

Medway Council
Meeting of Medway Council
Thursday, 20 July 2023
7.00pm to 0.23am

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next Full Council meeting

Present: The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway (Councillor Gurung)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Nestorov) Councillors Anang, Animashaun, Barrett, Bowen, Brake, Campbell, Cook, Coombs, Crozer, Curry, Doe, Edwards, Etheridge, Fearn, Field, Filmer, Gilbourne, Gulvin, Hackwell, Hamandishe, Hamilton, Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard, Hyne, Jackson, Jones, Joy, Kemp, Khan, Lammas, Lawrence, Mandaracas, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Myton, Osborne, Paterson, Peake, Pearce, Perfect, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Price, Sands, Shokar, Spalding, Spring, Stamp, Tejan, Mrs Turpin, Van Dyke, Wildey and Williams

In Attendance: Richard Hicks, Chief Executive
Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director, Legal and Governance
Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services
Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer

124 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Browne, Clarke and Mahil.

125 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

Councillor Curry declared an interest in motion 17B as he is a governor of the Rivermead Inclusive Trust. Councillor Curry left the room during discussion and determination of the item.

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Councillor Cook declared an interest in motion 17B as her employment involves working with the Rivermead Inclusive Trust. Councillor Cook left the room during discussion and determination of the item.

Councillor Price declared an interest in relation to the record of the Gateway 3 Contract Award: Intermediate Care and Reablement Service at the Cabinet meeting on 13 June 2023, as set out in Appendix 2 of agenda item No.8, Leader's Report. This was in relation to the record of the agenda item, Gateway 3 Contract Award: Intermediate Care and Reablement Service as Councillor Price had been asked to assist someone affected by the contract award. Councillor Price remained in the room as there was no discussion of this matter.

Other interests

Councillor Mandaracas declared an interest in motion 17C as her son was currently going through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) process. Councillor Mandaracas remained in the room during discussion and determination of the item.

126 Record of meeting

The records of the meetings held on 20 April 2023 and 24 May 2023 were approved and signed by the Worshipful Mayor as correct, subject to an amendment being made to the minutes of the 24 May meeting. In relation to minute no. 8 (Political Assistants, as set out page 29 of the 20 July 2023 Council agenda), it was agreed that this would be amended so that the decision read "The Council agreed to allocate Political Assistant posts to the Labour and Co-operative and Conservative Groups."

127 Mayor's announcements

The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway announced that Bessie Grewcock, who was former Councillor Dickie Andrews' partner, had passed away. She had been Mayoress twice, firstly in 1986-1987 and then in 2000-2001. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor extended condolences to the family.

The Mayor announced that she would be holding a charity event on 13 September 2023, a "Call the Midwife" tour at Chatham Dockyard. More information was available from the Mayor's office.

The Mayor also recognised Medway based and focused independent journalists, Steven Keevil and Ed Jennings, who had won the Kent News website of the year for Local Authority Newsletter and Mr Keevil for winning Kent Columnist of the Year Award at the Kent Press and Broadcast Awards 2023.

128 Leader's announcements

The Leader welcomed the Chief Executive, Richard Hicks and Deputy Chief Executive and Director of People, Dr Lee-Anne Farach, to their new roles with the Council.

129 Petitions

Public:

There were none.

Member:

Councillor Animashaun submitted two petitions on behalf of members of the public. The first called on the Council to install a pelican crossing outside All Saints Primary School in Chatham while the second requested that the Council extend parking restrictions in Carpeaux Close.

130 Public questions

Question A – James Chespy, of Gillingham, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“For the last 20 years we have seen an erasure of hope in the Medway towns and one saw it etched on the faces of some of our local population. Now that the people have entrusted the Labour and Co-operative Group with the governance of the local Council, I would ask the new Leader of the Council to commit to restoring hope to our towns and to our people.”

Councillor Maple thanked Mr Chespy for the question. He said that before 4 May 2023, he had sought to be given the opportunity to serve the people of Medway. Since then, the new administration had been getting on with the job, including being clear that tough decisions would need to be taken.

The new administration brought honest hope, for residents it would be a case of what they see is what they get with hard working councillors dedicated day-in-day-out to delivering on five key pledges. These would be delivered by 2027 along with much more. This would be delivered against the backdrop of the economic situation, both locally and nationally, which had been inherited and which put the Council in a financially difficult position.

Councillor Maple said that he and all the Councillors of Medway wanted the best for the local community. The new administration had been given a mandate to lead, whether that be delivering its pledges, fighting for the resources required or standing up for Medway to central Government.

