

Full Council 10 November 2022 – Schedule of written responses to Members' questions not answered at the meeting

Agenda Reference	Question	Response
10H	<p>Councillor Osborne asked the Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools, Councillor Potter, the following:</p> <p>Given the steeply rising costs of energy and unfunded pay rises, leading Medway schools to fear running out of money in the next nine months, can the Portfolio Holder clarify the per head funding per student in an annualised table in Medway since 2010/11, until today, while assessing whether these reductions are sustainable for school improvement?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Osborne.</p> <p>The question of sustainability around the rising costs of energy is one that schools are very focussed on. Medway Council continues to provide advice about energy efficiency to all schools that require it, including those schools which are academies and are therefore responsible for the running of their own schools.</p> <p>In Medway, the distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation is agreed in consultation with the Schools Forum and is reported to Cabinet as part of the budget setting process.</p> <p>The table of information below shows the average per pupil funding received by Medway's primary and secondary schools since 2012/13, as far back as currently accessible.</p> <p>The principal of a Minimum Funding Guarantee has been part of the schools funding formula for many years. However, in 2018 the government introduced a Minimum Pupil Funding Level Guarantee that schools will receive per pupil, with different funding guarantees set for primary and secondary schools as well as the Minimum Funding Guarantee.</p> <p>The principal of a Minimum Funding Guarantee was introduced by the government in 2018 and each year since, the government sets a Minimum Pupil Funding Level Guarantee that schools will receive per pupil, with different funding guarantees set for primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>In addition to the amounts in the table*, between September 2018 and March 2021 schools received a separate Teachers Pay Grant to fund pay awards, and between April 2019 to March 2021 they also</p>

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		<p>received the Teachers' Pension Grant to fund pension increases. Both grants were combined into the DSG in the 2021/22 financial year and are included in the funding shown above from 2021/22 onwards, at the rate £180 per pupil for primary schools and £265 for secondary schools to cover the impact of both pay and pensions.</p> <p>* Note - please see supporting table at the end of this document.</p>
101	<p>Councillor Browne asked the Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools, Councillor Potter, the following:</p> <p>Medway's School Place Planning Strategy describes Medway Council's presumption in favour of school academisation. When did Cabinet and Council make that decision?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. Within the School Place Planning Strategy 2022-27 (at page 4), it states a principle to, <i>where appropriate, support collaboration and partnership working between schools including academisation, federation or amalgamation of infant and junior schools, by supporting the Council's preference for academisation by coordinating the conversion process with all stakeholders.</i></p> <p>This principle was approved by Cabinet under Decision 66/2022, as part of the overall approval of the School Place Planning Strategy 2022-27. This was also the case in 2018 for the previous School Place Planning Strategy 2018-22 under Decision 88/2018.</p> <p>Central Government has set out clear plans to continue to expand the network of academy trusts across England and set out plans to further strengthen these as part of the <i>White Paper: Opportunity for all: Strong schools with great teachers for your child.</i></p> <p>Medway Council have consistently supported the plans from Central Government and continue to work in collaboration with Multi-Academy Trusts and LA-Maintained Schools as key stakeholders in the development of the School Place Planning Strategy.</p>

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10J	<p>Councillor Howcroft-Scott asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Gulvin, the following:</p> <p>Taking care of the workplace environment improves productivity, helps retain talent, and most important of all: it is good for the Council's overall mental health. To this end I am troubled and concerned with the working environment our Council employees are subjected to at Gun Wharf, greatly highlighted by the refurbishment taking place in the old mayoral chambers. Please can our Council employees have a working environment they can feel proud of and is fit for the 21st century?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. The object of the exercise was to keep the Family Court here in Medway, and we are pleased to say this has been achieved. We also note that the Gun Wharf building occupancy has benefitted from the incorporation of the MOJ law courts. The Gun Wharf building now has new boilers, and new LED lights, and air supply upgrades are also being currently being incorporated under our Refit energy saving invest to save scheme, all benefitting the office environment for staff. The works will continue with key upgrades to the building during this period of budgetary pressures. As the major plant areas are being addressed and moved forward, the works will move forward to the internal fabric which will come under review.</p> <p>We have through our input into KEPB Kent Estates Partnership Board, implemented the shared workspace scheme, where shared offices with other councils greatly reduce travel times and provide convenience to both our officers and other Councils officers who can drop down in other areas, working close to home, this is also in accordance with our Climate Change ambitions to net zero, reducing travel times and stress on officers.</p> <p>Mental health has been addressed by taking a holistic approach in utilising office space around Kent and adopting Teams meetings software that allows officers to attend meetings in a flexible manner from home if required. We believe this helps retain talent, and contributes to overall mental health, and note that implementation of Microsoft Teams over the Covid period has maintained and improved productivity.</p> <p>The objective now is to maintain the progress being made over and above essential large budget plant improvements and consider funding the refurbishment of</p>

