 2010-2012 and 2015-19.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett and the Leader of the Labour and Co-operative Group, Councillor Maple paid tribute to Mr Hicks. There followed a minute's silence.

The Mayor of Medway, on behalf of all Members, placed on record the Council's condolences to the family of Nick Brice who had sadly passed away in December 2019. He had represented Rochester South and Horsted from 2003-2011. He had served as Chairman of the Audit Committee from 2007-2009 and Vice Chairman of the Employment Matters Committee from 2004-2006.

The Mayor of Medway, on behalf of all Members, also placed on record the Council's condolences to the family of Carol Harries who had sadly passed away in December 2019. She had served as a Councillor on Gillingham Borough Council between 1987–1996 and was the Deputy Mayor of Gillingham during 1992/1993. She had been very active in the community and had served on the Dobson Trust for many years and had also served as an active member of the Kent Wildlife Trust and had worked with the Cubs.

The Mayor informed Members of the following charity event:

Thursday 30 January (8pm) – Charity Theatre Night, Cinderella, at Rainham Oast Theatre.

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

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. He also reminded Members to ensure that written copies of any amendments were brought up to the top table first.

603 Leader's announcements

There were none.

604 Petitions

Public

There were none.

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Members

Councillor Adeoye submitted a petition containing 231 signatures which asked the Council to improve the road safety at the cemetery end of Palmerston Road and the surrounding area.

Councillor Prenter submitted a petition containing 561 signatures which asked the Council to protect Vinalls Park and consult with local Councillors and residents on the design of these measures.

605 Public questions

Councillor Maple proposed that the time allocated for public questions (30 minutes) be extended to ensure that all questions be dealt with at the meeting. On being put to the vote, the proposal was lost.

A. Rachael Noxon of Strood asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

“Will the Portfolio Holder explain how it feels it necessary to support biodiversity and acknowledge the wishes of the public, by stopping using herbicides in children's play areas and around trees, but not in the rest of our greenspaces and facilities and which are also homes to wildlife, and recreational places for children and pets?”

Councillor Doe thanked Ms Noxon for her question. He stated that as glyphosate was currently deemed safe to use by independent scientific experts working for the EU and UK Government, the Council would continue the adopted practice on green space and other public assets, with the exception of children's play areas and around tree bases where an integrated approach using non-biochemical products would be trialled for one year.

He concluded by stating that the Council would continue to monitor best practice and the legal standing of products and would adapt its practices if that became necessary.

B. Graham Colley of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

“Most car journeys are short and, in many cases, could be replaced by bicycle journeys. Good for the environment and health of the individual. However, potential cyclists are concerned about cycling safety. London Boroughs have made massive strides to improve cycle routes and safety.

Would the Council please detail its cycle policy, including what has been achieved over the last 12 months, its aims over the next one, three and five years and what adjustments have been made with the advent of electrically assisted bikes?”

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

C. Peter Alexander of Street Fuel Ltd asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:

“Does the Leader of the Council accept that given the commitments given by Peel L&P when it obtained planning approval for the Chatham Waters site in 2013 to provide the necessary investment in the Docks through the release of the Chatham Waters site have not been forthcoming, the inclusion of Chatham Docks (SLAA 2018 site 824) as a mixed-use redevelopment site in MLP 2037 provides Peel L&P with a justification to renege on its commitments under the Chatham Water planning approval?”

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

D. Phil Taylor of ArcelorMittal Kent Wire asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

“Given that the inclusion of Chatham Port as a mixed-use redevelopment site in the New Medway Plan would directly threaten 800-full-time skilled jobs and more than 16 apprentices and the idea that Chatham Docks could simply move to Sheerness shows a complete lack of understanding of port activities at Chatham Docks, how will Medway Council ensure that it plans for employment land within the New Local Plan guarantees that all the businesses at Chatham Docks will be able to remain in Medway and in doing so whether the 600,000 sqm of additional employment land identified in the latest version of the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) is appropriate for the operators at Chatham Docks and whether these figures take account for the loss of 284,000 sqm employment space that would be lost at Chatham Docks?”

Councillor Chitty thanked Mr Taylor for his question. She stated that the most important element to this matter was the Strategic Land Availability Assessment which had been reported to Cabinet in December. This formed part of the Local Plan work and evidence base but did not allocate sites and did not represent a draft Local Plan. She stated that significant work was ongoing in relation to the evidence base to support the Local Plan and it was anticipated this would be issued as a formal draft plan (Regulation 19 stage) for consultation in the summer of this year.

She also stated that it would be wrong to comment on specific sites at this stage until all the necessary evidence and work had been completed and the draft Plan had been produced for consideration.

She concluded by stating that to do so could prejudice the draft plan and that this could be seen as predetermination.

E. Gary Rosewell of Total Ship Services Ltd asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

“Port capacity and capabilities is already stretched and to lose Chatham Docks would be an irreversible decision. If its protection is removed by Medway Council and a Developer with little or no interest in the local community is allowed to wipe away centuries of port and naval traditions this will be lost to the Medway Towns forever.

Would Medway Council agree that the importance of its Climate Emergency Initiative will be impossible to achieve if the water traffic from Chatham Docks and along the River Medway will have to move onto roads with the effect of increased CO2 emissions and if it agrees this is the case, how will Medway Council give due consideration to the impact Chatham Docks has provided and will continue to provide to significant infrastructure projects, such as Crossrail, Thames Tideway and the upcoming Lower Thames Crossing and Silvertown Town Tunnel?”

Councillor Chitty thanked Mr Rosewell for his question. She stated that the answer she would provide would be repetitious but she wanted to make sure everybody understood the Local Plan process because the Council had to follow a very prescribed way of achieving a Local Plan.

She stated that, as indicated earlier, the Strategic Land Assessment did not allocate sites; this would come as part of the draft Local Plan to be released in the summer of this year for consultation. Significant work was continuing in relation to the completion of a Strategic Transport Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment.