Question B – Carl Dunks, of Rainham, submitted the following to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray:

“Can there be a medical unit in Rainham (ME8) to help people with challenging behaviours such as Tourette’s, autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?”

Note: As Mr Dunks was not present, the Mayor stated he would receive a written response to his question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

Question C – Vivienne Parker, of Chatham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

“I have had complaints that some roads on Davis Estate have not been cleaned and that local people are having to do their own cleaning. Can the Council confirm that street cleaning is still taking place on the estate?”

Councillor Curry thanked Ms Parker for the question. He confirmed that the roads on the Davis Estate were cleaned regularly. The Council was not aware of local people undertaking their own cleansing and, therefore, he urged residents to report any issues directly to the Council to allow them to be investigated and necessary action taken. Medway Norse, the Council’s street cleansing Contractor, cleaned roads around the Davis Estate with the Shirley Avenue area and the parade of shops, receiving high intensity cleaning and daily attention.

Councillor Curry said that tackling litter was something that Medway was particularly focused on. There were successful volunteer schemes, such as the Great British Spring Clean, that had been run for several years, with more planned for the future. Ms Parker was encouraged to contact the Council again in the future should specific action be needed.

Question D – Alan Wells, of Chatham, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

“Flash floods and flooding are projected to rise considerably by 2050 because of increased intensity of rainfall during winter and summer. Sea levels are also predicted to rise by 10-30cm, which will compound coastal flooding and negatively impact coastal infrastructure.

In relation to the recently published Isle of Grain Policy Unit: Thames Estuary (TE2100) by the Environmental Agency to manage flood risk and adapt to rising sea levels, land on some parts of the Peninsula is within flood zone 3 which has a high probability of flooding. Flood defences have been built to protect and reduce flooding, but do not completely stop the chance of flooding because they can be overtopped or fail.

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TE2100 calls on the Council to produce Riverside strategies either as a standalone document or part of a Local Plan, created with local communities, and in place by 2030. Visions for the riverside show how flood defence upgrades can deliver social value and multiple benefits.

In some places in the outer estuary, they will need to be in place earlier. This is because planning for defence raising will need to start before 2030. Riverside strategies enable opportunities to upgrade flood defences through planned developments. Decisions taken in the 2020s will determine the quality of public space along the river for generations.

Environment Agency Director of Flood Risk Strategy and National Adaptation, Julie Foley said “What we already know in the Thames Estuary is that climate change is happening: sea level is rising faster than we were expecting, assets are deteriorating faster than we were expecting and some of the key dates that we originally thought we needed for bringing forward investments and raising flood defences are coming forward.”

Ensuring the Peninsula’s communities, growth, and infrastructure is resilient to climate change, and to future sea level rise, the Council needs to ensure that TE2100 requirements will be embedded into the Local Plan.

The Environment Agency published TE2100 recently. Setting out flood risk along the Thames Estuary, including between the Isle of Grain and Cliffe. To protect the Isle of Grain and this part of the Peninsula against future sea level rise.

The report calls upon Medway Council to set out plans to manage the flood risk and adapt to rising sea levels, by 2030. This covers flood risk, waste water management and infrastructure investment.

Given the need to address much of that call to action in this Council term, in developing plans for future riversides, will the Council commit to engaging Peninsula communities affected by flood risk and rising sea levels in Medway?”

Note: As Mr Wells was not present, the Mayor stated that he would receive a written response to his question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

Question E - Ben Rist, of Rainham, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“Considering the cost-of-living crisis, banning Uber in Medway will put residents at risk of losing jobs and also be detrimental to people’s welfare when it is impossible at times to book a local taxi. Given these issues that we are facing, are you still committed to taking choice away from residents who rely on Uber by continuing to try to ban the service?”

Councillor Maple thanked Mr Rist for the question. He said that he was not opposed to competition within the taxi industry and that there were good companies locally, all of whom were legally compliant. He explained that if Uber

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wanted to be legally compliant in Medway, they could achieve this very quickly but that they had chosen not to.

Councillor Maple said he was concerned that residents of Medway using Uber would not be covered by insurance. He urged residents to use taxis licenced by Medway's Licensing team, which undertook important work on a daily basis to ensure that Medway licensed taxis were safe and legally compliant. The Council did not have that same assurance for companies operating in Medway who relied on a licence issue elsewhere.

Councillor Maple concluded that until Uber made themselves legally compliant to operate in Medway, he did not want them operating locally.