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		<p>internal finishes to create an environment that promotes our ambitions to retain our officers and keep our officers productive and happy. We will be careful to ensure the workplace environment continually improves and keeping Council staff up to date on these plans.</p>
10K	<p>Councillor Mahil asked the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services – Lead Member (statutory responsibility), Councillor Mrs Josie Iles, the following:</p> <p>It is encouraging that four schools in Medway have signed up to the national <i>Lets Go Zero</i> campaign, supporting schools reach net carbon zero by 2030. What encouragement is the Council giving to schools across Medway to participate in such schemes and how are they monitoring engagement levels?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Mahil. We chair a Medway Schools Climate Network, that is open to staff to attend to share best practice on the climate change measures they have undertaken, and to highlight further opportunities that are available to schools.</p> <p>Schools are also supported to sign up to the Eco Schools Award, with their first year on the scheme funded by Public Health.</p>
10L	<p>Councillor Johnson asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:</p> <p>What is the projected total cost of the current Judicial Review of the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, the Council has appointed Kings Counsel to represent it in this case, fees to date are around £7000 and it is anticipated that Counsel’s fees to the conclusion of the trial will be in the region of £17,000. Should the Council be successful in the claim we will seek to recover those costs from the Home Office. Those fees should be seen in the context of the cost of out of area placements which cost in the region of £11,000 per week.</p>

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10M	<p>Councillor Curry asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:</p> <p>The Council has recently signed off contracts for subsidised bus routes across Medway and accepted into service operators not capable of meeting the preferred tender requirement for EURO V buses. What assessment was made of the environmental air quality impact of accepting such buses into operation on routes traversing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Curry. Our local bus operators are working hard to ensure their fleets minimise impacts on air quality in Medway. All 57 buses within ASD's fleet are Euro V or VI standard. Of Arriva's fleet of 109 buses at Gillingham Depot, 72 are Euro V or VI (66%), with plans to retire a number of the older double deck buses in favour of newer Euro VI upgrades over the next few months. Other bus operators in Medway are also upgrading their fleets.</p> <p>When we procure our subsidised bus contracts, we must carefully balance environmental factors with other considerations, including budget availability and the social need for the service. We will continue to look to our operators for further improvements to fleet emissions over time, whether that be retrofitting to Euro VI standard or using new low or zero-emission vehicles, and we will work with them to pursue any funding opportunities presented by Central Government.</p>
10N	<p>Councillor Lloyd asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:</p> <p>What is the total cost, including advertising, the traffic order and physical works, of the recently installed 40 mph zone on Deanwood Drive, Rainham?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Lloyd. This was a road safety scheme designed to improve compliance through this residential area and is expected to cost £18,331.</p>
10O	<p>Councillor Prenter asked the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:</p> <p>Medway has an ambition to be child friendly. For this to be a</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Prenter. We work in partnership with our bus operators to ensure that safe and affordable public transport is available for our children and young people. We continue to fund the Medway Youth Pass, which allows young people to travel at a discounted rate on any bus service. We also fund the MY buses to a number of</p>

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	<p>reality it needs to have good quality, affordable public transport for our young people. Do you think Medway's children get a fair deal compared to those either in London or Kent?</p>	<p>local schools, with ASD providing an outstanding service that helps reduce the traffic on our roads at peak times. Our largest bus operator, Arriva, also plays its part by working with the Universities in Medway to provide students with significant discounts on weekly, monthly and annual season tickets. Medway's bus strategy includes ambitious plans to improve bus travel and make fares simpler and lower, but this needs to be undertaken in partnership with our operators, and we need the Government to provide the funding. We will continue to bid for funding as the opportunities arise.</p>
10P	<p>Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Turpin asked the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:</p> <p>Following the closure of Deangate Ridge Golf Course, Cabinet in March 2018 instructed officers to begin detailed planning for consultation and development of a new sports centre for the Hoo Peninsula.</p> <p>In July 2019, Full Council approved the provision of up to £150,000 to complete initial investigation surveys (ecology, topographical, contamination, utilities, UXO and tree) as well as a high-level capacity study to establish approach and quantum of sustainable development.</p>	<p>Deangate Ridge Golf Course was closed 'on the basis of ongoing substantial financial loss, which is unsustainable, on 31 March 2018'. This decision was documented in a Cabinet Report considered in March 2018.</p> <p>Since the closure of the Golf Course in 2018, feasibility and optioneering for the future of the site have been undertaken in relation to sustainable development. More recently, the site has also been considered as part of the Future Hoo (Housing Infrastructure Fund) project – for community parkland and a new spur road as part of Phase 2 of the HIF road scheme.</p> <p>Several surveys were commissioned through Frankhams in 2019 to understand the ecology and topography of the site to inform any future uses for the site.</p> <p>In November 2019, a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was carried out on Deangate Golf Course and Sports Area that identified potential species present that should be surveyed within a redline at Deangate which takes in the Golf Course and the running track/sports area on the other side of Dux Court Road.</p>

