

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Medway Council**  
**Thursday, 8 October 2020**  
**7.00pm to 11.15pm**  
**Record of the meeting**

- Present:** The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway (Councillor Tejan)
- Councillors Bowler, Brake, Browne, Buckwell,  
Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers, OBE, Chitty, Cooper,  
Curry, Doe, Etheridge, Fearn, Gulvin, Hackwell, Howcroft-Scott,  
Jarrett, Kemp, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Pendergast,  
Potter, Prenter, Price, Purdy, Sands, Tranter, Rupert Turpin and  
Wildey
- In Attendance:** Neil Davies, Chief Executive  
Wayne Hemingway, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
Perry Holmes, Chief Legal Officer/Monitoring Officer  
Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer

**300 Apologies for absence**

During this period, it was informally agreed between the two political groups, due the Coronavirus pandemic, to run Medway Council meetings with a reduced number of participants. This was to reduce risk, comply with Government guidance and enable more efficient meetings. Therefore, the apologies given reflects that informal agreement of reduced participants.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor expressed his best wishes to Cllr Steve Iles, who was recovering from a stroke.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adeoye, Ahmed, Aldous, Barrett, Bhutia, Carr, Clarke, Filmer, Griffin, Hubbard, Mrs Josie Iles, Steve Iles, Johnson, Khan, Lloyd, Mahil, McDonald, Opara, Andy Stamp, Chrissy Stamp, Thompson, Thorne, Mrs Elizabeth Turpin and Williams.

**301 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

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### Other significant interests (OSIs)

Councillor Kemp declared an OSI in Motion 17C (which related to the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority) as a member of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Board. He left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor Maple declared an OSI in Motion 17C (which related to the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority) as a member of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Board. He left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor Tranter declared an OSI in Motion 17C (which related to the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority) as a member of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Board. He left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor Rupert Turpin declared an OSI in agenda item 12 (Additions and Amendments to the Capital Programme and Rent Setting for New Properties at Ingram Road, Gillingham) as his son attended Abbey Court School. He left the meeting for the remainder of the agenda following his making the declaration of interest.

### Other interests

Councillor Bowler declared an interest in agenda item 12 (Additions and Amendments to the Capital Programme and Rent Setting for New Properties at Ingram Road, Gillingham) as a member of the Planning Committee. He left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor Curry declared an interest in agenda item 12 (Additions and Amendments to the Capital Programme and Rent Setting for New Properties at Ingram Road, Gillingham) as a member of the Planning Committee. He left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor Doe declared an interest in agenda item 8 (Leader's Report) as the Chairman and Director of Medway Commercial Group Ltd and as a Director of Medway Development Company Ltd and he relied on a dispensation granted by the Councillor Conduct Committee to enable him to take part in the discussion on this item.

Councillor Etheridge declared an interest in agenda item 12 (Additions and Amendments to the Capital Programme and Rent Setting for New Properties at Ingram Road, Gillingham) as a member of the Planning Committee.

Councillor Gulvin declared an interest in agenda item 8 (Leader's Report) as a Director of Medway Development Company Ltd and he relied on a dispensation granted by the Councillor Conduct Committee to enable him to take part in the discussion on this item.

Councillor Turpin declared an interest in agenda item 8 (Leader's Report) as the Chairman of Medway Norse and a Director of Medway Commercial Group

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Ltd and he relied on a dispensation granted by the Councillor Conduct Committee to enable him to take part in the discussion on this item.

### **302 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 16 July 2020 was agreed by the Council and signed by The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway as correct.

### **303 Mayor's announcements**

The Worshipful Mayor of Medway, on behalf of all Members, placed on record the Council's condolences to the family of Richard Guichard, who had died in August 2020. He was a former Gillingham Borough Councillor between 1992 and 1997 and Medway Councillor between 1997 and 2007. Former Councillor Guichard had held several significant positions including Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, and spokesperson on Finance and Corporate Services and Education and Lifelong Learning Committees.

The Mayor also advised the Council that he would be hosting an online Opera Evening, starting at 6:30pm on Friday 30 October. Tickets would cost £30, which would allow access to all those viewing via a single device. The event would include a raffle in support of the Mayoral charity.

### **304 Leader's announcements**

There were none.

### **305 Petitions**

#### Public

There were none.

#### Members

Councillor Brake referred to a petition on behalf of members of the public in relation to various matters causing disruption to the public in respect of Domino's Pizza in Walderslade.

### **306 Public questions**

The Mayor announced that Council rules stated that should a member of the public be unable to attend the meeting they would receive a written response to their question. However, given the current exceptional circumstances, the Council had not asked members of the public to attend the meeting in person. Therefore, the 20 public questions submitted would be answered at the meeting on the basis set out in paragraph 7.1 of the Remote Meetings Protocol.

**A) Sarah Burns of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:**

“Nelson Road is like a race track, there is nowhere to cross safely and there are more and more children moving into the road, would the Council install speed cameras and a pedestrian crossing?”

Responding on behalf of Councillor Filmer, Councillor Gulvin thanked Mrs Burns for her question. He said that the Council took all highway safety concerns seriously and that it worked to promote and improve road safety across Medway. He undertook to assess the location in question to see if improvements could be made. He advised that speed enforcement was a police matter and that residents may wish to contact the Police directly to register concerns that drivers were not adhering to the speed limit.

**B) Adam Dyjak of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:**

“Why hasn't Gillingham bus depot been moved to the old Chatham bus station? We'd save on Co2 with buses going a shorter distance to the station and with Gillingham bus depot being empty if it moves we'd be able to put more housing on the empty lot.”

Responding on behalf of Councillor Filmer, Councillor Gulvin thanked Mr Dyjak for his question. He said that Arriva Kent and Medway owned and operated the Gillingham bus depot. As they were a private company, the Council did not have any influence over the potential relocation of their engineering and maintenance activities elsewhere. Aside from this, it was unlikely that the former Chatham Bus Station at the Pentagon would have the capacity to accommodate Arriva's fleet of over one hundred vehicles, all their engineering and maintenance equipment and facilities for the staff that worked there.

**C) Mick Miller of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

“I joined Kent Wire in 1992 and have spent nearly 30 years employed at this company. I have worked hard during my time with Kent Wire and earned a good salary. But more importantly I work with some great people, past and present. Now I'm training some really great young local talent, the next generation to take Kent Wire forward. Can Councillor Chitty give me and the young generation in the business assurances that I'm not wasting my time or theirs and that she will protect Chatham Docks and the well-paid jobs that rely on the Docks?”

Councillor Chitty thanked Mr Miller for his question. She said that the Council was working on the evidence base that would support its new Local Plan, which would plan for growth in Medway over the next 17 years. The Plan would include not only planning for the housing to meet Medway's growing population, in order to meet clear Government targets, but also the employment and other

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services and facilities to make Medway a truly sustainable city of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Councillor Chitty advised that it was not appropriate for Full Council to make decisions in relation to future allocations or zonings in relation to the Local Plan, as those decisions must be informed by a considerable evidence base. That work was continuing and the draft Local Plan was currently programmed to be considered by the Council's Cabinet in March 2021.