Question F - Alan Collins-Rosell, of Gillingham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, the following:

"Building homes is rarely popular, particularly for those who live close to proposed developments, such as in Rainham and on the Hoo peninsula. Opposing individual developments is a campaign tactic used by all parties to win votes, but often it comes with little or no alternatives to where housing should be built.

Like many local authorities across the country, Medway is in the grip of a housing crisis. People in my generation are often unable to afford to buy without generous handouts or inheritance from family members, while those in private rented accommodation are expected to pay unbelievably high rents, leaving renters, particularly those living on their own or with young families with little spare cash to save for the future or spend on leisure activities in the local economy. Meanwhile, social housing is in very short supply, leaving unacceptably long waiting lists for people who are unable to buy or rent privately.

Given the urgency, what will the new administration be doing to ensure enough housing, particularly genuinely affordable and social housing, is built in Medway to ensure there is a sufficient supply of housing for the future?"

Councillor Khan thanked Mr Collins-Rosell for the question. She agreed that there was a national housing crisis caused by the under delivery of homes for decades and that this included significant under provision of affordable and social housing. This crisis also affected Medway with the consequence being a lack of homes and the cost of both buying and renting homes.

The Council was committed to tackling the housing crisis and providing the right homes in the right places. As part of that, it would be moving forward at pace on a Local Plan for the area, which would seek to deliver on housing and employment growth needs in a way that would protect the natural and historic value of the area and deliver the necessary infrastructure to support that growth sustainably. This included a commitment to deliver affordable homes and social housing, both as part of larger developments and standalone. Work was taking

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place to ensure that housing provision would be delivered through a range of initiatives.

The Council, through its Housing Revenue Account, was continuing to purchase and develop homes, increasing the amount of stock that the Council owned. Through Medway Development Company, new opportunities were being brought forward, significantly contributing to the regeneration of Chatham, increasing the supply of homes across all tenures and delivering affordable housing. A significant amount of work was taking place with housing association partners, to bring forward sites for new homes.

Medway needed to ensure that new homes coming forward also delivered in relation to climate change and energy efficiency, enabling future residents to benefit from high quality homes in well landscaped settings with open space and lower energy bills.

Councillor Khan said that while it would not be possible to fix the housing crisis in Medway immediately, she could give reassurance that there was commitment to doing this.

Question G - Jon Castle, of Chatham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

“In specific areas of Medway building at large volume is not currently sustainable.

The Hoo Peninsula currently has insufficient GPs to service the population sustainably. There is also insufficient sewage capacity to support large housing development.

There are councils that have committed themselves not to build houses in conditions that are unsustainable, such as those stated above. Does the Council agree with me that large scale development on the Hoo Peninsula is not sustainable without significant investment in infrastructure and services?”

Councillor Curry thanked Mr Castle for the question. He said that the UK, South East and Medway were experiencing a housing crisis and the Council needed to respond positively to meet its housing needs. Housing needed to be delivered in a sustainable way, with the necessary infrastructure to create high quality and healthy places to support the growing community.

Medway had a government target for Medway of 28,500 homes to be built by 2040 but currently had no Local Plan, which had not been delivered by the previous administration. Significant work was taking place to ensure that a Local Plan could be delivered by 2025.

The loss of £170m of Housing Infrastructure Funding had made the situation more difficult, this had not been helped by the MP for the area and opposition Councillors suggesting this was a good thing.

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Councillor Curry highlighted the Sans Pareil roundabout, where funding would have been used to alleviate traffic jams in the area. He concluded that the Council was working hard to deliver a Local Plan and the supporting infrastructure.

Question H - Andrew Millsom, of Rochester, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“The Council withdrew their objection to the appeal by Trenport for a development in Cliffe, shortly after the May local elections. Medway Council said the following in a statement: “The Council has carefully considered its position following the evidence heard in the first week of the inquiry and has decided that it is necessary to withdraw its reasons for refusal.”

An interpretation is that the Council has undermined its own case and subsequently withdrawn its objections. This indicates weak preparation and a failure to back the Medway Council's Planning Committee and the residents' group who are also objecting.

A second interpretation is that the passing of a neighbourhood plan by Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council via the referendum in May has changed the circumstances fundamentally.

A third option is that the new incoming Labour Medway Council administration instructed the Council officers to withdraw.

In the context of the Council having failed over two decades to implement a Local Plan, thus creating conditions for applications to be challenged robustly, can the Council place on record which interpretation, or combination of the above, led to the decision to withdraw its objections, or was there some other overriding factor?”

