

Full Council 16 July 2020 – Schedule of written responses to public questions a not answered at the meeting

Agenda reference	Question	Response
10H	<p>Councillor Maple asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:</p> <p>“The BBC regional radio and television teams which cover Medway are under threat of severe staffing cuts which will undoubtedly impact on their ability to report effectively on everything from a public health pandemic to highlighting a bid for City of Culture.</p> <p>Will the Leader of the Council join me in a joint letter calling on senior BBC executives to reverse this decision to ensure Medway residents continue to receive outstanding public service broadcasting which informs, educates and entertains?”</p>	<p>“Thank you Councillor Maple for your question.</p> <p>Subject to us agreeing the wording, yes.”</p>
10I	<p>Councillor Adeoye asked the Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools, Councillor Potter, the following:</p> <p>“In 2010 the incoming coalition government halted the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme which would have seen a massive improvement in the condition of the school stock throughout the country. In view of the government's recent announcement, what is the financial implication of the condition of Medway's school stock?”</p>	<p>““Thank you for your question.</p> <p>Further to the significant education capital funding we've seen in Medway over recent years we welcome the government's recent announcement for additional funding for the refurbishment of school buildings. We now look forward to further details on how and when the funding will be made available so that we can work with schools to best utilise any capital allocated to provide maximum benefit, and to help enable children learn in the best environments possible.”</p>
10J	<p>Councillor Howcroft-Scott asked the Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools, Councillor Potter, the following:</p> <p>In view of the suspension of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile this year due to the Covid-</p>	<p>“Thank you for your question. The establishment of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS) and profile under the Childcare Act of 2006 and its introduction into settings in 2008, recognised the importance of the early year's stage of a child's life.</p>

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	<p>19 emergency, does the Portfolio Holder agree that children should have a test free start to their statutory education which should be based on approaches that enhance learning and support the curriculum?</p>	<p>The EYFS Framework is a tool that builds knowledge and skills to enhance an early years child's educational journey that progresses their learning to their next stage of development.</p> <p>The EYFS Profile, is a summary of a child's attainment and takes place at the end of the reception year. As it is not a 'test' but a summative assessment, a child cannot pass or fail.</p> <p>The EYFS Framework, refers to the assessment and states that it involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles that in turn shape learning experiences for each child reflected through the observations. It is important that the observations have a dedicated focus and rationale.</p> <p>The assessment informs practitioners of a child's readiness for school entry.</p> <p>The evidence gathered through observation is collated, discussed and interpreted to form a judgement that in turn informs the EYFS Profiles attainment in 17 areas of learning, known as Early Learning Goals. The learning goals are titled under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and Language development • Physical development • Personal, social and emotional development • Literacy • Maths • Understanding the world • Expressive arts and design <p>The EYFS Framework and Profile are very much an approach that looks at the Early Years holistic developmental journey of the child.</p> <p>The EYFS Profile is due to be replaced by a baseline assessment that can be completed on an iPad through activities</p>

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		<p>that take approximately 20 minutes to complete.</p> <p>Extensive consultation was undertaken with practitioners before the EYFS Profile was replaced.</p> <p>The baseline assessment will measure the broad starting points of children upon school entry.”</p>
10K	<p>Councillor Chrissy Stamp asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services - Lead Member (statutory responsibility), Councillor Mrs Josie Iles, the following:</p> <p>Can the Portfolio Holder confirm that, in view of the potential spike in referrals following the return to schools in September, adequate staffing, funding and other resources are in place to cope with any rise in demand, in order not to put at risk improvement following last year's 'Inadequate' judgement?</p>	<p>“Thank you for your question. At the beginning of lockdown Children’s services with the support of our Education colleagues put measures in place to identify and monitor children and young people’s attendance in schools. This enabled us all to monitor the most vulnerable children within Medway and to ensure that additional support was provided to them when needed. This included daily telephone/email contact with schools, regular meetings with Headteachers to ensure that communication and information sharing was frequent and relevant, and children’s services were able to put in place additional support for vulnerable children and schools at this time. For example, those children who were not attending school, early help hubs created activity resource packs and delivered these to approximately 800 Family’s across Medway.</p> <p>Children’s Services has experienced a reduction in referrals for support during lockdown. This may result in a spike in demand from September 2020 onwards as schools, health providers and the other agencies supporting children recover and resume their services.</p> <p>In June as more children and young people returned to school, to support a potential spike in referrals, additional support was offered to schools over and above that which is readily available to them daily. The additional school support service came via teams of multi-agency professionals; including early help workers, social workers, education psychologists, 0-25 and at times school</p>

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		<p>nurses working virtually together and being available daily for discussions with schools when there were worries or concerns about a child. These discussions were available to each Area/zone in Medway twice a day (4 in the morning and 4 late afternoon). This enabled concerns to be identified early and for the right level of intervention to be recommended for families and for safeguarding concerns to continue to be managed timely and effectively within the single point of access and Multi-agency safeguarding hub, First Response.</p> <p>Prior to the summer holidays, the early help service has been working with schools to engage those family's schools will be most worried about during the summer holidays. It is hoped that families will then work with early help during the holidays and be provided with any additional support needed.</p> <p>In September, the school support service will continue daily and support any potential spike in contacts and referrals to the front door, by providing that initial discussion (if needed) when concerns are identified.</p> <p>Contacts that progress to the SPA and MASH will be assessed for the right level of intervention. If the recommendation is that further support is needed, our early help teams and assessment teams have workloads which will enable them to respond efficiently and effectively for children and families in Medway."</p>
10L	<p>Councillor Andy Stamp asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:</p> <p>"Shelter estimates that more than 225,000 renters have fallen into arrears since March meaning the total of renters in arrears is now over 440,000.</p>	<p>"Thank you for your question Councillor Stamp. We continue to work, through our homelessness prevention activity, to reduce the number of people that are at risk of losing their home.</p> <p>My officers are continually in communication with advisors from MHCLG to discuss the systemic issues of homelessness and have undertaken a range of initiatives through the Pandemic</p>

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	<p>Lord Greenhalgh has stated there would be no extension to the current ban on evictions which is due to finish on 23rd August.</p> <p>Will the Portfolio Holder write to the MHCLG to urge a more compassionate approach than simply removing protections in Mid-August which will leave thousands vulnerable particularly as a result of a loss of income due to CoVid19?"</p>	<p>to engage with landlords and tenants to address potential homelessness issues.</p> <p>In addition, there is a number of pre-eviction protocols in place to ensure full consideration is given to the circumstances of each household, and there will also be scrutiny from the court before action is taken.</p> <p>Therefore, at this stage, we will not be writing to MHCLG about this issue, but we will monitor the position closely and make appropriate representation to the Ministry if we feel it is necessary".</p>

Democratic Services

30 July 2020