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	<p>None of the above work has been completed, or even started.</p> <p>As these decisions were taken over 3 years ago and would have been very helpful for the Hoo Development Framework consultation (and the draft Local Plan that was proposed last October).</p> <p>Also considering the work that has been completed to redevelop Splashes during this time, please can you advise why this work has not been carried out?</p>	<p>At that stage it was considered appropriate to pause work and focus on the Hoo Development Framework, which would include the potential location for sports provision, which would then be consulted upon. The assessment of the responses would then help to identify the most appropriate location for the sports provision, as well as thoughts on what specifically could be included. Once this has been established, it would then be appropriate to undertake further design and feasibility work in relation to sustainable development as appropriate.</p>
10Q	<p>Councillor Etheridge asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation Councillor Chitty, the following:</p> <p>At the Regeneration Culture & Environment Overview and Scrutiny meeting, held on the 13th of October this year, the committee, requested that you supplied the answer to the following questions, prior to this full council meeting.</p> <p>The questions were as follows: -</p> <p>Since you were last here before this committee in October</p>	<p>In relation to the last paragraph of your question, Members have had received full presentations to individual groups and jointly, throughout the process. Continuous presentations have been given by officers as to the full implications and requirements laid out by Government and as to the progress of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Elected Members played a fundamental part in the development and challenges that we as an authority played.</p> <p>I'm sure I don't have to remind you that we recently held a meeting of DEPAG, which is a cross-party group, where there was a full update as to the current position, which you of course attended.</p> <p>In relation to your specific questions to Council, you were provided with a full response to each of them in advance of the Council meeting, many of which you have previously sought clarification on.</p>

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	<p>2021, it has been identified that from 2014, you have spent over a million and a quarter on consultants to assist in developing a draft local plan</p> <p>1. Who were these consultants and what was their expertise?</p> <p>2. In what year were they hired, was the work put out to tender and exactly what areas of the local plan they were directed to?</p> <p>3. From their services, how was the draft local plan enhanced, ensuring compliance, with government regulations.</p> <p>You have stated on numerous occasions, that consecutive governments have made changes to the local plan process.</p> <p>4. Can you tell us in which years, those changes were made to the local plan process?</p> <p>5. Can you tell us the overall effect specifically and on what part of our local plan process.</p> <p>6. Finally, considering the amount of time that has passed since 2014 to-date, the number of man hours by both</p>	

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	<p>council staff and consultant's, why wasn't the draft local plan robust enough to weather a few minor changes in its production.</p> <p>Cllr. Chitty, not a single question has been answered, can you tell us why, considering that by not doing so, you have denied members the opportunity and the right to seek further information.</p>	
10R	<p>Councillor Rupert Turpin asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarrett, the following:</p> <p>On page 99 of the Hoo Development Framework consultation pack the very first principle of the indivisible and interlocking framework for the delivery of garden cities is land value capture for the benefit of the community.</p> <p>With this in mind, will the council commit to ring fence the land value capture of any council owned land on the peninsula which may be developed into housing or captured in any land equalisation process with the Hoo consortium or other developers as a result of the</p>	<p>Thank you for your question and your interest in planning for growth on the Hoo Peninsula, with the further development of services and infrastructure.</p> <p>There is ongoing work with the Local Plan on site assessment and infrastructure planning. The Council will give due consideration to land equalisation processes and strategic infrastructure funding and delivery, and this will inform policy.</p>

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	<p>development framework?</p> <p>If so then community infrastructure in Hoo and the surrounding villages, such as, for example the much needed new sports centre and swimming pool, can be funded and provided in a timely manner and to the high quality the area deserves, rather than any land capture being redistributed on projects across the rest of Medway or lost in the general fund and reserves.</p>	
10S	<p>Councillor McDonald asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:</p> <p>Could the Portfolio Holder inform Council when the last time Transport for London carried out compliance checks on TfL licensed vehicles in Medway?</p>	<p>Thank you for your question, Councillor McDonald. This question should be directed to Transport for London as the Council only knows of inspections carried out by its officers. I can confirm however, Licensing Enforcement Officers carried out a joint operation with Transport for London on 18 August 2017 between 2pm and 1 am the following morning to monitor the number of out of towns licensed vehicles including those licensed by TfL.</p>

Table for response to question 10H

Financial year	Primary Minimum Funding Guarantee £	Secondary Minimum Funding Guarantee £	Medway Average Primary £	Medway Average Secondary £
2012/13	N/A	N/A	3,444	4,650
2013/14	N/A	N/A	3,337	4,636
2014/15	N/A	N/A	3,975	4,855
2015/16	N/A	N/A	3,960	4,897
2016/17	N/A	N/A	3,895	5,037
2017/18	N/A	N/A	3,887	4,995
2018/19	3,300	4,600	3,925	5,148
2019/20	3,600	4,800	3,909	5,200
2020/21	3,750	5,000	4,010	5,022
2021/22	4,180	5,415	4,413	5,838
2022/23	4,265	5,525	4,464	5,938