Councillor Maple thanked Mr Millsom for the question. He said that Trenport had indicated to Medway Council before the planning inquiry that they would not apply for full costs. Following cross-examination of the Council's witness and the hearing of the case on 18 May 2023, the Council had been advised that should it not withdraw its case, full costs would have been applied for. The Council had to make its decision ahead of the enquiry resuming on 23 May 2023. Had it continued its appeal, the costs to the Council would have been significant.

Question I - Stuart Bourne, of Rainham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

“I am pleased that the Council is continuing its programme to plant more trees around Medway. I was also impressed that council officers managed to secure funding for 300 extra trees, especially as the funding included money to water the trees for the first couple of years.

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However, we have seen another record breaking period of heat and very little rain in June, and I have seen many trees suffering from lack of water. In fact, if it wasn't for myself and other teams of volunteers in Rainham and Gillingham, many of these trees would have died.

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm that Medway Norse has used this extra funding and increased its capacity to water trees around Medway so that no tree is missed?"

Councillor Curry thanked Mr Bourne for the question. He said that the Council had been previously successful in bids for the Urban Tree Challenge Fund and the Local Authority Treescapes Fund, which had resulted in the planting of over 300 trees during the last few years.

Medway Council and Medway Norse recognised the importance of watering and there were sufficient resources planned for standard watering. Watering was taking place at night to increase the available time, but trees would often show signs of drought stress in significant periods of hot weather.

Councillor Curry agreed that tree planting was essential for the future in both urban and rural environments. Trees provided shading and helped to cool town centres, supported a variety of wildlife and were aesthetically pleasing. The Council's Tree Strategy was being refreshed as a matter of urgency.

Question J - Bryan Fowler, of Chatham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

"Our historic Paddock in Chatham has been much changed using legislation which enables Permitted Development Rights for work to go ahead without the need for Planning Application protocols.

Will you please update us on the future annual maintenance charges of the water feature, including budgetary allowances for water and electricity costs?"

Councillor Curry thanked Mr Fowler for the question. He said that he had examined the ongoing maintenance costs associated with the water feature, including the water and electricity costs and had found them to be unsustainable. The Water Feature had therefore been removed from the scope of the Paddock public realm project.

A new, attractive and more sustainable scheme had been developed by Council officers and Councillor Curry was grateful for the work to achieve this.

Question K - Alan Stockey, of Rainham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

"Earlier this year, the Council committed to complete a piece of work by the end of May 2023, which would clarify its assessed (Scope 1, 2 and 3) carbon

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emission footprint from its original, highly tentative, 1.4% of the Medway total emissions.

This piece of critical assessment work is needed to better target its emission reduction priorities and determine where best to apply the Council's considerable influence. The commitment was made in this chamber and again by Councillor Doe at the final Member's Advisory Group on Climate Change but has not yet been completed. What does this administration plan to do now to confirm its footprint and priorities?"

Councillor Curry thanked Mr Stockey for the question. He said that improving understanding of the Council's Scope 3 emissions remained a priority workstream and the need for this data to inform and direct future activities was recognised.

Due to staffing changes, it had not been possible to progress the work and how it could be commissioned was being explored through a variety of mechanisms. It was anticipated that this could be progressed over the next six months to provide the additional clarification of the carbon emissions footprint.

Councillor Curry said that a new reporting structure was being established for climate action, which would engage directly with the community, allowing for clearer and more transparent scrutiny of the Council's work. This would also enable more effective support and engagement with community groups, businesses and individuals to enable everyone to play a part in the essential work to address the serious impact of climate change.

Question L - Melanie Stockey, of Rainham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

"Over the past month, the Council has launched three consultations / surveys concerning traffic and highways, school streets, and most recently, Red Routes. There is an evident lack of coordination across the relevant departments responsible for: Active Travel; Transport; Public Health, Environmental Protection and linkage back to Climate Change objectives.

This lack of collaboration is concerning and costly at a time when budgets are highly constrained and the Adult Social Care budget continues to be influenced by health conditions clearly associated with Medway's air pollution. The lack of reference in these surveys to ongoing initiatives e.g. Rainham Anti-idling Project, and reducing the number of highly polluting Euro 3 buses from our streets and school transit corridors, further illustrate the lack of coordination.

What is the Council doing to ensure that the respective teams are working together to achieve maximum benefit and impact?"