**D) Mark Donnelly of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

"I've spent all of my working life in Chatham Docks. My father had a senior job with ArcelorMittal Kent Wire, and I followed in his footsteps and have a career in Chatham Docks. I earn a good salary and have responsibilities to my family to keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table. I've looked at what employment alternatives are available to me if Chatham Docks closes, and there is nothing to compare with my current job. Can Councillor Chitty give me and my family assurances that she will look after me and my family and save Chatham Docks and my job?"

Councillor Chitty thanked Mr Donnelly for his question. She said that the Council was working on the evidence base that would support its new Local Plan, which would plan for growth in Medway over the next 17 years. The Plan would include not only planning for the housing to meet Medway's growing population, in order to meet clear Government targets, but also the employment and other services and facilities to make Medway a truly sustainable city of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Councillor Chitty advised that it was not appropriate for Full Council to make decisions in relation to future allocations or zonings in relation to the Local Plan, as those decisions must be informed by a considerable evidence base. That work was continuing and the draft Local Plan was currently programmed to be considered by the Council's Cabinet in March 2021.

**E) Zara Mughal of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Children Services, Cllr Mrs Josie Iles, the following:**

"At Full Council in July 2016, Mr Stephen Goldsbrough asked the following public question.

'Following the death of Alan Kurdi last September, there was a huge public outpouring of generosity. People were willing to offer their homes to refugees, individuals and families wanted to foster etc. The government has set up a coordinating page on its [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website for the public who wish to offer help. It is questionable whether the website is allowing those compassionate people who want to help to be able to do so effectively, therefore does the Portfolio Holder support the principle of a localised version of this on the Medway Council website?'

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In responding to the question, Cllr Rupert Turpin stated that 'the answer, in short, would be "yes"'. Now in 2020 I am asking why has the Council failed to act on what it promised to do four years ago?"

Responding on behalf of Councillor Mrs Josie Iles, Councillor Potter thanked Ms Mughal for her question. She said that Medway Council had considered its existing arrangements for supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and put in place new arrangements to develop a framework to manage this area of work. This work had been completed and a new framework put in place in 2017 through the Council's partnership commissioning team and this has been so successful that all 22 children who had used the service had been placed on the same day. These children would then be subject to the full range of care and support that every looked after child in Medway received.

With regard to local information on the Medway website, the website had been redeveloped and information renewed.

**F) Gary Graham of Rainham asked Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:**

"Who sanctioned the applying political, inappropriate and quite frankly distressing art on Saxon Way/Riverside Gillingham?"

Examples, such as Pritti Patel smiling over a washed up refugee body, the cabinet picnicking over, what I assume are COVID body bags and whether a fan or not, the Prime Minister is portrayed in every so called piece of art as a grossly overweight person, even exposing his body is quite frankly at this time something I feel distressed and angered by. People enjoy the area for its walks and escapism from everything which is going on at this present time. Please if you are using my money to fund such ridiculous projects give me a rebate or better still improve your support services during the present crisis."

Councillor Doe thanked Mr Graham for his question. He said that the exhibition, by the artist and satirist Cold War Steve had been brought to Riverside Country Park as part of a national project in partnership with Sky Arts, bringing art to outdoor spaces. This touring exhibition would also be exhibited in Liverpool and Coventry, which would become the third UK City of Culture next year.

The artist's work, whilst not to everyone's taste, was satirical, placing celebrities and politicians in incongruous settings. His often challenging and thought-provoking work had also featured on the front cover of Time magazine and was designed to stimulate conversation and engagement. Medway's bid for UK City of Culture 2025, would challenge convention and open up Medway's green spaces, shopping centres, stadiums and public areas into venues that showcase world-class creativity for everyone.

Councillor Doe said that Riverside Country Park had been selected as a venue by the artist, and to ensure nature and wildlife was not impacted by the installation, permission was sought and granted by the Council's Greenspaces

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Team and Natural England, the Government's adviser for the natural environment in England.

Sky Arts and the artist had funded the exhibition and Councillor Doe confirmed that no Council budget or Council tax derived money had been used.

**G) Claire Reed of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, the following:**

"I am in need of help with antisocial behaviour around the Lordswood Library area. A few years ago the Council built a smoking shelter but this was quickly vandalised. It is now used as a meeting point with sometimes around 20 youths who constantly shout, swear, smash bottles, litter and urinate wherever they wish!

My main concern is that they climb on this shelter to gain access to the library roof, I have even seen them playing football up there. This surely is a health and safety issue. I have asked our local Councillor if it can be taken down but years later it is still there. I feel as if I am being ignored, each time I log it with the police which means they have to keep coming out which is not good given how busy they are.

What will the Council do to tackle this antisocial behaviour?"

Councillor Gulvin thanked Ms Reed for her question. He said that in terms of tackling anti-social behaviour, Medway Council staff worked closely with Kent Police through the Community Safety Unit (CSU) located at Medway Police Station.

The Council had liaised with colleagues in Kent Police around the concerns of anti-social behaviour and had been assured that the CSU and in particular the local PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) were working to address the issue.

The Council also had detached workers from Youth Services working in Lordswood, and they would continue to do so with the aim of providing diversionary activities, while also liaising with the PCSO.

Councillor Gulvin said that colleagues in the Library Service would continue to report incidents to Kent Police. Anti-climb paint had been used on the building and there was one CCTV camera in place. The Service was in the process of reviewing access points to the roof, and investigating the possibility of some additional CCTV, as well as setting up a multi-agency meeting to discuss further strategies.

Councillor Gulvin advised Ms Reed that, in his role as the as the Chair of the Medway Community Safety Partnership, he would be happy to discuss the issue further should Ms Reed make contact with him.



**H) Kay Hutchfield of Cuxton asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:**

“Given the long overdue re-opening of the Cuxton Household Waste and Recycling Centre and the inconvenience the closure caused for users as well as the increased fly-tipping this exacerbated, residents are understandably anxious about speculation on the future of the site. Could the Portfolio Holder confirm whether there are any short or long term plans to develop Cuxton Household Waste and Recycling Centre into a depot for Medway Norse vehicles?”

Responding on behalf of Councillor Filmer, Councillor Gulvin thanked Ms Hutchfield for her question. He confirmed that there were currently no plans in place to turn the Cuxton Household Waste and Recycling Centre into a depot for Medway Norse vehicles.

**I) Jonathan Brind of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

“In some areas local authorities are reporting that air quality improved as a result of the measures taken to control the virus.

Can the Portfolio Holder reveal if the lockdown resulted in a reduction in air pollution in Medway and in doing so what the figures were for PM2.5 pollution?”

Councillor Chitty thanked Mr Brind for his question. She said that the Air Quality team had some preliminary data from the Council’s continuous monitoring stations which, in general, had shown a significant reduction in nitrogen dioxide concentrations across the network. However, there was some element of seasonality in relation to the levels. Therefore, reductions may have been due to lower traffic volumes but also due to the weather conditions.

Councillor Chitty said that the true ongoing impact of the pandemic on air quality would not be known for some time to come. In terms of 2020, the monitoring data had to be fully ratified and would be subject to the necessary data checks and adjustments as required by Defra and so would not be published until next year’s Annual Status Report.

Going forward if some of the behavioural changes around travel, working from home, walking and cycling etc. were maintained, there may be some positive impacts on air quality. However, in addition to reviewing the monitoring data over a longer period of time, the Council would also need to look at data around travel behaviour and traffic flows.

**J) Wendy Selman of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, the following:**

“Historically in my area we have had great wardens like Muriel and Zehra supporting our community.