She also stated that the Local Plan was being produced by following national planning policy and guidance, with sustainability at its very heart.

She concluded by stating that, as with the last question, it would be wrong and completely inappropriate at this stage without the necessary evidence base, to comment on individual sites and to do so could potentially prejudice the Local Plan.

F. John Spencer of GPS Marine Contractors Ltd asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

“GPS Marine has produced a report which I would ask that Councillors read (via our website - <https://gpsmarine.co.uk/>), which sets out the key benefits that can be readily secured simply by moving freight off the road and onto rivers. These already considerable benefits will be increased massively as soon as vessels start to use biofuels and introduce emissions reduction technologies. The first steps towards these changes are already being made.

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The South East is extremely well placed to take advantage of the benefits that water freight brings, but the opportunity to take advantage of such benefits will be lost for ever if facilities such as Chatham Dock are continually lost to residential development.

The Council declared a climate emergency last year, keeping Chatham Docks open would be a firm step towards doing something about the climate emergency. Promoting the use of Chatham for intra port freight would be a second step and the Council using the dock area for its waste and refuse services and shipping waste by barge to the incineration facility would constitute a real step change in terms of the Council's environmental credentials.

Chatham Dock is an irreplaceable strategic asset in terms of water freight and water freight derived benefits. In London such assets are protected under the "Protected Wharves Scheme" and are being brought back into use as quickly as planning allows.

I believe that for all the reasons alluded to, the Council should consider adopting such a scheme in the case of Chatham Docks.

I also believe that that water freight brings significant benefits in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving curbside air quality, reducing traffic congestion, reducing road wear and reducing HGV related road traffic accidents.

I would also state that Council should be doing more to promote the use of the river Medway for freight traffic – starting with its own domestic and commercial waste.

GPS Marine operates the largest fleet of tugs and barges on the Thames and Medway and currently provides employment for 126 people. The closure of Chatham Dock would lead to losing all but one of the ship repair facilities on the river Medway. GPS Marine uses EAPL and Stick-Mig Welding Ltd, both of which are based at Chatham, to do most of the steelwork repairs on its fleet of 70 vessels. If it becomes impossible to repair the fleet without leaving the Thames and Medway, it is conceivable that it will become impossible to operate the fleet. This would put hundreds of thousands of truck movements back onto the roads annually and cause thousands of tonnes more carbon to be emitted into the atmosphere as stated in GPS Marine's report.

Therefore, is the Council's concern in relation to climate change sufficiently robust to cause it to act to prevent Chatham Docks closing and maintain the area's ability to use its natural assets to deliver the benefits of reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved air quality, reduced traffic congestion, reduced road wear and reduced HGV related road traffic accidents?"

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

G. Kate Belmonte of Gillingham asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

“With the declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 and the immense threat we and many other species face, why is the newly formed Climate Change Member Advisory Group meeting just once every 4 months for 90 minutes?”

Councillor Doe thanked Ms Belmonte for her question. He stated that he recognised that the response to Climate Change was one of the fastest growing environmental movements in recent history and that action was required to avoid significant consequences.

He stated that a Climate Change Member Advisory Group, set up to respond to this challenge, met quarterly. The first two meetings had already been held in September and December 2019 resulting in the identification of a considerable number of positive actions, some of which would require additional expertise to take them forward.

He stated that an officer group, made up of key officers across the Council, had also been established to oversee the development of a cross-cutting action plan. The group had been meeting on a monthly basis since September 2019 and provided him with frequent updates.

He stated that these meetings were very important, but the actions that were being taken were more significant. The Council had come together to play its part, and it was determined to progress this work in the context of the steps being taken nationally, and indeed internationally.

He concluded by stating that progress could not be judged simply on the basis of how often the Member Advisory Group met but actually by what was happening between meetings where a lot of the action was being taken.

H. Daniel Belmonte of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, the following:

“How will the Council use its procurement power to respond to the climate & biodiversity crisis?”

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

I. Marilyn Stone of Rainham asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

“I would like to ask on behalf of all Medway Green Party members if you are able to provide an update on the work you are doing around the climate emergency.”

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

J. Catriona Jamieson of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

“We are aware that the final draft Local Plan will be completed in the summer 2020. Have you read the Green Party’s response to the consultation and are you able to comment?”

Councillor Chitty thanked Ms Jamieson for her question. She stated that work was ongoing in relation to the evidence base to support the draft Local Plan to be released this summer. She stated that while it would be inappropriate to comment on individual responses received as part of previous consultations, she advised that her Local Plan team had read and considered all comments received in relation to consultation on the Local Plan.

K. Kate Belmonte, on behalf of Extinction Rebellion Medway, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:

“Should we see the forecasted 2 degree rise in global temperatures by 2050 what plans do the Council have for the potential flooding of large areas of Medway, and how would this influence the placement of new building developments?”

Councillor Jarrett thanked Ms Belmonte for her question and the accompanying map she had provided to him. He stated that the Council worked closely with other bodies, such as the Environment Agency who had particular responsibility for this matter, Internal Drainage Boards and Southern Water to manage flood risk.

He stated that these bodies worked together to understand the risks, share information and investigate flood incidents to find solutions to reduce the risk of flooding.

He stated that the Environment Agency had strategic overview and had produced a Shoreline Management Plan and the Medway and Swale Strategy, which looked at the actions needed to manage flood risk now and in the future.

He stated that the Council, as a lead Local Flood Authority, also had a strategy to manage flood risk. Any new development at risk of flooding had to be built in accordance with national planning policy, which took flood risk into account. Development proposals in areas at risk of flooding were reviewed by the Environment Agency and the Council.

He concluded by stating that the Council worked with developers to ensure that development was appropriate, safe and mitigated the risks of flooding both now and over the lifetime of the development.