Councillor Curry thanked Mrs Stockey for the question. He said that the Council had several existing and emerging strategies in place to address transport,

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health and environmental issues, and he agreed it was very important for these activities to be coordinated and communicated across departments.

The proposals for School Streets and Red Routes aligned with the Council's transport objectives for road safety and healthier, active lifestyles. They also supported the transport and travel actions set out in the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, which aimed to reduce emissions from road transport and meet air quality objectives.

The initiative would contribute to implementation of the Council's Environmental Strategy, the Sustainable School Travel Strategy, the Air Quality Action Plan, Local Transport Plan and emerging Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan.

Mrs Stockey's comments about the recent consultation surveys for School Streets and Red Routes had been noted and the Council would continue to ensure that all its projects and initiatives were strategically coordinated and that there would be clear communication around achievements and how projects supported climate change objectives.

Medway Council was now establishing a more community focused structure to consider how to address climate action. This included a revision of the Active Travel group, which would now incorporate plans for improvements to public transport, particularly bus services. Full engagement was taking place across the Council with Highways teams, Health and Wellbeing teams and the Climate Action team and the points made by Ms Stockey would form a key part of the agenda going forward.

Question M - Kate Belmonte, on behalf of Medway Green Party, submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple:

"Medway Green Party would like to congratulate the Labour team for their recent successes in May's Local Elections. The Green Party received a total of 7741 votes, making us the third largest political party in Medway, but because of the First Past the Post voting system operated by Medway Council we were unable to secure a seat. On the Hoo Peninsula just 7192 votes secured 4 councillors.

We support the motion passed at the 2022 Labour Party Conference, specifically the terminology which described First Past the Post does "long-term damage to the health of our democracy", and which committed the Labour Party to introducing Proportional Representation. The Green Party also notes that alternative electoral systems have been adopted in other electoral bodies nationally, from London to the devolved bodies. Medway Greens also note that the Labour Portfolio Holder for Housing, Naushabah Khan, sits on the National Policy Forum for the Labour Party.

Will Medway Labour Group commit to exploring, with the aim of introducing, alternative electoral systems for our Unitary Authority, so that every vote cast in Medway matters?"

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Note: As Ms Belmonte was not present, the Mayor stated that she would receive a written response to her question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

131 Leader's report

Discussion:

Members received the Leader's report. The following issues were discussed:

- The inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) currently taking place. While it was acknowledged that there was more work to do, there was confidence in the management of the Services. The collaborative approach to the improvement journey was highlighted.
- The decision made by Homes England to remove £170 million Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), which would have been invested in improving transport and environmental infrastructure on the Hoo Peninsula and the challenge Medway now faced as a result.
- The suggestion that the HIF funding would not have been sufficient to deliver all the required infrastructure and that Medway not having a current Local Plan was a key factor in the Homes England decision.
- The suggestion made by Kent County Council to pursue a Devolution deal; while cooperation with Kent was important, an elected Mayor was not something that Medway would like to see.
- An event held at Chatham Historic Dockyard that had brought together eight anchor organisations to sign the One Medway Charter.
- Work to reduce the Council's use of consultants and temporary staff.
- Work with schools to improve air quality and safety.
- The range of community events held, such as Armed Forces Day, the Medway River Lit Festival, Chatham Carnival and the forthcoming Grain Carnival.
- The Council signing of the Federation of Small Businesses Local Leadership pledge. Medway was the first unitary authority in the south east to have done so.
- The importance of business engagement and support for town centres should they wish to establish Business Improvement Districts.
- The development of a Healthy Living Centre in the Pentagon Shopping Centre in Chatham.
- Changes to the governance of arm's-length businesses and joint ventures.
- The delivery of a Cost-of-Living Plan to help Medway residents and the suggestion that the Help for Households campaign should be referenced within it.
- Changes to the Town Centres Board to give all five town centres representation.
- Enhancement of community engagement and involvement in tackling the climate emergency.
- The development of regular meetings with local MPs and between Councillors from different political groups.

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- The recognition of eight of Medway's green spaces by the Green Flag Award scheme.

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

132 Overview and scrutiny activity

Discussion:

Members received a report on Overview and Scrutiny Activity and raised the following issues during debate:

- The improvement journey of Children's Services in Medway.
- Effective cross-party work undertaken in relation to scrutiny of Children's Services.
- The development of Child Friendly Medway.
- The work of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had included a young person speaking at the Committee. Topics considered by the Committee had included childhood obesity, Sure Start Children's Centres, breastfeeding and Youth Justice.
- The Committee had adopted a new meeting format as a result of work undertaken with the Local Government Association.
- The GP Access Task Group and the suggestion that this work should return to the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update.
- The importance of the scrutiny function in holding to account and in the creation of better policy and decision making.
- Concern about the provision of mental health services including long waiting lists, the inability to access services and the need to address suicide rates, particularly amongst young men. It was suggested that all Councillors should have a role to play in this work.