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We now have the situation that the Council has removed wardens allocated to geographical areas across Medway. Since that change there has been a sharp decline in the state of the surrounding area especially concerning Old Road. Amongst the debris, without me having to look closely were; used disposable gloves, condoms/wrappers, syringe wrappers, face masks, dirty wipes and tissues, an empty bottle of Jack Daniels and a variety of empty bottles, crisp packets and takeaway food packaging and left over food. This is not only unacceptable but a matter of urgency due to the hazard posed to health and safety of all local residents.

Will the Council urgently consider the re-introduction of geographically based wardens?"

Councillor Rupert Turpin thanked Mrs Selman for her question. He said that during early 2020, there had been a fundamental restructure across the Council's Front Line Services division to enable services to be delivered in a new way to reflect the changing needs of the local communities and modern local government agenda. Due to delays relating to the current pandemic and the need to prioritise service delivery to vulnerable people, the new structure had not been fully implemented until 1 July 2020.

Under the new structure, the Community Warden Service had been split into specialist functions, taking their work with them. By putting the officers into specialist teams, they had been given better career progression and the new structure allowed the Council to be more efficient and streamlined in relation to the front line services offered. Additionally, not all officers were undertaking all parts of the existing Community Warden role, for valid personal reasons. This had led to pressures in some areas and parts of the work not receiving the dedicated attention it required.

Councillor Rupert Turpin said that the Council's online reporting system should be used to log issues such as street cleanliness, refuse/recycling being put out early, or fly tipping. This would allow issues to be actioned promptly by the relevant teams in the Council. He also thanked Mrs Selman for bringing issues in her area to the Council's attention.

In relation to Old Road, he said that following feedback received by the Waste Services team on the decline in cleanliness in Old Road, cleansing frequency had been reviewed and increased. Car park cleansing would be monitored by a Waste Warden for four weeks and if more frequent cleansing was required, parking services would be notified.

**K) Phil Taylor of Rochester asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

"As of 1 September 2020, how many of the 3,540 jobs promised as part of the 2013 Chatham Waters development have been created and what confidence does the Council have that this level of employment will ever be achieved?"

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Councillor Chitty thanked Mr Taylor for his question. She said that the development on the site was on going and was still at a relatively early stage in terms of delivery. So far, in terms of completions, this had included ASDA, the university technical college and a Marston's restaurant and pub, which collectively had provided approximately 500 jobs. In addition, the provision of these has seen over £120m of construction costs, which had generated 820 person years of construction employment, the equivalent of 96 full time jobs.

Based on the 500 jobs created so far, the development completed had contributed £19m of GVA (Gross Value Added) to the local economy every year.

Councillor Chitty said that the first phases of residential development were currently taking place on site, which would provide for just under 400 units with there being commercial units on the ground floor. These units would provide another 100 jobs and an additional £3.8m of GVA for the local economy annually. Linked to this would be indirect and supply chain jobs which it was estimated would provide a further 200 jobs.

The site had so far delivered an additional £1.1m of business rates, £9.5m of improvements to the local highway network, £1m S106 to local services and parks as well as the undoubted benefit of the UTC upskilling young residents of Medway.

The next phase of development was currently under discussion. This would come forward as a planning application shortly with there due to be on-site delivery of 25% affordable housing, equating to 237 units.

**L) Gary Rosewell of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

“It was evident during the lockdown period that Chatham Docks remained active throughout the duration with critical businesses supported by key workers providing essential services to Medway, the region and nationally. Waste management facilities, ship repairs, fabrication services continued to operate with site staff placing themselves and their families at risk to support the community and ensure some continuity of the economy. These unprecedented and exceptional circumstances experienced over the past 4 months further personifies the importance of maintaining the docks as a working entity. With unemployment continuing to climb exponentially and will continue to do so, does the Council agree that it would be foolhardy and perhaps even fiscal suicide to close established, fiscally stable critical services for the hospitality, residential and retail influenced businesses?”

Councillor Chitty thanked Mr Rosewell for his question. She said that it was important that the Council worked to produce a Local Plan that met the growing needs of Medway in terms of housing, employment and all other services, to make it a truly sustainable location. This included responding to the changing needs of the world following Covid.

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Councillor Chitty said that it would not be appropriate for her to respond in relation to individual sites at Full Council as that could prejudice the work on the Local Plan. Decisions had to be taken based on the full knowledge and understanding of a considerable evidence base, which was currently being completed. The draft Local Plan would be considered by Cabinet in March 2021, including a full and detailed report on all the evidence base.

**M) Peter Alexander of Gillingham asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Alan Jarrett, the following:**

“Tim Strangleman’s recent report on the economic impact report on closing Chatham Docks which states closure of the Docks would lead to:

- £258 million worth of business lost per annum.
- 2200 + jobs lost. 800 highly skilled, well paid jobs will go at the Docks. 1440 more local jobs will be lost from the supply chain / local stakeholders who rely on Docks trade. 200 planned new on-site jobs will not happen.
- Environmental cost. There will be a massive increase in CO2 emissions (12,610t/CO2 per year) through loss of onsite recycling, engineering and transport of finished goods that can currently be done by water.

Would the Leader of the Council agree that immediate threats to Medway’s local economy, through the closure of Chatham Docks far outweigh the supposed future benefits of re-classifying for mixed-use development?”

Councillor Jarrett thanked Mr Alexander his question. He said that Tim Strangleman’s report had been given to the Local Plan team for consideration in relation to the evolving Local Plan. Land owners had also submitted information to support their contention that the site should be allocated for a mixed use development.

Work on the Local Plan was progressing, as Councillor Chitty had previously confirmed. Considerable work was on-going in relation to the evidence base to support the Local Plan. As advised at previous Full Council meetings, Councillor Jarrett confirmed that it was not appropriate for comments to be made in relation to individual sites at these meetings, as to do so without consideration of the full evidence base and a detailed report from officers to support that, could be considered to be a pre-determination of the Local Plan and bring into jeopardy all the considerable work, some 7 years, undertaken so far. The Draft Local Plan, supported by a completed evidence base, would be reported to Cabinet in March 2021.

**N) Stephen Dyke of Strood asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Alan Jarrett, the following:**

“As a result of climate change, Britain is likely to face more extremes of weather in future, with warmer, wetter winters and hotter summers with more thunderstorms.

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Now that funding has been secured, major infrastructure projects planned for the Hoo Peninsula will begin, followed by house building on a huge scale. Cllr Jarrett is on record as recognising the importance of providing sustainable growth, so can he please advise what specific safeguards have been or will be put in place by Medway Council to ensure that all development on the Hoo Peninsula takes into account the climate emergency and will be designed to fully meet the needs of our future changed climate?"

Councillor Jarrett thanked Mr Dyke for his question. He said that Medway Council had declared a climate emergency in April 2019 and supported the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy; clean, sustainable growth was at the heart of the Strategy that would be presented to Members of the Council in due course.

A rolling five-year climate change Action Plan was currently being developed with a key priority of the Plan being the development of the emerging Local Plan, including policies to promote low carbon development and transport.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to include in their Local Plans 'policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the LPA's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change'. The Local Plan would be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal which included consideration of the impacts, both negative and positive, of proposed policies and allocations on climate change.