L. Julian Quinton of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, the following:

“Could the Portfolio Holder please tell me how and when the public are to be consulted over the savings of £406K by cutting front line services and what the impact these cuts will have on the local area and local residents?”

Councillor Turpin thanked Mr Quinton for his question. He stated that the £406,000 of savings formed part of the Council’s transformation savings. He stated that the Council had an outstanding Transformation Board and team of officers throughout the Council who worked to deliver large amounts of savings.

He stated that following a meeting of the Board earlier in the week, three officers, who were in line for awards, had gone up to London to give a presentation because the outstanding work they had done had been noticed.

He stated that the £406,000 in savings was not anticipated to result in any cuts to frontline services because there were more efficient ways of working. The services were going to be delivered to meet the needs of the local communities by new ways of working.

M. Paul Watkinson of PDMR Ltd asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:

“The notion that Chatham Docks ‘is not financially viable’ is fantasy. The Docks have suffered from a lack of investment by Peel L&P over the last two decades, despite during this time the tenants in addition to the rents paid, have also seen the services charges increase. These service charges are supposed to fund the upkeep and maintenance of the site.

Peel L&P has created the illusion of a run-down, financially unviable asset, in order to convince Medway Council that the only solution is to redevelop the site for luxury housing.

Would the Council agree that:

Sheerness or Thamesport is not suitable for the existing tenants because;

- A) The road network in and out of Sheerness / Thamesport cannot cope with a further 400-600 vehicle movements;
- B) The quayside at Sheerness / Thamesport has an 8mtr tidal movement that is wholly unsuitable for the coastal vessels using Chatham Docks or for the vital ship repair works undertaken in Chatham Docks;
- C) The cost of relocating the businesses in Chatham Docks will put many of them out of business.

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Kingsnorth is not suitable for tenants because;

- A) There is not suitable quayside. The existing jetty is c.400mtrs long and in poor condition and is not designed to handle general cargos or capable of being used for ship repairs;
- B) Medway Council has already informed tenants in Chatham Docks that there is now insufficient space on this site to accommodate the business needs of the specialist Companies in Chatham Docks?"

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

N. James Chespy of Gillingham asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

"Will Councillor Doe withdraw his disgraceful remarks made about Jess Glynne in relation to the loss of revenue coming from her having to cancel due to ill health her concert at Rochester Castle?"

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

O. Vivienne Parker of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

"What is the Council doing to reduce household waste and encourage recycling?"

Councillor Filmer thanked Ms Parker for her question. He stated that he was very proud of the recycling service provided in Medway. At a time when other local authorities were limiting their services, the Council had maintained its weekly collections, access to recycling centres had been preserved, as had the education programme. He stated that with weekly collection services and a network of recycling centres, it had never been easier to recycle within Medway. He also stated that there was a dedicated engagement team.

He stated that over 28 different material streams could be recycled through the three household waste recycling sites, with over 70% of the material dropped off being recycled.

He also referred to Medway's free organic service, collected on a weekly basis, which allowed residents to send garden and food waste for composting and the weekly recycling service which allowed residents to recycle an unlimited amount of mixed recycling containers and separated paper and cardboard from the kerbside.

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He concluded by stating that for anyone who was unsure how or what to recycle, he would encourage them to contact the Environmental Engagement team, via @medwayrecycles on twitter or by emailing communityteam@medway.gov.uk for further information and support.

P. John Castle of Chatham asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

“The Climate Change Emergency demands action from all actors including local authorities.

There is a national target of reducing emissions by 80% before 2050. Medway has an opportunity to become a leader and set an example. Other authorities are adopting targets for reducing emissions, for example Sevenoaks has a Zero Carbon initiative.

Will the Council set a target of being carbon zero for its estates, properties and business by 2030?”

Councillor Doe thanked Mr Castle for his question. He stated that the Council had declared a Climate Change Emergency in April 2019 and that a report to Cabinet in July 2019 had set out the Council proposed response.

He stated that it had been agreed that a cross-cutting action plan would be developed which would see short, medium and long term steps outlined to achieve measurable change throughout Medway. The Council had also signed up to the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy which committed to achieving “net zero” by 2050. The strategy was currently being finalised and it was anticipated that it would be published in March. The strategy would frame the Council’s 5 year rolling action plan.

He stated that, in the meantime the Council was exploring options to undertake a carbon baseline assessment of its own estate so that the journey to carbon zero could be mapped out for inclusion in the action plan. So whilst at this stage the Council was aiming for 2050, if the actions could be taken within the financial envelope then he thought that this target could be brought forward.

However, he stated that he did not want to commit to a target that the Council may then not be able to deliver. Therefore, the Council would not commit realistically to an earlier target until it had the baseline information.

He also stated that the Council had invited providers to tender via the Re:fit programme, so that existing Council buildings could be assessed for energy efficiency in order to propose measures which would contribute towards a reduction in emissions. A staff travel survey had been conducted in December 2019, and the results of the survey would provide the information necessary to further support and encourage active travel, business travel and commuting among staff such as car sharing and so on. He stated that the Council had also taken a look at electric buses and were looking for a framework where they may be able to be introduced.

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He concluded by stating that the Council was taking this matter seriously and would do everything it could to achieve being carbon zero in the minimum possible time.

Q. Martin Rose of Rainham asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

“Debenhams on Chatham High Street is, sadly, due to close imminently. Its size, shape and location may make it an unattractive prospect for retail investment, particularly in the current unpredictable environment for business.

The primary concern is that it will go the way of the other local buildings such as the Theatre Royal, Rochester Post Office and Britton Farm in Gillingham, remaining derelict for a long time, leading to a cycle of further decline in the eastern end of Chatham High Street. This well-connected site could offer the community a great deal, providing new housing, educational or health care facilities.