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

133 Members' questions

Question A – Councillor Paterson asked Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

"Our region is as varied as it is distinctive, with residents proud to say that they come from very specific places. Some people from Borstal might take issue with the suggestion they hail from Rochester, while a Frindsbury resident definitely does not live in Strood.

But just at the moment where such distinctiveness has been rightly recognised in the names of the new wards we have been elected to represent on this

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unitary authority, it seems bean-counters at the BBC are moving in precisely the opposite direction.

Proposed cuts to BBC local radio will mean a loss of BBC Radio Kent's distinctive identity. The station – home to journalists and presenters of the highest calibre including Anna Cookson, Julia George and Pat Marsh – will be forced to share an increased part of its schedule with other parts of the south and south east which we have little or nothing in common with, beyond a county boundary or relative proximity on a map.

I am proud of the BBC, not only for its international reputation for the finest journalism which lives up to its motto “Let Nation Speak Peace Unto Nation”, but for the way it reflects the places it serves at a very local level. I am also proud of the unique way it is funded, which puts it at arm's length from politicians who might seek to influence its editorial policy and out of reach of the sort of rapacious, tax-dodging media moguls who covet and resent it in equal measure.

Last year the Leader joined forces with senior local government figures from around the country, signing an open letter to the Director-General pointing out that these changes are ill-considered, highly damaging to regional identity and bad news for the communities local radio gives a voice to.

Will he join with me in paying tribute to the National Union of Journalists members at BBC Radio Kent who have taken industrial action as they campaign to reverse the cuts and #KeepBBCLocalRadioLocal to Kent?”

Councillor Maple thanked Councillor Paterson for the question. He said that he was proud of the BBC and the job it did in holding elected representatives to account and asking the tough questions. The suggested proposals put forward by senior managers at the BBC were disappointing, particularly in the context of the excellent job the BBC had done, particularly during COVID. The Make a Difference scheme was now in its fourth year, with a local organisation, the Rochester eco-hub, having been highlighted by Radio Kent for the great work they did here in Medway. This scheme was now at risk.

Councillor Maple said he supported the National Union of Journalists in their efforts to defend local radio in Kent and nationally. Without local radio, a unique voice would be lost that was so important to residents, many of whom got in touch with these stations to give their views and participate in democracy, which was welcome. Councillor Maple had previously coordinated a letter of over 100 leaders in local government, including the new LGA chair, to clearly send that message. Following the Council elections in May, he had also coordinated a letter with other Labour Group and Council leaders, specifically on the issue of Radio Kent.

Councillors of all parties valued the role of the BBC in holding to account and giving the local community a voice. This must be defended as the alternative was bland and irrelevant radio and the local community deserved more.

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Question B - Councillor Spring asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

“Recent weeks have seen chaos caused by the ongoing substantial number of roadworks across Rainham, causing significant inconvenience to our residents. Can the Portfolio Holder please explain how officers are ensuring proper coordination around street works, and if any consideration is taken to the impact on air quality, given the challenges faced in this area, particularly around the A2?”

Councillor Curry thanked Councillor Spring for the question. He said that the intention when planning street works was to minimise the impact of the proposed works on the network. The type of traffic management suggested and locations were reviewed to avoid unnecessary traffic delays to ensure disruptions would be kept to a minimum. By reducing disruption, the impact on air quality would be minimised.

When emergency works were required, a review would still be undertaken and where necessary and possible, other works would be suspended. In the case of the Lower Rainham Road, the A2 had been kept clear of all other works for the duration and to ensure efficiency was maximised, engagement took place with traffic signal engineers.

Close work took place with the Council’s Environmental Protection team, including on the development of some local initiatives, which included new signage at temporary traffic signals stating, “When stationary please switch off engines”.

Councillor Curry said that air quality was taken extremely seriously and that one of the aims of Medway’s climate action was to have no air quality management areas in Medway. There were currently four, one of which was in Rainham. While work had to be undertaken in Rainham to maintain the road infrastructure and avoid problems in the future, it was acknowledged that this was highly disruptive. The potholes on the road network were the result of a lack of investment by the government in road infrastructure and Councillor Curry gave assurance that the work was being done as quickly as possible.