Councillor Jarrett said that Medway Council was commissioning a study of the potential for district heating distribution networks, which included the Hoo Peninsula. Sustainability was embedded in the Hoo Development Framework, which was currently being developed by the Planning Service, to provide guidance on the principles and approaches to securing sustainable growth on the Hoo Peninsula. The Framework would set out the sustainable location of services, neighbourhoods and transport.

Medway Council was undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment for the Road and Rail schemes, and all works would be subject to rigorous testing via the planning process and stakeholder and community consultation. The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) for Hoo was providing a new rail facility linking passengers to the Medway stations and to London Charing Cross.

He said that the new road and environmental schemes were being designed and costed to provide long term improvements in walking and cycling provision. Together, these investments would assist in delivering sustainable transport options for both current and growing communities on the Hoo Peninsula to support a low carbon future.

Councillor Jarrett said that a key air quality issue had been the impact of queuing traffic on Four Elms Hill. The new road infrastructure would significantly reduce queuing traffic and contribute to improving local air quality.

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He concluded by stating that the HIF bid would see investment in a network of new and accessible parkland areas. These would be areas of value for wildlife and for people. Trees and hedges would be planted to address hotter summers, creating new wetland and meadows to help address wetter winters alongside traffic free walking and cycling routes. This would be in addition to the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme and good urban design.

**O) Zi Fincham of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake, the following:**

“The debacle and disaster that is now the state of Medway surgeries is a direct consequence of Medway CCGs arrogant and dismissive attitude despite my continually warning them of the strongest objections against awarding DMC Healthcare contracts based in patient experience expressed to me at the time.

For two years I have been strongly objecting to Medway CCG's centralisation policies and still they would not listen. Now since the CQC intervention I have been proved unequivocally correct.

Two years ago Medway CCG were also told the Sunlight Surgery should be viewed as the main surgery - as shown time and again by patient and public preference and evidence I currently have – for reasons of ease of accessibility and community centre facilities.

Two years ago they were also told that Twydall Surgery was necessary and needed because of the elderly patient population that uses that surgery for accessibility reasons. Again I have current evidence to support this assertion.

For two years Medway CCG has continued to not listen to patient and public objections in telephone complaints, written complaints, objections at meetings. It took the CQC to stop Medway CCG's determined plans.

Now Medway CCG (under the guise of Kent and Medway CCG) is repeating All the same mistakes again with the allocation of surgeries:

- Still preferring St Mary's Island as the main surgery
- Bringing surgeries under that umbrella, including the Sunlight, but omitting any mention of Twydall as branch surgeries
- Still ignoring patient rights re centralisation of patients' records.
- Yes, there are changes happening, slowly - because they have been forced upon the CCG by the CQC.
- Those few changes made to date have not been sufficiently publicised to reach the wider patient and public audience and still do not appear to be in line with public opinion and wishes.

Patients want and deserve reliable GP services where they need them, not where they are told they can have them.

The CCG is still not listening, still determined to repeat old mistakes in new ways, still determined to pursue their own agenda. As such, I would like the

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CCG to be forced to hold more and more regular public meetings to ensure patient and public views are actually heard, taken seriously, listened to and acted on, in line with patient opinion and wishes and further that the requested public meetings offer patients and the public alike proper and full insight into CCG proposals and plans for their surgeries before the CCG enacts their plans. In other words, show the public they have a true and proper and full say in their surgeries' futures.

In light of all the above, what is the Portfolio Holder doing or going to do to hold - and make - the CCG accountable to all patients and the public in the manner spoken of in this submission?"

Councillor Brake thanked Ms Fincham for her question. He said that the Council had the power to review and scrutinise the planning, provision and operation of health services in Medway and in common with many other local authorities the Council had made this the responsibility of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. One of the most important functions of that Committee was to ensure that the needs and experiences of local people were considered as an integral part of the commissioning and delivery of health services and that those services were effective and safe.

The Committee had the power to ask for information about the performance of local health services and was able to seek independent verification of information provided by health service commissioners and providers. In this context concerns raised by patients in relation to DMC Healthcare operated GP and dermatology services, as well as wider primary care issues, had been considered by the Committee on a number of occasions during the last two years, including most recently on 18 August 2020. In relation to services previously operated by DMC Healthcare, Councillor Brake said that he shared the concerns expressed at Committee meetings that the difficulties experienced by the provider appeared to have been allowed to escalate and that the Committee had not been made aware of the issues sooner.

The Committee expected to be kept regularly updated on the situation. This would include being provided a report that was due to be presented to the CCG Governing Body that would contain findings in relation to the problems experienced by DMC Healthcare. The Committee also expected to be updated on the work being undertaken by the CCG to find a permanent provider to replace DMC Healthcare.

Councillor Brake confirmed that Kent and Medway CCG already held public meetings that enabled local people to raise concerns with these meetings taking place online. While the Committee could not compel the CCG to take a particular course of action, it did require regular CCG attendance at meetings and was able to make formal recommendations to the CCG which must be responded to within 28 days of the request.

Medway Council also commissioned HealthWatch Medway to ensure that the patient voice was heard, with Healthwatch being a non-voting member of the Committee. HealthWatch had a duty to advocate for the local population,



specifically in relation to NHS service quality and had published a report that set out their findings on primary care access and DMC Healthcare. He suggested that Ms Fincham may, therefore, also like to get in touch with HealthWatch Medway directly in relation to her concerns.

**P) John Castle of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

“Several schools in Medway are situated near main roads. The presence of a school in such locations increases the traffic on top of the pre-existing volume of traffic. The danger is that such schools are in areas where air pollution is not as good as it should be. This is bad for parents, teachers, children and residents.

I believe that new schools should not be placed near high traffic volume roads, or in areas that would become at risk with the presence of a school. I also believe that existing schools near main roads should put in place preventative measures to ensure the school is protected from poor air quality.

Other councils have already put in place such measures, will Medway Council also adopt the same measures?”

Councillor Chitty thanked Mr Castle for his question. She said that she was delighted when the issue of air quality received attention. The issue was a significant one in most urban areas and alongside most busy main roads, which included a number of areas in Medway. Most of the air quality issues related to traffic and it was therefore important that schools were located close to the areas they served so that pupils could travel to school by means other than private car. The availability of safe routes to school was an important consideration to facilitate children walking or cycling as well as working with the school and local bus companies to provide a school bus service that worked for local children. A great example of this work on bus services was the new school currently under construction in Rainham. The Council also worked with schools to develop school travel plans to discourage the drop off and pick up of pupils by private cars.

Councillor Chitty said that in conjunction with the KM Green School Awards, the Council had been working with schools to raise the awareness of air quality and the effect it had on people’s health and what action schools could take to reduce these impacts. This had involved children monitoring air quality on their school grounds. This year, schools had been asked to consider the impact of idling cars and the Council had run an anti-idling poster competition. An air quality video had been produced, which was accessible by all Medway schools. Schools had acknowledged air quality as an important issue and children were keen to be involved in it.



**Q) Chris Spalding of Gillingham asked the Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools, Councillor Potter, the following:**

“Last July the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System refused the merger of Stoke Primary School with Allhallows Primary School.

Despite this decision, the Leigh Academy Trust continued to transport year 5 and 6 pupils who would normally attend Stoke Village School to Allhallows.

Leigh Academy Trust now in a letter to parents and carers dated 23 September stated the intention to transport Year 2 pupils to Allhallows from 28 September.

