

COUNCIL

29 JULY 2010

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

Author: Wayne Hemingway, Cabinet Coordinator

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 **John Jones of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

Many Medway residents serve in Her Majesty's Armed Forces and many more have family members who serve. They note with concern the Government's budget which announced a pay freeze for all those earning more than £21,000. In the light of the Council's commitment to those who serve their country, will the Administration lobby the local MPs to actively represent the interests of our Armed Forces in respect of improving their pay and conditions?

2.2 Mrs Furlong of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:

With reference to Ridge Meadow School. At the beginning and during the consultation period you said "I can understand these are very upsetting and unsettling times for all involved" So since Ridge Meadow is now the only school out of the original three set to close, why have you or the council not offered any support for the children, families and staff? You have closed us and washed your hands of us.

2.3 Derek Munton of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following question:

Can the Portfolio Holder tell me why he has allowed the entrance to Watts Meadow from Priestfields Road to be closed by a building company, and why was this action taken with no public consultation?

2.4 Alan Collins of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:

What is Medway Council's policy with regards to leasing council-owned properties to charities and charitable organisations?

2.5 Trish Marchant of Gillingham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:

The Leader has stated that 68% of people they asked said they were in favour of a Medway City bid. Can I please have an explanation on how this consultation was carried out, who conducted the consultation, over what period did it extend, and how were the respondents selected.

2.6 Amanda Bowar of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:

Owing to your eagerness to close St John's, parents tried to move their children in to other schools. Nathaniel was accepted by another school and his mum notified schools admissions. However, when St John's was saved his places at both schools were cancelled, and now he is left without a school. Your offer of support on this was "you can appeal". Could you please explain why you have let him down?

2.7 Sam Whittington of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:

Could you please explain clearly and precisely why it is you have refused to apologise to all those involved in the school closures?

2.8 Stacy Wilson of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:

The council faces £6million of cuts. Could you tell the public how much money of their money has been wasted on the school closures you tried to implement?

2.9 Tracy Coutts of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:

Will the Leader say which elected members were consulted about the decision to enable the Pentagon Centre's leaseholder to charge 20p for admission to the renovated toilets?

2.10 Bryan Fowler of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:

Cabinet discussed the letting of the Bus Station contract on Tuesday 20th July - will the Leader confirm this will be debated at Full Council?

2.11 Mrs Furlong of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:

Since I have moved schools my 6 year old is finding the change extremely unsettling, he was a happy and well behaved child at Ridge Meadow. He is now the total opposite and as a result has been excluded 5 times in four months. All of this has put an extra strain on the school's resources and the NHS service and other support services and our family. How can you justify this? This is clearly a result of your actions?

2.12 Trish Marchant of Gillingham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:

Can the leader advise how much money was spent on the Medway City campaign leading up to the bid, including the report "5 Towns Make A City" by Terry Farrell, and also state what proportion came from our council's funds and what proportion came from elsewhere?

2.13 Amanda Bowar of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:

Why did you force parents to remove their children from a school they loved and a security they thrived in before the adjudicator made his decision, causing such upset?

2.14 Sam Whittington of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:

Cabinet Members are supposed to look at all the information present and make an informed decision, but we know from Cabinet meetings that you do not do this as you did not consider any of our documents. You simply agreed with what Cllr Wicks said, which suggests you should not hold your Cabinet positions as you clearly cannot think for yourselves. Do you agree?

2.15 Tracy Coutts of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:

Which Elected Members of the Council knew about the decision to charge for admission to the Pentagon Centre's toilets apart from the Leader of the Council?

2.16 Bryan Fowler of Chatham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:

Why were members of the public not allowed to attend meetings of the Medway Renaissance Partnership (now known by a different name)?

Background papers

None

Lead officer contact:

Wayne Hemingway
Cabinet Coordinator, Democratic Services
Telephone: 01634 332509
Email: wayne.hemingway@medway.gov.uk