Question C - Councillor Sands asked the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, the following:

Councillors will be aware of the Boys Need Bins and Dispose with Dignity national campaigns to bring awareness to the lack of public toilets and importantly the lack of facilities in male toilets.

1 in 8 men will get prostate cancer, and some of those men experience urinary and bowel problems as a direct effect of their treatment. 1 in 3 men over the age of 65 will suffer urinary incontinence problem and 1 in 25 men over the age of 40 will experience some form of urinary leakage. A lack of public understanding of these conditions and the stigma surrounding incontinence and the lack of facilities for men are damaging men’s physical and mental health.

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More and more men are having to use incontinence products. It's something men can become very embarrassed about. And of course, for councils this can cause extra expense and maintenance problems if incontinence products are flushed rather than properly disposed of in a discreet way. But there is a relatively cheap and easy solution, putting sanitary bins in our men's toilets, a small but important difference for those who need it.

All sufferers know that embarrassing leaks can happen from time to time and so a "Just can't wait" card to enable access a toilet quickly and explain to someone discreetly that you need to use a toilet urgently. The 'Just Can't Wait' card is now available as a digital card for your smartphone to ensure you always have your toilet card at easy reach.

Will the Deputy Leader commit the Council to the following:

- To encourage businesses across Medway to put incontinence bins in their male toilets.
- To encourage the acceptance of "Just can't wait" cards throughout Medway.
- To help Medway become a place where men's lives are not limited by incontinence, by ensuring every men's public toilet has an incontinence bin so men can dispose of incontinence pads and stoma products easily, safely and with dignity?"

Councillor Murray thanked Councillor Sands for the question and for the additional information which had helped everyone to understand the important health challenges and causes of male incontinence. She hoped that the question and resulting actions that would be put into place would help to give sufferers confidence that the Council supported their needs and did not want anyone to feel embarrassed about asking for help to be able to manage their health condition.

Councillor Murray thanked Council officers in Public Health who had agreed to help with promotion, signage and information cards. A small amount of extra funding had been agreed for the provision and maintenance of disposal bins in Medway's male public toilets. These would be installed by 28 July 2023. Further progress would be needed to ensure the same facilities were available to the public in the Council's other buildings. The Public Health team's additional promotion would reach out to businesses to encourage them to also recognise these health needs.

Question D - Councillor Perfect asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (including statutory responsibility), Councillor Price, the following:

"Providing an outstanding Children's Services provision should not be seen as an aspirational target but be the standard for all upper-tier local authorities. Over the past four years, the previous administration worked tirelessly on this goal, and now, as an opposition, we remain committed to supporting the improvement journey. Can the Portfolio Holder please update me on the action

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he has undertaken since his appointment at Annual Council to support the improvement journey and preparations for the Ofsted Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection?"

Councillor Price thanked Councillor Perfect for the question. He said that he was fully committed to continuing to support the improvement work underway in Children's Services. He had engaged with the service at pace and had visited staff at Broadside and the Elaine Centre, which had given valuable understanding of their responsibilities and the challenges faced. Councillor Price had also visited Parklands to meet some of the children and families and had seen the benefits of the valuable short break services provided there for disabled children.

Councillor Price said he felt privileged to take on his new role as Lead Member for Children's Services and would take forward the work undertaken by the previous Lead Member. The Portfolio Holder also sat on the multi-agency Improvement Board which oversaw the Improvement Plan and would Chair the Corporate Parenting Board, which championed the interest of children in care and care leavers. He looked forward to working directly with the young people who were part of this Board and ensuring their views and aspirations were supported.

Councillor Price had undertaken a safeguarding visit alongside a practitioner. These visits were undertaken on a six weekly basis, along with the Director of People and the Assistant Director of Children's Social Care. They provided Councillor Price an opportunity to meet families and see at first hand the valuable work of Medway's social care practitioners.

Councillor Price continued to meet and work with senior officers in the People Directorate and so had line of sight to front line practice across Children's Social Care and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This enabled him to discharge statutory responsibilities as Lead Member for children. In view of the Ofsted inspection now underway, the Portfolio Holder wanted to be supportive of all staff and was keen to ensure the transition to the new administration would be managed smoothly to reassure inspectors that the Council's commitment to improvement would be sustained.