With this in mind, what is the Council doing to ensure the future use of the Debenhams site serves the needs of the community and in providing a response can the Portfolio Holder confirm whether the Council will work with developers to change its planning designation to residential or other uses to avoid a cycle of decline on the High Street?”

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

R. Paul O’Neill of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

“It’s good to see Gillingham FC not at the bottom of the league but it seems Medway Council is when it comes to provision of electric car charging points. Electric vehicle adoption is one way to achieve multiple goals in Medway. First, air pollution is high in some parts of Medway. Enabling fast adoption of cleaner vehicles in Medway would help to reduce car emissions. Gillingham now ranks 4th on the most polluted towns according to WHO figures. The Office for Low Emission Vehicles offers grants for the adoption of electric car charging points, so additional funding is available to achieve national targets. For example Southwark are putting charging points on lampposts.

Will Medway Council put in place measures to provide good quality coverage of electric car charging points before 2030?”

Councillor Chitty thanked Mr O’Neill for his question. She stated that the Council wished to see an increase in electric vehicle charging infrastructure, both on-street, off-street and at the workplace.

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She stated that officers had approached the Office of Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) about funding opportunities and where best the Council could use any available funding that may be there and they had been advised to establish a robust evidence base first, before preparing a bid. She stated that this work was currently being progressed.

She concluded by stating that the Council was committed to providing good quality coverage and had engaged with the Energy Savings Trust on options to seek to progress this.

S. Bryan Fowler of Chatham asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:

“Medway Council is proposing to abolish geographically, locally based Community Wardens as part of making savings of £406,000 to Front Line Services. Why are these cuts of funding being made?”

Councillor Jarrett thanked Mr Fowler for his question. He stated that the answer had been clearly set out earlier in the meeting by Councillor Turpin. These were financial savings being made as part of the Transformation Programme. He stated that transformation was not the same as reduction. He stated that there would be no cuts to these services and he referred to the Transformation Programme which had yielded over £4million worth of savings precisely to avoid cuts to frontline services.

He concluded by stating that these services would be delivered in a new and better way importantly to reflect the changing needs of our local communities.

606 Leader's report

Discussion:

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

- Appointment of Councillor Aldous as Deputy Mayor
- General election
- Regeneration projects including Britton Farm, Chatham place making project, Chatham Waterfront and Housing Infrastructure Fund
- Local Plan
- City of Culture bid
- Castle Concerts
- Children's Services inspection
- Civil Partnerships
- Community Wardens
- Climate Change
- Housing
- Crime
- Highways

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- GP services
- Overview and scrutiny.

607 Overview and scrutiny activity

Discussion:

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

- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Contract and the Local Transformation Plan
- Integrated Child Health Service
- Review of the Old Vicarage Children's Home Provision
- Gillingham and Chatham GP Surgery Proposals Update and Response to Patient Concerns
- Medway Joint Adult Learning Disability Strategy
- Speeding Restrictions for Luton Road
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy
- Risk Strategy Annual Review
- Procurement Strategy
- Voluntary Sector Task Group
- Member Training
- Kent and Medway Five Year Plan
- Public Health
- Clinical Commissioning Groups merger proposals
- Children's Services Inspection
- Herbicides
- Housing Revenue Account proposals
- Castle Concerts.

608 Members' questions

A) Councillor Steve Iles asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

"Considering the huge cost of the upkeep of the Medway Tunnel, how much of the revenue from speeding vehicles goes towards the costs?"

Councillor Filmer thanked Councillor Iles for his question. He stated that speed limit enforcement, including via fixed speed cameras, was carried out locally by Kent Police. He stated that no revenue was received by the Council for speeding fines and any fines issued to speeding motorists by the Police were returned to central government, which was the situation nationally.

He concluded by stating that the aim of speed cameras was to encourage compliance with speed limits, helping to prevent road casualties and promoting safe road use.

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

“In 2013/14 the Tory-led Council produced a detailed report on Luton Road and surrounding areas, including investment in traffic safety for local residents.

Can the Leader of the Council confirm whether his Council acted on the report, and can he provide an updated timetable on proposals and delivery of traffic calming and management for Luton?”

Councillor Jarrett thanked Councillor Osborne for his question. He stated that the report produced in 2013/14 contained a comprehensive review of road safety issues in the Luton area and put forward some suggestions as to how road safety could be improved and how sustainable transport in this area could be encouraged. These included traffic calming features and improvements to pedestrian facilities and the public realm. Unfortunately, the funding that would have enabled the Council to progress this work was not forthcoming at the time.

He stated that the Council was committed to promoting road safety across Medway and the Council had implemented prioritised improvements where transport budgets allowed. He stated that a report to Overview and Scrutiny in October last year outlined the Council’s commitment to undertaking a further study into road safety issues in Luton. As part of this, the Council would review and update the work undertaken in 2013/14 and analyse the latest road safety data available to make sure the Council had the up to date position. This work was already underway and would be discussed with Members in April.

He concluded by stating that the Council would also put forward outline recommendations for proposals to reduce collisions and casualties on Luton Road and Luton High Street. An implementation plan would then be produced for the remainder of 2020/2021. In the meantime, there would be discussions with the Portfolio Holder for Frontline Services in order to identify appropriate funding from the Local Transport Plan capital budget.

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

“After squandering more than £1.6million of taxpayers' money over a decade of botched delivery of the Castle Concerts, on December 17 Cabinet finally agreed to stop the rot and transfer the financial risk to the private sector.

However Cabinet washing its hands of the problem does not wash away the blame for those unbelievable, sustained losses. Nor does it absolve it of the responsibility to ensure future Castle Concerts benefit our community, instead of simply lining the pockets of promoters and pop stars.