This is clearly a merger of the schools by stealth.

What is the Portfolio Holder going to do to stop this?”

Councillor Potter thanked Mr Spalding for his question. Councillor Potter said that he had been notified by Councillor Filmer of the decision by the Leigh Academies Trust on 23 September and that he had tasked senior officers with investigating this to ensure that the Trust was complying with the decision of the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and not attempting to merge the two schools.

He said that officers had taken up the matter urgently with the Regional Schools Commissioners Office (RSC). Representatives from the RSC reported that the Chief Executive of Leigh Academies Trust had explained that the Trust had a difficult situation of a small year 2 cohort at Stoke, who were in a mixed class with some young year 1 pupils, and a teacher absent through long-term leave. Trust leaders reported that they had maintained communication with parents, believing that they were all happy with the solution to educate the children in a single year group class at All Hallows. On-going communication with the RSC office would provide an overview of compliance with the decision by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State not to permit the closure of Stoke School and the expansion of Allhallows.

**R) Alan Collins Rosell of Gillingham asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:**

“Just over 2 weeks ago, on 23 September, the bi+ community marked the 22nd Bi Visibility Day. Whilst it is an occasion for those of us who identify within the bi umbrella to celebrate our sexual identity, it is also an important reminder of the challenges that members of the bi+community continue to face.

For example, those who identify as bisexual are far more likely to experience mental health problems in general (43% compared to 25% in the wider population) and in particular depression and/or anxiety (34% compared to 17% in the wider population). Members of the bi+ community, and in particular bi men, are also far less likely to be open with family, friends and work colleagues than other members of the LGBT+ community. Research conducted by Stonewall in 2018, for example, revealed 30% of bi men and 8% of bi women

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felt unable to be open about their sexual orientation with any of their friends, compared to just 2% of gay men and 1% of lesbians.

Clearly there is a long way to go to achieve parity for the bi+ community and many councils are taking positive steps to increase support, particularly around Bi Visibility Day. For example, many councils are now including specific information relevant to bisexuality into the equality training they provide to staff, both in respect of the workplace and in respect of service delivery, and I'm sure that as a local authority representing an area as diverse as ours, Medway Council is already providing staff with high-quality training in line with its own equality policies.

However, in light of the specific issues faced by members of the bi+ community, will the Leader of the Council commit to adding Bi Visibility Day to the calendar of events marked by the Council, including flying the bisexual pride flag outside Gun Wharf every 23 September, providing specific training or information to staff as to why Bi Visibility Day is relevant to the services they provide and taking any other additional steps the Council feels appropriate to mark the occasion?"

Councillor Jarrett thanked Mr Collins Rosell for his question. He said that Medway Council was committed to being both a responsible employer and an example within the community in relation to matters of equality and diversity.

The Council had a suite of Equality and Diversity training for staff, which included sexual orientation. It also had an Equalities Board which was chaired by the Chief Executive and supported by the Head of HR. This forum provided staff the opportunity to directly discuss any areas of concern, to share good practice and identify opportunities for improvement.

Additionally, the Council had also recently taken steps to rejuvenate staff forums in order to increase their activity and involvement. Councillor Jarrett was pleased to report that the Council's LGBTQi Forum was in the process of electing a new chair and also thinking about future focus areas.

**S) Vivienne Parker of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:**

"What is the purpose of a cycle lane which runs for only 20ft like the one at the top of City Way?"

Responding on behalf of Councillor Filmer, Councillor Gulvin thanked Ms Parker for her question. He advised that short lengths of cycle lane provided a transition between different types of cycle route. The short cycle lane at the top of City Way, near Marconi Way was intended to help northbound cyclists leaving the shared footway/cycleway to join the main carriageway.

Councillor Gulvin confirmed that the cycle lane was mandatory, meaning traffic must not enter it, and it provided cyclists with the space to establish themselves at the point where they enter the road.

**T) Bryan Fowler of Chatham asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:**

“Medway Council has recently introduced dedicated cycle lanes in line with its commitment to more active travel. What influence have Medway Councillors, especially those who are Bridge Wardens, had on the decision to remove the separate cycle lane on the new Rochester Bridge between Strood and Rochester?”

**Note:** The Mayor stated that since the time allocation for public questions had been exhausted, a written response would be provided to question 7T.

**307 Leader's report**

**Discussion:**

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

- The local response to Covid-19
- Children's Services and Ofsted monitoring visits
- Housing developments in Medway
- Medway Commercial Group Ltd police investigation
- Unemployment in Medway
- Council finances
- Waste and recycling services
- Decisions made by the Cabinet on 4 August 2020, 25 August 2020 and 22 September 2020.

**308 Report on Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

**Discussion:**

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

- Scrutiny of children's services
- The impact of COVID-19 and the Council's response
- The restart of NHS services following COVID-19
- Key priorities for the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group
- Development of the Medway and Swale Integrated Care Partnership
- Issues in relation to DMC Healthcare primary care and dermatology services
- The reopening of the Sunlight Centre GP Surgery
- Inclusion of Councillor contact details in 'Medway Matters'
- Member questions at overview and scrutiny committees
- Awareness of mental health issues
- The importance of emergency planning
- The Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership

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- The HMIP Inspection of the Youth Offending Team
- The report of the Voluntary Sector Task Group

### 309 Members' questions

#### A) Councillor Pendergast asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

“Getting children to and from school in the present climate was always going to present challenges, particularly with those who live some distance away from their school.

No doubt the Portfolio Holder will agree with me, that keeping our young people and the future generations safe is of utmost importance.

Having raised a specific issue of inadequate provision regarding pupils who attend the Hundred of Hoo School, I am grateful to the Portfolio Holder and Council officers for the promptness in securing additional resources to allow the children to travel safely.

Can the Portfolio Holder please confirm that appropriate measures and resources will continue to be provided to keep all school children in Medway safe during journeys to and from school?”

Responding on behalf of Councillor Filmer, Councillor Gulvin thanked Councillor Pendergast for his question. He said that Medway Council had worked very closely with its schools and bus companies to promote the safe use of public transport and would continue to do so over the coming months. As well as securing additional capacity for students travelling to and from school, the Council had used posters, leaflets and social media to provide information about social distancing, wearing face coverings on the buses and using hand sanitiser.

Floor stencils, bus vinyls, posters and signs at the bus station in Chatham had also been used reinforce these messages. The School Crossing Patrol service had resumed at the beginning of September and the Council continued to offer schools road safety education.

#### B) Councillor Howcroft-Scott asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

“According to recent data from Centre for Cities, Chatham is ranked as one of the highest in the country for levels of dangerous PM2.5 pollutant, with an estimated 1 in 16 deaths in the area being caused by high levels of this pollutant alone. In Medway, the pollutant is estimated to be almost exclusively driven by combustion in commercial, institutional and domestic activities – yet even the station monitoring PM2.5 in the rural part of Rochester records levels of air pollution in excess of WHO hazard levels.

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Five years on from the Cabinet's approval of an Air Quality Action Plan, the latest figures from the monitoring station located in Luton recorded levels of toxicity approximately 50% above the WHO threshold.

I trust that the Portfolio Holder agrees with me that the current high levels of PM2.5 are deeply concerning, and could she please report on the tangible efforts being made to uphold the Air Quality Action Plan?"

