

## **COUNCIL**

**25 NOVEMBER 2010**

### **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

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#### **Summary**

To set out the public questions received for this meeting.

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Section 7.3 of the Council Rules, as laid out in the Council's constitution, sets out the rules for the receipt of public questions as follows:
- At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation. Members of the public who have not submitted questions before will be given priority over those who have, and second questions will only be dealt with when all first questions have been dealt with. Any questions that have not been dealt with within the time limits will receive a written reply after the meeting.
- 1.2 The questions received for this meeting are set out in below in the order they were received, allowing for the rules above.

#### **2. Public questions**

- 2.1 **Peter Cook of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:**

With regards to city status, how much will it cost to 're-label' Medway's schools, hospitals, police and so on including stationery, labels, websites and all media that will need to change if you succeed?

- 2.2 **Naushabah Khan of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

Can the Portfolio Holder tell me how many students in Medway have received the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) since it was introduced by the Labour government?

**2.3 John Ward of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:**

Although we share a dislike of in-year budget cuts, most people now realise that this was unavoidable.

Medway Council's Conservative Administration has stated all along that front line services would be the last to be considered for cuts, so would the Portfolio Holder kindly place on public record the items of unnecessary expenditure that have been removed in order that front line services can be maintained?

**2.4 Robert Heathfield of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following question:**

In Strood the former Foyer flats on Canal Road, owned by MOAT Housing Association, are less than fifteen years old yet they have not been occupied for several years. Given Medway's ever lengthening housing needs list – only likely to increase exponentially given recent Coalition cuts – what is the Council's Housing Department doing to help MOAT make the flats available for residence to needy local families and individuals?

**2.5 Bryan Fowler of Chatham will ask the Chairman of the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Bright, the following question:**

At the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 September, Members of the Conservative party, appeared to be acting in unison, by opposing the request of my Ward Councillor and your fellow Committee Member, that the Committee write to the owners of the Pentagon Centre about the matter of the refurbishment of the Shopping Centre toilets for which a public grant of over £200,000 was made.

The Pentagon Shopping Centre management did not replace the old, cracked wash basins and have levied a charge of 20p for each shopper using them.

The decision not to write to the Pentagon Centre management indicates that the majority of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are content with the quality of work performed and approve of £200,000 of public money being spent without any negotiated outcomes from the funders' point of view. Could the Chairman comment on his Committee's reason for doing what it did?

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

With regard to bids for Medway to gain City status, excluding the proposed bid which Medway Council is currently pursuing, could the Leader of the Council kindly confirm whether Medway Council has made previous applications or bids for City status for Medway, and if so the number of those previous applications or bids and the costs of such.

**2.7 William Knott of Rochester will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

The Council enjoys very fine toilets in the St Georges Centre, and in the municipal buildings at Gun Wharf, both free at the point of use. Does the Council Leader think that the same facilities should apply to the Council Tax payers in Chatham and Strood town centres?

**2.8 Peter Cook of Gillingham will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

Can you explain why you have attempted to censor public opinion by blocking comments on websites, monopolising the local media, in my opinion, with brainwashing adverts and advertorial and giving misleading figures to the public re City Status?

**2.9 Robert Heathfield of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following question:**

Will the Portfolio Holder join with me in thanking Greenspaces Council officers and the local friends group for making such a success of the newly installed children's play equipment in Strood's Broomhill Park? A £50,000 Community Spaces Big Lottery grant, secured by the Friends of Broomhill, a sum matching funding monies from the last Government's Playbuilder grant, was spent on providing facilities for older children, and providing two viewing platforms for the benefit of all park users.

**2.10 William Knott of Rochester will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Rodney Chambers, the following question:**

There are no signs in Chatham High Street to indicate the whereabouts of toilets. Would the Council consider erecting signs to indicate the presence of toilets in the Central Theatre, the Brook Theatre, and the library? This would help to save Council Tax payers the cost of using the Pentagon toilets.

**Background papers**

None

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