The report and recommendations agreed by Cabinet in December speak only of removing the Council "from any future financial risk", but notably make no commitment to clawing back any of the £1.6million this administration poured down the drain while propping up a flawed business model. The report also, in

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addressing the issue of loss of artistic control over future concerts, merely says that any contract negotiated "can include opportunities within the programme to showcase local talent".

Given the ongoing financial pressures on this local authority and our goal of being crowned UK City of Culture 2025, will Cllr Doe commit now to begin recouping those seven-figure losses through any guaranteed income from future concerts and does he promise to turn that vague "can" into a firm "will" when it comes to ensuring local talent is given the chance to shine as part of that contract?"

Councillor Doe thanked Councillor Paterson for his question. He stated that very many people, including himself, were extremely proud of the Castle Concerts. They were regularly a highlight of Medway social calendar and had pulled in people from near and far, all part of the positioning that the Council had as a city in waiting. The Castle Concerts had seen some incredible acts, and around 150,000 people had enjoyed fabulous evenings in the intimate setting of the castle gardens.

He stated that the Council put on a number of events during the year, not just the Castle Concerts, but also festivals and sporting events and so on and this was not to make money, but in order to make sure that those events take place and reflect on Medway.

He stated that there was always going to be a debate about the cost of the Castle Concerts and whilst £1.6million looked like a lot, over ten years it was actually not that bad.

He stated that, in his view, because of the dramatic change there had been in the way that artists were remunerated, i.e. they no longer earned their money from recordings but from appearances, the Castle Concerts model (4,500 capacity) was no longer sufficient to get really top artists to appear which he thought had made things very difficult.

He stated that as far as he was concerned the Council had taken action by putting in a model for the future. He stated that the Council had sought advice from promoters and officers to see if the Council could get these concerts put on without any risk to the Council and he stated that the Council was in an advanced state of negotiations on this and was quite hopeful to get the concerts happening this year. If that happened then quite a lot would have been achieved.

He concluded by stating that nobody should run away with the idea these events could make a profit and if they did make profits then the private sector would be doing it anyway. He stated that it had to be accepted that not every Council event could make money and he thought that what had been done over the years, taken as a whole, had been very good.

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

“The need to stop the use of herbicides on our greenspaces has now been accepted by the Council following the decision at O&S and Cabinet to stop their use in children’s play areas and around trees. This is based upon the understanding that these chemicals are very damaging to biodiversity, the climate, and potentially damaging to domestic pets, wild animals, and public health.

However, this Council continues to use herbicides in other public areas and greenspaces which could still have the same outcomes as listed above. In the eyes of many this will be seen as a halfway house policy, will the Portfolio Holder please explain the Council’s policy on the use of herbicides on our greenspaces?”

Councillor Doe thanked Councillor Curry for his question. He stated that through Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet there had been a number of very detailed discussions on this issue. He stated that this was a substance which was currently deemed safe to use by independent scientific experts working for the EU and UK Government, which the Council used in a very diluted form in order to provide control in green spaces.

He stated that in responding to the issue if Glyphosate was quite safe to use why couldn’t it be continue to be used on children’s play areas and around trees, there were two reasons:

Firstly, with regards to children’s play areas there had been some public concern about this, therefore, it was wise to have done this. He stated that he did not think the Council needed to do this but because it could be done comparatively easily, financially, he thought it was a good thing to do.

Secondly, with regards to trees, whilst not a danger to the public, the Council was dealing with the issue of the growth of trees and would try a different approach for a year. He stated that if this approach worked it would continue but if it did not work well then the approach would be discontinued.

He also stated if further evidence came up which caused the Council to say that this was not the right product to use, then it would no longer be used. He added that, should this be the case, then there would be some quite difficult decisions to be taken which could lead to more expense. He concluded by stating that the Council had listened to the evidence, there had been the discussion and he thought a reasonable result had been reached.

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

“Community Wardens have always provided an invaluable service across the Medway Towns; from reporting graffiti and fly-tipping, to attending local schools to teach the pupils about good citizenship, these individuals help protect and grow our communities.

Can the Portfolio Holder provide data on the number of community wardens and managers in each Medway ward as well as the services offered by these wardens and managers, in both 2010 and 2020?”

Councillor Turpin thanked Councillor Mahil for his question. He stated that in 2010 there were 5 managers and 22 Wardens. Duties of the managers included: Strategic direction, line management and financial control of the team. The wardens’ duties included:

- Being a conduit between the Council and communities
- Locking and unlocking of parks and their inspection
- Needle removal
- Stray and dangerous dogs
- Street and litter inspections
- Litter and dog fouling enforcement
- PACT and SACT meetings as well as community surgeries
- Highway obstructions
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Illegal skips and scaffolding
- Graffiti
- Assisted collection visits
- HWRC inspections
- Community clean ups / litter picks / projects.

He stated that in 2013, the roles of Engagement and Enforcement were separated, with 4 managers and 12 Community Wardens moving to Engagement, and the remaining officers moving over to the Enforcement Team as Street Scene Enforcement Officers or to Green Spaces as Community Rangers, taking with them the duties to lock and unlock parks and park inspections.

He stated that, currently, the Community Warden Service had 2 managers and 12 Community Warden posts with 2 specialist Environmental Engagement Officers. The Street Scene Enforcement Team consisted of 1 manager and 6.6 FTE, undertaking specialist enforcement work related to fly tipping, littering and dog fouling enforcement. Between the two teams, the total staff numbers were 3 managers and 20.6 FTE undertaking the same work as in 2010, just in a different team format.

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He stated that the parks work had gone over to Norse, which represented a different strategy and different method of working. There were 22 wardens and 5 managers in 2010 and now there were 3 managers and 20.6 wardens plus the rangers etc who went over to Norse, so there was not a lot of difference over the period of time.

F) Councillor Johnson asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:

“Will the Leader consider stepping down if, after six months, the DfE-appointed Children’s Services Commissioner decides that Medway Council is no longer capable of running its own Children’s Services?”