Councillor Chitty thanked Councillor Howcroft-Scott for her question. She said that Medway operated two air quality monitoring stations measuring PM2.5 as part of Defra's automatic urban rural network. Until relatively recently Medway had been the only authority doing this in Kent, hence there was no local data to be compared against.

It was highly likely that there were other towns and cities across the UK that would be above the WHO guidelines, but because there was no monitoring being carried out, they would not be highlighted in the Centre for Cities report. It was therefore misleading to compare Chatham with other areas of the UK in the absence of comprehensive data.

Councillor Chitty said that the data presented in the Centre for Cities report was for 2018 and did not reflect the improvement in PM2.5 levels measured at the site in 2019. Reducing road transport emissions within the Air Quality Management Areas was a key air quality priority for Medway. The Medway Air Quality Action Plan had been adopted in 2015 and had been established to ensure the Council was able to monitor progress. The action plan had a particular focus on reducing nitrogen dioxide, but also contributed to reducing other pollutants including particulate matter. Good progress had been achieved since the action plan had been adopted and progress was reported annually to DEFRA in the Annual Status Report, which could be found on the Council's website.

**C) Councillor Murray asked the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake, the following:**

"The Government's test, track and trace policy is in chaos and I have received many calls from constituents who need Covid tests, but have struggled to obtain them. I have also heard from local GPs who are frustrated by their lack of involvement, making it hard for them to support patients.

Will the Portfolio Holder join me in writing to the Secretary of State for Health and Social care to ask him to give more responsibility, authority and resources to local medical and public health experts to organise testing in Medway?"

Councillor Brake thanked Councillor Murray for her question. He said that the issues affecting the test and trace system nationally, had been fully explained by the Secretary of State for Health and fully debated in the House of Commons. There had been an unprecedented demand for testing, coinciding with the return of all children to school and students starting university. Councillor Brake acknowledged that some Medway residents would have been

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affected by these issues. Locally however, Medway Council had been extremely proactive in relation to testing. It had facilitated the establishment of a Regional Test Site and Local Test Sites, which provided local access for residents. The Council continued to work with the Department of Health and social care and would be introducing more local testing sites.

Whilst other areas may have experienced significant challenges with the NHS Test and Trace programme, this had not been the position in Medway. The local Test and Trace data confirmed that the case completion rate in Medway was very high and easily within 60-80 per cent effective rate established by the national Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE). Medway was already working with Public Health England and the NHS Test and Trace programme to establish an enhanced local test and trace offer. On this basis, Councillor Brake considered that the Council was being given more local control over these issues. The Council would continue to monitor this situation and he said he would not hesitate to contact the secretary of state should it be considered that there was a need but it was not considered that there was a requirement to do so at this time.

He concluded by urging residents to follow government guidance by regularly washing their hands, covering their face, social distancing appropriately and getting tested if they had symptoms. This would help to protect Medway and ensure that levels of infection were kept low.

**D) Councillor Andy Stamp asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:**

“If the Lower Thames Crossing is given the go-ahead, will the Leader join the Medway Labour and Co-operative Group in calling upon Highways England and the Secretary of State to ensure that Medway residents and businesses are exempt from any future toll charges?”

The Mayor announced that as Councillor Stamp was not present at the Council meeting, in accordance with Council Rule No. 9, the question would be answered in writing.

**E) Councillor Maple asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

“Does the Portfolio Holder welcome the Leader of her Majesty’s Opposition standing alongside Medway Labour and Co-operative Group Councillors, the Conservative MP for Rochester and Strood, the leader of the Conservative Group of Gravesham Councillors, Medway Liberal Democrats, Medway Green Party, local business owners and hundreds of local residents in defending high quality jobs in Medway at the Chatham Docks?”

Councillor Chitty thanked Councillor Maple for his question. She reiterated that the Council was currently preparing the new Local Plan for Medway, which would plan for the growth in Medway up to 2037. The Plan, which was currently timetabled to be submitted to Cabinet, in its draft regulation 19 form, in March



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2021 would be supported by significant evidence based work which included work on housing and employment needs.

Councillor Chitty said that employment was a key part of ensuring a sustainable Medway, but it would not be appropriate to comment at Full Council on any individual site in advance of the Draft Plan being presented to Cabinet, which would include a full report and reference to all the evidence base. She reminded the Council that she had stated at previous Full Council meetings, that to specifically comment on individual sites at Full Council in relation to the Local Plan and without consideration of the evidence base, would put the whole Local Plan process at risk of challenge, with the potential of it being found to be unsound.

**F) Councillor Prenter asked the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Turpin, the following:**

“How many Covid Marshalls have been employed by Medway Council to date?”

Councillor Rupert Turpin thanked Councillor Prenter for his question. He said that Medway Council had been awaiting further announcements from central Government in relation to implementation of the national COVID Marshalls scheme, with specific guidance being drawn up. Information on the scheme had been received on the day of the Council meeting. This would need to be reviewed and aligned to Medway’s existing local outbreak control plan.

The Council already had a range of officers, including regulatory services officers, working to protect Medway residents from the virus.

**G) Councillor Bowler asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:**

“In recent months, Medway residents have suffered from a surge in fly-tipping exacerbated by the prolonged closure of Cuxton Waste and Recycling Centre. Many residents are considerate with their waste, however the closure of refuse sites has led to increased prevalence of illegal fly-tipping of goods.

Given the fact that the tip at Cuxton is the largest in the area with the most capacity on site for cars, can the Portfolio Holder tell me why it has been necessary to keep the centre closed for so long?”

Responding on behalf of Councillor Filmer, Councillor Gulvin thanked Councillor Bowler for his question. He said that in partnership with Medway Norse, the Council had done an incredible job at keeping waste services operational throughout a global pandemic and on that basis there really was no excuse for fly tipping. Throughout the pandemic, Medway’s weekly waste collection services of recycling, garden and food waste and black bag waste had been maintained. Alongside this, the bulky waste collection service had continued while the Capstone and Gillingham recycling centres had reopened on 15 May.



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Councillor Gulvin said he appreciated how frustrating residents had found the continued closure of the Cuxton recycling centre, with the site remaining closed due to the ongoing traffic issues on the A228. These traffic issues dated back to 2016 and, following consultation with both Kent Police and Medway's Transport team, the Council had made the decision not to reopen the site until the new booking system had fully bedded in and the backlog of customer waste had begun to ease.

He said he was pleased to announce that Cuxton would be reopening with the booking system which had gone live on the Council website on 6 October with the site opening on 8 October. Whilst the sites had been busy over the summer holidays, there was plenty of capacity for residents needing to visit one of the recycling centres.

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

"At the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July there was unanimous, cross party support for the implementation of Selective Licensing in Medway. This policy would mean that Medway Council can work in partnership with local landlords to fundamentally improve the lives of thousands of tenants in our most deprived communities, it would significantly boost the local economy of these communities and once in place would be a cost neutral policy. Can the Portfolio Holder explain why the Cabinet chose to turn down the development and implementation of this policy despite it having universal support?"

Councillor Doe thanked Councillor Curry for his question. He said that it had been clearly noted in the minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 24 August, where this item had been discussed, with the reasons for the decision having been as follows:

'Whilst such licensing schemes are laudable and could yield distinct benefits, because of the additional revenue costs required and the uncertainty associated with any scheme being fully self-funding it is prudent to pause at this stage enabling the scheme to be considered at a future date when the Council's financial position improves.'