Councillor Jarrett thanked Councillor Johnson for his question. He stated that he wanted to focus on what the direction and the letter from the Minister had said. The Minister had talked about two reviews, one after 6 months and one after 12 months. Councillor Jarrett stated that he had discussed this with the Commissioner in terms of what that actually meant. The Commissioner would produce a report after 6 months advising the Minister and would produce a second one after 12 months also advising the Minister.

He concluded by stating, as he had said live on radio when asked a very similar question, that Councillor Johnson’s question was a hypothetical question.

He concluded by stating that he did not anticipate failing, the Council would work hard to ensure that it would not fail and that this was his answer, that he did not anticipate failure.

G) Councillor Howcroft-Scott asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mrs Josie Iles, the following:

“A recent Ofsted report has judged Medway Secure Training Centre (MSTC) to be ‘Inadequate’, the lowest score awarded by Ofsted.

Following a BBC Panorama, a serious case review conducted by Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership found that, under the management of G4S, the centre was putting children at risk of harm.

MSTC will close in Spring 2020 and be reopened as the country’s first Secure School, run by Oasis Charitable Trust, an organisation which has no previous experience looking after children in a residential setting.

Considering Oasis Charitable Trust’s lack of experience in this area what is the Portfolio Holder prepared to do to ensure that the mistakes made at MSTC are not repeated at the Secure School?”

Councillor Mrs Josie Iles thanked Councillor Howcroft-Scott for her question. She stated that the repurposing of the current Medway STC as the first secure school in England was being progressed by Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) as part of the Ministry of Justice. This followed the

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recommendation within the Wood Review that secure schools would provide a model based on education and social pedagogy models to better meet the needs of this vulnerable group of children and young people who were detained within a youth justice context.

She stated that the selection process for the provider of the secure school sat solely with HMPPS. However, the Council did have a responsibility for safeguarding children within Medway. She stated that she had been assured that the Director of People would continue to ensure that the wellbeing of children in this setting was being satisfactorily addressed. He and his team would do this through engagement with HMPPS and the provider Oasis Multi-Academy Trust, during the project design to ensure that robust safeguarding processes are in place for children resident in this setting. In addition, Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership had appointed an Independent Scrutineer to ensure that the recommendations of the MSCB Serious Case Review were fully implemented, and to co-ordinate multi-agency oversight of the safeguarding arrangements at both of the youth secure estate settings in Medway.

H) Councillor Khan asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, the following:

“An employment tribunal recently ordered Medway Council to pay a former employee £15,000 on grounds of unfair dismissal. Combined with court fees, this outcome will cost Medway taxpayers tens of thousands of pounds.

What lessons will the Council learn from this case to ensure that, in future, residents do not have to pay for the Council’s mistakes?”

Councillor Gulvin thanked Councillor Khan for her question. He stated that the Council took any organisational change process seriously, whether there were redundancies or not. He stated that the Council was committed to following the organisational change policy which, following this ruling and in response to your question concerning lessons learnt, was being reviewed and would be brought forward to Employment Matters Committee for approval.

He concluded by stating that the additional costs had not been tens of thousands of pounds.

I) Councillor Hubbard asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mrs Josie Iles, the following:

“Can the Portfolio Holder please advise on the following regarding staffing in Children’s Services:

- The number of staff who are agency staff or on interim contracts and the proportion of the total staff that figure represents;
- The number of senior staff at Head of Service or above on interim contracts and the proportion of senior staff that figure represents?”

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Councillor Mrs Josie Iles thanked Councillor Hubbard for his question. She stated that within Children's Social Care there were a total of 420fte total budgeted posts. The number of interim or agency staff currently across Children's Social Care was 72.2fte which equalled 17%.

She stated that the proportion of the 5 senior staff posts on interim contracts currently was 20% with one Interim Assistant Director and 4 Heads of Service one of which was vacant. These were the Head of First Response and Early Help, Head of Children in Care and Head of Quality Assurance and Safeguarding. The vacancy was the Head of Children's Social Work and the Council was currently out to recruitment for this post.

She concluded by stating that she was pleased the recruitment campaign had been successfully completed for two new permanent Assistant Directors for Education and SEND and Children's Social Care respectively. She stated that she was pleased with the positive response seen across both roles and the Council would be interviewing mid-February to secure appointments.

J) Councillor Murray asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member), Councillor Mrs Josie Iles, the following:

“Thomas Aveling School, a popular and successful school favoured by many families who live close by in my Ward, has recently commenced a public consultation on changing their admission criteria to prioritise primary schools within their Trust one of which is outside of their normal catchment area. Recently the Thinking Skills Academy Trust (TSAT) successfully changed their admission arrangements to do this too. This action undermines Medway's admission criteria which currently prioritises the nearest appropriate school and potentially places additional pressure on the Council's finances because applications for school transport assistance could increase.

Is the Portfolio Holder aware that the DFE overruled Medway's objection to the TSAT change and is she prepared to support the Labour Group by writing a joint letter to the Secretary of State asking what he is prepared to do to prevent local authority admission policies being undermined by Academy Trusts?”

Councillor Mrs Josie Iles thanked Councillor Murray for her question. She stated that she was aware of the previous decision by the DFE to overrule Medway's objection and approve The Thinking Schools Academy Trust's (TSAT) change to their secondary admissions over-subscription criteria, which gave a preference to pupils from primary schools within their Trust.

She stated that she was also aware that Medway had objected to Thomas Aveling's initial proposals to change their admissions over-subscription criteria to include a similar element from September 2021.

She stated that as a statutory consultee, the Local Authority would be making its own representations. She had spoken to officers who would respond with a formal objection to the DFE if the school was determined to proceed with the proposal.

K) Councillor Cooper submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett:

“Given the vital importance of robust challenge and scrutiny to the rapid and sustainable improvement of Medway’s Children’s Services, as emphasised by the Commissioner, what assurances can he provide to backbench members of his own group that they will be encouraged to be robust in Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings and that they will not face disciplinary or other action for challenges to the administration?”

L) Councillor McDonald submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Adults’ Services, Councillor Brake:

“According to NHS Data, Medway CCG has a total of 2,917 patients per FTE fully-qualified GP - the highest number of patients per GP in the country. What are the reasons for this and how is the Council addressing them?”

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

609 Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Discussion:

This report provided details of the re-adoption of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20 and included details of the proposed revisions, as set out in section 2 of the report.

The Cabinet considered this report on 14 January 2020, details of which were set out in section 4 of the report.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken on the Scheme, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme, as set out in Appendix 4 to the report, was included in Supplementary Agenda No.1.

The Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, supported by Councillor Tranter, proposed the recommendation in the report.

Decision:

The Council approved the revised Council Tax Reduction Scheme, as set out in Appendix 4 to the report.

610 Amendments to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme

Discussion:

This report provided details of a number of amendments to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme as recommended by Cabinet following the rounds 1 and 2 2019/20 capital budget monitoring reports. The report also included an addition to deliver secondary surge classes following a recommendation from Cabinet on 19 November 2019.

In addition, following confirmation from the government that the Council's £170million Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid has been successful, the report stated that this scheme had been added to the Capital Programme under the Chief Finance Officer's delegated authority. As such, the report also set out a recommendation to reduce the revenue budget by the £850,000 for advance works on the HIF programme, which would now be funded from the capital scheme.

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 addendum report with the following addition:

"The Council is asked to add the schemes set out in sections 3 to 11 of the report to the Capital Programme, approve the virement as set out in section 12 of the report and to remove £850,000 from the Revenue Budget as set out in section 11.2 of the report.

Decision:

The Council agreed to add the schemes set out in sections 3 to 11 of the report to the Capital Programme, approve the virement as set out in section 12 of the report and to remove £850,000 from the Revenue Budget as set out in section 11.2 of the report.

611 Changes to the Corporate Management Team Structure

Discussion:

This report provided details of proposed changes to the corporate management team structure following consideration by Cabinet on 14 January 2020.

In particular, this related to the Children and Adults Directorate by deleting the post of Deputy Director Children and Adult Services, and creating two new Assistant Director roles, namely Assistant Director Children's Services and Assistant Director Schools and SEND and in Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation by deleting the post of Assistant Director Transformation and moving responsibilities currently undertaken by this role to other members of the Corporate Management Team.

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The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Mrs Josie Iles, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

- a) The Council approved the proposed changes to the Council's Corporate Management team structure as detailed in paragraphs 3 and 4 and Appendices A and B to the report with effect from 17 February 2020.
- b) The Council approved the budget transfer between RCET and the Business Support department, to reflect the movement and reallocation of functions as explained in the report.
- c) The Council approved the changes to the Employee Scheme of Delegation (Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Constitution) as set out in Appendix C to the report, noting that the Leader of the Council will agree any changes to delegations relating to executive functions with effect from 17 February 2020.
- d) The Council approved the changes to Article 11 - Employees (Chapter 2 of the Constitution) as set out in Appendix D to the report and the Management Structure (Chapter 7 of the Constitution) as set out in Appendix E to the report with effect from 17 February 2020.

612 Contract Letting - Exceptional Circumstances

Discussion:

This report provided details of details of two contracts awarded in the past year, in accordance with the provisions paragraph 1.8.2 of the Contract Procedure Rules. The report stated that exemptions to Contract Procedure Rules to deal with the letting of contracts in exceptional circumstances where it was considered to be in the best interests of the Council to do so, could be approved by the Monitoring Officer, provided that the exemption did not breach any EU or UK Directive, Statute or Regulation.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, proposed the recommendation set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council noted the contents of the report.

613 Update on a Review of Local Government Ethical Standards

Discussion:

This report provided details of some proposed changes to the Members' Code of Conduct following a report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) on ethical standards in local government, which was published in January 2019. The report also proposed a minor amendment to the Code as a consequence of the Civil Partnership (Opposite-sex Couples) Regulations 2019.

The Councillor Conduct Committee considered this report on 6 November 2019, details of which were set out in the table below paragraph 2.10 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, supported by Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

- a) The Council approved the proposed changes to the Members' Code of Conduct regarding bullying and harassment as recommended by the Councillor Conduct Committee and demonstrated as tracked changes in Section 2 (General Conduct) of Appendix 2 to the report.
- b) The Council approved the additional changes to the Members' Code of Conduct in relation to how the categories of people who could give rise to a Member having a DPI are described in order to comply with the Civil Partnership (Opposite-sex Couples) Regulations 2019, as described in paragraphs 3.1-3.3 of the report and shown as tracked changes at Appendix 2 to the report.
- c) The Council noted the other decisions taken by the Councillor Conduct Committee in response to the best practice recommendations from the Committee on Standards in Public Life, as set out in the table below paragraph 2.10 of the report.

614 Proposal to Include the Seven Principles of Public Life in the Employee Code of Conduct

Discussion:

This report provided details of a recommendation from the Employment Matters Committee that the Seven Principles of Public Life be included in the current Employee Code of Conduct policy following an Internal Audit report on ethics. This would align the Employee Code of Conduct to the Member Code of Conduct. The report also provided details of some proposed minor changes to the Code.

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The Employment Matters Committee considered this report on 4 December 2019, details of which were set out in section 4 of the report.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken on the proposals, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, supported by Councillor Opara, proposed the recommendation set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council approved that the Employee Code of Conduct be amended as set out in appendix 1 to the report, including adding the Seven Principles of Public Life as detailed at paragraph 3.2 of the report.

615 Schedule of Meetings 2020/2021

Discussion:

This report provided details of the provisional programme of meetings for the 2020/2021 municipal year, as set out in Appendix A, for recommendation to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 20 May 2020.