Councillor Doe advised that a licensing scheme had already been introduced and that any further scheme would be an addition to this. Once it was known how the scheme was working, a more informed decision could be made as to where and when the further scheme might be introduced.

He concluded by stating that the policy had not been turned down, rather it had been deferred for consideration at a later stage.

**I) Councillor Price asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Alan Jarrett, the following:**

“Given the harrowing scenes emerging from the Moria Refugee Camp and escalating situation in Lesbos with rising pressures and an increasing number of vulnerable families fleeing oppression and violence, does the Leader agree with me that the Council should reconsider their reluctance to support the National Refugee Resettlement Scheme?”

Councillor Jarrett thanked Councillor Price for his question. He agreed that the situation faced by refugees and asylum-seeking families was very saddening. Whilst the natural instinct was to help in any way possible, it must be recognised that resettling large numbers of refugees could place a strain on local housing resources, health resources and school and college resources. Therefore, although the Council needed to do its part, it needed to do so within its means.

There were a significant number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) and Care Leavers aged over 18 years placed in Medway with Medway Council being responsible for eight UASC and 12 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking care leavers.

The majority of UASC that had been placed in Medway were the responsibility of Kent County Council (numbering 13), who, as a gateway authority, were responsible for large and growing numbers of UASC, particularly over the summer period. There were also nine UASC placed by other Local Authorities other than Kent in Medway, making a total of 47 under 18-year-old UASC placed in Medway.

Compared to a number of London Boroughs, such as Bexley, Havering, and Greenwich, or Thurrock or Staffordshire – all of whom currently had just one UASC child each within their authority area, it could be seen that Medway was doing more than its fair share to help UASC seeking children secure a brighter future.

**J) Councillor Paterson asked the Portfolio Holder for Frontline Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:**

“I am no fan of the Scottish First Minister, however amid the unfolding omnishambles that is the UK government’s Brexit strategy, I have always held on to the silver lining that if Nicola Sturgeon were to achieve her political ambition, at least my children would be entitled to Scottish passports and perhaps in future be able to regain the European Citizenship and freedom of movement which is being stolen from them.

Whether Scotland eventually chooses that path is not my decision. I accept that having lived nearly all of my adult life south of the border, it is a matter for its residents and I will have no vote in any second, or third or fourth independence referendum.

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However I recall no such plebiscite on Kentish independence – a decision which me, my family and indeed every other member has a significant stake in.

We now discover that the English nationalists' infantile "taking back control" slogan had a hitherto hidden meaning. Taking back control of the decision to build a Brexit lorry park in the Garden of England, and away from local authorities. And taking back control of our borders with London and East Sussex to dictate that lorries weighing over 7.5tonnes entering the county bound for mainland Europe only do so if they are in possession of a Kent Roads Access Permit, or KRAP for short.

I have long noted the uncanny similarities between ultra-Brexiteers and the most hardline of Scottish nationalists – suspicious of experts, angry about facts and allowing brave hearts to rule heads. Indeed I know the Medway Conservative Group counts several of these extremists among their number.

Nonetheless, surely the Portfolio Holder will agree with me that the implications of such measures – the inevitable delay and inconvenience and needless red tape - are an unacceptable price for the people of Medway to pay. As a democrat, I accept the result of the EU referendum and support the pursuit of a deal which does as little damage as possible, but absolutely nobody voted for this.

So can I ask him quite simply - what representations he has made on Medway residents' behalf against these undemocratic and unworkable proposals?"

Responding on behalf of Councillor Filmer, Councillor Gulvin thanked Councillor Paterson for his question. He said that with regards proposals for a lorry park within Medway, at no time had anything substantial been proposed. He clarified that the inclusion of a local authority within the Town and Country Planning Special Development Order 2020 did not indicate that a temporary inland border facility would be needed in that area and considered it to be scaremongering to claim otherwise.

Councillor Gulvin confirmed that on 9 September an email had been sent to the Chief Executive of the Council from the office of the Deputy Director of the GB Borders & Infrastructure Delivery Programme. This email directly stated that no proposals were currently under consideration within the Medway local authority area. In relation to the Kent Road Access Permit scheme, this was a KCC led initiative and it was confirmed that Medway had no involvement in its conception or implementation.

**K) Councillor McDonald asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:**

"The voluntary sector and partnerships within are vital, and arguably have never been as important to our local community as the previous 6 months amidst the Coronavirus pandemic.

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Will the Portfolio Holder join me in formally recognising the hard work of those in the voluntary sector at such an extraordinary time?"

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

**L) Councillor Mahil asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:**

"At the beginning of August, three fatal road traffic accidents occurred on the streets of Medway within a two-week time period. This tragic loss of life is devastating for the families involved and our wider local communities.

I trust that the Portfolio Holder agrees with me that we cannot wait for further fatalities to occur before we take action. For this reason, does he agree that the long-awaited pilot scheme for introducing targeted 20mph zones in Medway must now finally be brought forward as a matter of urgency?"

**M) Councillor Cooper asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Mrs Josie Iles, the following:**

"Would the Portfolio Holder agree with me that the proposed relocation of Medway Family Courts will have an extremely detrimental impact on Medway's vulnerable families at a time when they are most in need of support?"

**N) Councillor Chrissy Stamp asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:**

"The proposed relocation of Medway Family courts was established on the basis that there are no other appropriate sites in the area to house the Medway Family Court. I trust that the Portfolio Holder agrees with me that this is dubious at best and there is plenty of space in Medway. Would she agree to press the Ministry of Justice for more details on this assessment and accept a move within Medway?"

**O) Councillor Johnson asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Josie Iles, the following:**

"In what ways is Medway supporting UASCs (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) that have been placed in Medway from other authorities?"

**P) Councillor Adeoye asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:**

"At the end of September, a plaque was unveiled at Chatham Station to honour Asquith Xavier, a railway worker from Medway who overturned a whites-only recruitment policy in the 1960s. Asquith overcame adversity and prejudice in the campaign for racial equality in Britain, and as a result of his actions the racist recruitment policy was scrapped."

### **310 Public Space Protection Orders**

#### **Discussion:**

This report proposed approval of the extension for a further 3 years of the existing four town centre and two dog control PSPOs. It set out that Public Spaces Protection Orders ('PSPOs') had been introduced by section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. This followed consideration of the report by the Cabinet on 22 September 2020.

The report stated that Medway's approach to anti-social behaviour had led to a reduction in the number of incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) across Medway. However, there was a determination to reduce incidents of ASB further, particularly as Kent Police continued to receive complaints from residents, visitors and local businesses across Medway about unreasonable ASB.

The report advised that the PSPOs were all due to expire on 19 October 2020 and summarised responses to the public consultations carried out to seek views on their renewal.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools, Councillor Potter, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

#### **Decision:**

The Council approved of the extension for a further 3 years of the existing four town centre and two dog control PSPOs (not varied or discharged).

Councillors Bowler, Cooper, Curry, Howcroft-Scott, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Prenter and Price requested that their votes in favour of the decision be recorded in accordance with Council Rule 12.6.