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

Decision:

The Council agreed a provisional programme of Council and Committee meetings for 2020/2021 as set out in Appendix A to the report for recommendation to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 20 May 2020.

616 Motions

A) The Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, supported by Councillor Maple, submitted the following:

“Adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Anti-Semitism

This Council recognises the invaluable role local authorities have to play in tackling all forms of hate crime, working in partnership with local police forces.

Council deplores all incidents of religiously motivated hatred, and notes the worrying trend reflected in the Home Office official statistics from October 2019 which show that 18% of religiously motivated hatred is targeted at Jewish people – up from 12% in 2018 – and that, per capita, Jewish people were most likely to report experiencing hatred.

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Council further notes with concern that The Community Security Trust (CST)'s report on anti-Semitic incidents in the first six months of 2019 showed the highest total on record over a six-month period, and an increase of 10% on the same period in 2018, with over 100 incidents per month for the third year running.

The IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, as adopted by the Government in December 2016, is as follows: 'Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.'

Council recognises the above definition as an invaluable tool for public bodies to understand how anti-Semitism manifests itself in the 21st century.

Council therefore agrees to formally adopt the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, in order to demonstrate this Council's commitment to engaging with the experiences of Jewish communities, to support them against the contemporary challenges they face, and to send a clear message that anti-Semitic behaviour will not be tolerated in Medway."

Decision:

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

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

"In January 2018, this Council passed a motion to become a single use plastic free Council by phasing out the use of unnecessary single use plastic products in all Council buildings and at all Council events, and encouraging our facilities' users, local businesses, stakeholders and other local public agencies to do the same, by championing alternatives. In April 2019, this Council passed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency.

It is therefore clear that Medway Council recognises the global severity of climate change and are committed to working with partners and local communities to tackle the impact of climate change on the local area. Council notes the steps that have been taken to ensure that the above commitments have been upheld, and thanks partners for the vital role they are playing in encouraging and supporting Medway's plastic-free journey.

This Council wishes to place on record its support and thanks to all voluntary groups across Medway making valuable contributions towards reducing the amount of single use plastics being used.

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To further demonstrate this support the Council agrees that the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, as Lead Member for climate change, should represent the Local Authority on the Plastic Free Community steering group, established by the Towards Plastic Free Medway group - which is seeking to achieve Plastic Free Community status for Medway by encouraging local businesses, stakeholders and other local public agencies to phase out the use of unnecessary single use plastic.”

Decision:

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

C) Councillor Mahil, supported by Councillor Khan, submitted the following:

“As an employer, Medway Council recognises more can be done to prevent discrimination and unconscious bias during each stage of recruitment.

One proven method for preventing employment discrimination in the early stages of recruitment is to adopt a “name-blind” application process, wherein the names of applicants are not disclosed.

This Council notes that:

- Name blind recruitment is a positive step to reduce discrimination in employment;
- Name blind recruitment assists in reducing both gender and racial bias in initial recruitment stages;
- Name blind recruitment helps reduce legal risks to employers;
- Name blind recruitment has been effectively implemented in numerous organisations, including the UK Civil Service and UCAS.

This Council resolves:

- To adopt a name-blind recruitment policy in order to reduce unconscious bias during the recruitment process.”

Decision:

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

D) Councillor Stamp, supported by Councillor Murray, submitted the following:

“Chatham Docks is under threat of closure from landlords Peel L&P, who have claimed that the site is no longer financially viable, despite having used their ownership of the land to demonstrate their commitment to employment when applying for residential planning permission on an adjacent site.

The Docks have been designated for ‘mixed use – housing & employment’ in the current version of the Local Plan.

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This Council notes that:

- Chatham Docks is a thriving commercial port which provides over 800 skilled local jobs and 16 apprenticeships, and the vast majority of Chatham Docks employees live in Medway
- The closure of Chatham Docks would have a negative impact on the employees and their families because they would either lose their jobs or have to relocate; some of the businesses at Chatham Docks are physically unable to relocate due to the nature of their operation
- Chatham Docks makes a positive contribution to Medway's economy and uses environmentally sustainable methods to ship goods which would otherwise be transported by road
- Medway's Local Plan has not yet been approved, and previous iterations have been criticised for failing to designate sufficient numbers of sites for employment use.

This Council resolves to ask the relevant officers to consider to:

- Remove 'mixed use – housing & employment' designation for Chatham Docks
- Safeguard employment, skills, and the local economy by re-designating Chatham Docks as solely for employment use before the Local Plan is submitted for approval."

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

For – Councillors Adeoye, Bowler, Browne, Cooper, Curry, Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard, Johnson, Khan, Lloyd, Mahil, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Prenter, Price, Sands, Andy Stamp and Chrissy Stamp (20)

Against – Councillors Aldous, Barrett, Bhutia, Brake, Buckwell, Carr, Chitty, Doe, Etheridge, Filmer, Griffin, Gulvin, Hackwell, Mrs Josie Iles, Jarrett, Kemp, Opara, Potter, Purdy, Tejan, Thompson, Thorne, Tranter, Mrs Elizabeth Turpin, Rupert Turpin, Wildey and Williams (27)

Abstain – Councillor Steve Iles (1)

Note: Councillors Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers OBE, Clarke and Pendergast were not present for the recorded vote.

Decision:

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

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E) Councillor Browne, supported by Councillor Cooper, submitted the following:

“Fireworks are used by people throughout the year to mark different events. While they can bring much enjoyment to some people, they can cause significant problems and fear for other people and animals.

This Council resolves:

- To ask officers to explore how all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries could be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people
- To actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks
- To write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays
- To encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock ‘quieter’ fireworks for public display.”

Decision:

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

Mayor

Date:

Julie Keith, Head of Democratic Services

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