### **311 Additions and Amendments to the Capital Programme and Rent Setting for New Properties at Ingram Road, Gillingham**

#### **Discussion:**

This report provided details of proposed additions and amendments to the Council's Capital Programme, as recommended by the Cabinet on 25 August 2020, following consideration of the Round 1 2020/21 Capital Budget Monitoring Report. These included the addition of £121,000 to the Children and Adults Capital Programme Management scheme, £3.050million for further works to Strood Riverside Phase 1 and 2, £300,000 for the buyback of Housing Revenue Account properties, the addition of £384,000 to the Mountbatten House Purchase scheme and £3,275,300 under the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy, to fund a new transformation programme.

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Following recommendations made by the Cabinet on 25 August and 22 September 2020, the report also requested an amendment to the Capital Programme to deliver additional places for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at Abbey Court (£12 million requested) and Bradfields Academy (£4.2 million requested) as well as an addition to the Capital Programme to deliver a new 3G floodlit football artificial turf pitch and changing pavilion at Watling Street Playing Fields (£1,319,976 requested, including a contribution of £400,000 from Medway Council, to be funded from borrowing). Finally, the report requested that Council approved the rents set for the new build properties at Ingram Road that the Council was in the process of purchasing.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

### **Decision:**

The Council:

- a) Approved the additions and virements to the Capital Programme as set out in sections 3 to 9 of the report.
- b) Approve the rents set for the new HRA properties at Ingram Road as set out in section 10 of the report.

Councillors Browne, Cooper, Howcroft-Scott, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Prenter and Price requested that their votes in favour of the decision be recorded in accordance with Council Rule 12.6.

**Note:** Councillors Bowler, Curry and Rupert Turpin were not present for the vote having declared an interest and left the meeting for the consideration and determination of this item.

## **312 Treasury Management Mid-Year Review Report 2020/21**

### **Discussion**

This report provided details of the mid-year review of the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice for Treasury Management.

The report had been considered by the Cabinet on 22 September 2020 and by the Audit Committee on 24 September 2019 and their comments were set out in sections 9 and 10 of the report respectively.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

**Decision:**

The Council noted the report.

Councillors Bowler, Browne, Cooper, Curry, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Prenter and Price requested that their votes in favour of the decision be recorded in accordance with Council Rule 12.6.

**313 Councillor Conduct Complaints under the Localism Act 2011 - Appointment of Independent Persons**

**Discussion**

This report provided an update on progress made in recruitment of an Independent Person to investigate allegations that a Member is in breach of the Code of Conduct and recommended the appointment of two Independent Persons.

The Localism Act 2011 required the appointment of an Independent Person and this appointment was required to be approved by the majority of the Members of the authority.

Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers, supported by Councillor Kemp, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

**Decision:**

The Council agreed the appointment of John Greenhill and Harish Tekchandani as the Independent Persons under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011, with effect from 13 October 2020 for a period of 4 years, to carry out the functions required by section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011.

Councillors Cllrs Bowler, Browne, Cooper, Curry, Howcroft-Scott, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Prenter and Price requested that their votes in favour of the decision be recorded in accordance with Council Rule 12.6.

**314 Duration of Council Meetings**

**Discussion**

This report suggested amendments to the Constitution to limit the duration of Council meetings. The amendments had been proposed following the Full Council meeting in July 2020 which had lasted just over seven hours. Commentary from both members of the public watching and Members of the Council was that the meeting had been too long for it to be an efficient democratic process that could be accessed by those wishing to observe.

The report proposed that Council agree to amend the Constitution to limit the duration of Council meetings, by presuming that reports for noting are agreed without debate or limited to 15 minutes where notice of a request to debate is



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given and to limit the number of motions per formally constituted political group to one per Council meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Rupert Turpin, supported by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

In accordance with Paragraph 16.2 (Amendment to Council Rules) of Part 1, Chapter 4 of the Council's Constitution, the recommendations set out in the report would be taken forward for debate at the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

### 315 Use of Urgency Provisions

#### Discussion

This report provided details of recent usage of urgency provisions contained within the Constitution.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

#### Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

Councillors Bowler, Browne, Cooper, Curry, Howcroft-Scott, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Prenter and Price requested that their votes in favour of the decision be recorded in accordance with Council Rule 12.6.

### 316 Motions

#### A) Councillor Sands has submitted the following:

"That Medway Council recognises how we treat our lands, how we build on it, how we act towards the air we breathe and water we drink will in the long run tell what type people we truly are.

That the Council recognises that if future generations are to remember us with gratitude and respect rather than contempt we must leave something more than urban sprawl, we must leave them with a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning and with that in mind we must ensure that the special character of the Hoo Peninsula, its biodiversity, rich history and heritage that go to make up this national and internationally protected area is preserved.

That the Council recognises that its future at present is in our hands but we must remember it doesn't belong to any one person, not to a political party or developer, but all the people and if we continue to abuse its ancient woodlands, its world renowned mudflats, its rugged beauty and its spectacular rawness

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there will be nothing left, and when I hear developers', and councils' statements like "better access to natural assets and wildlife" I shudder.

That the Council recognises that we must just stop to think of the impact of protected wildlife and ecological sites. We must understand you can't improve the natural environment by destroying it, we as councillors, as present custodians have a duty to recognise the vulnerability of this world class area.

That the Council resolves to start a campaign to have the Hoo Peninsula recognised as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty."

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

For – Councillors Bowler, Browne, Cooper, Curry, Howcroft-Scott, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Pendergast, Prenter, Price, Sands (13)

Against – Councillors Brake, Buckwell, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers OBE, Chitty, Doe, Etheridge, Fearn, Gulvin, Hackwell, Jarrett, Kemp, Potter, Purdy, Tejan, Tranter, Rupert Turpin, and Wildey (18)

### **Decision:**

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

### **B) Councillor Maple has submitted the following:**

"This Council is very disappointed to note that Medway is included in a list of 29 areas where the Government have legislated to give permission for a lorry park to be built, without any consultation with either our Council or our community.

This Council agrees to write to the relevant Secretaries of State to make clear that to have legislated in this way is unacceptable and shows complete disregard for local government and local communities."

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

For – Councillors Bowler, Browne, Cooper, Curry, Howcroft-Scott, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Prenter, Price, Sands (12)

Against – Councillors Brake, Buckwell, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers OBE, Chitty, Doe, Etheridge, Fearn, Gulvin, Hackwell, Jarrett, Kemp, Potter, Purdy, Tejan, Tranter, Rupert Turpin, and Wildey (18)

Abstain – Councillor Pendergast (1)

### **Decision:**

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

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### C) Councillor Pendergast has submitted the following:

“In light of recent events, this Council recognises and applauds with admiration, the professionalism, dedication and bravery of Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Service.

With the continued expansion of rural areas such as the Peninsula, Cliffe and Cliffe Woods, to meet Government set housing targets, this Council calls on the Government to make available additional resources to replace the current rural provisions with permanently manned presence.

This Council requests the Leader of the Council write to the relevant Secretary of State to request such additional resources and when so doing the leader of the Council should seek the support of the three local Members of Parliament for this endeavour.”

#### **Decision:**

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

Councillors Cllrs Bowler, Browne, Cooper, Curry, Howcroft-Scott, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Prenter and Price requested that their votes in favour of the decision be recorded in accordance with Council Rule 12.6.

**Note:** Councillors Kemp, Maple and Tranter were not present for the vote having declared an interest and left the meeting for the consideration and determination of this item.

**Mayor**

**Date:**

**Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer**

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