Question E - Councillor Tejan asked the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Van Dyke, the following:

"Care providers play a vital role in providing essential support and care to their loved ones, often sacrificing lucrative employment and promising careers to ensure the well-being and quality of life of those they care for. Care providers typically receive a daily allowance of £9.40 from the state for their caregiving responsibilities, which does not adequately compensate for the financial burdens they face; and the Adult Social Care charge element of Council Tax can impose an additional financial strain on care providers, creating an unfair burden that hinders their ability to meet their own financial obligations.

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I hope the Portfolio Holder will acknowledge the significant contributions and sacrifices made by care providers in our community, the financial challenges they often face due to limited financial support, and whether she agrees with me that care providers should be exempt from the Adult Social care charge element of Council Tax, when they are directly responsible for providing care for their loved ones at huge savings to the local authority?"

Councillor Van Dyke thanked Councillor Tejan for the question. She recognised the valuable contribution made by carers across Medway and was committed to ensuring residents received all support available to them. The Carer's Allowance was administered by the Department for Work and Pensions, and for 2023/24 was paid at the rate of £76.75 per week, or £10.96 per day.

The Adult Social Care precept formed part of the overall Council Tax liability for each property, so it could not be excluded from the amount payable by any individual or group. However, for both types of carers, the professional care worker, and the unpaid carer or relative, support was available to them to pay their Council Tax.

Professional care workers who lived in the same property as the person they cared for, worked for at least 24 hours a week and were paid no more than £44 per week were not counted for Council Tax. This meant a 25% discount could be applied to their bill if they were the only adult in their household.

For unpaid carers who lived with the person they cared for and provided at least 35 hours of care each week for someone, excluding their partner, who was in receipt of certain benefits, they were also disregarded for Council Tax purposes. This meant that a property occupied solely by a carer and the person receiving care would receive a 25% discount. Should a carer move to provide care and leave their home unoccupied, they would not have to pay Council Tax in respect of the unoccupied property.

Medway's Council Tax Reduction Scheme disregarded any income from Carer's Allowance, Personal Independence Payments, Disability Living Allowance or the support component of Employment and Support Allowance and provided additional income disregards of £40 per week if someone in the household was disabled. This meant that carers and those they were caring for benefitted from being assessed as having lower income, increasing their entitlement to help within the scheme.

A page dedicated to support for Carers was available on the Council's website and Councillor Van Dyke encouraged anyone in Medway suffering financial hardship to visit the website, and search 'household help' to find out what support was available.

Question F - Councillor Lawrence asked the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, the following:

“Can the Cabinet Spokesman for Health give her view on the effectiveness of the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) with particular reference to its delivery of services needed by the residents of Medway?”

Councillor Murray thanked Councillor Lawrence for the question. She said that the Kent and Medway Integrated Care partnership (ICP) had been established to develop a partnership working approach and it was important that all councillors recognised that developing an honest, open and supportive relationship with the ICP was the best way to ensure that Medway received its fair share of health resources.

Councillor Murray considered that tackling the legacy of health inequality in Medway was a top priority and said that she had utilised every available opportunity so far to emphasise to the ICP that for Medway to achieve health outcomes set out by the partnership, its need for a share of funding was greater than that of more affluent areas, whose residents enjoyed better health and longer lives than many of the residents of Medway.

The ward profiles on Medway’s website set out how far Medway still had to travel compared to the rest of the Southeast to ensure that all residents had fair access to health care and the support they needed to make lifestyle changes, which would enable them to live well and achieve their full potential. The Kent and Medway ICP was just over a year old and was making reasonable progress. However, their instruction from central Government was to make 30% cuts in addition to previous years of cuts.

Councillor Murray was optimistic about the Kent and Medway ICP as there was professional consensus about what needed to be done and agreement that the wider determinants of health, such as bad housing, poverty and poor education all contributed to poor health. In support of the ICP’s aims, there was determination to ensure that Medway Council played its part in tackling those issues and by doing so, achieving a healthier Medway.

Question G - Councillor Gilbourne asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“Will the Leader of the Council confirm that the new Labour Administration has no plans to sell any land that it owns and/or controls in Capstone Valley, opening the way to large scale house building on an important green space, which is vital to the environment and to the wellbeing of the surrounding communities?”

Councillor Maple thanked Councillor Gilbourne for the question. He said that there had been no formal request to sell land at Capstone. Should any request be received, a decision would be one for the Cabinet based on a careful consideration of all the facts and issues.

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There had been previous Cabinet reports on this issue and Councillor Maple noted, with interest, the recent comment of the former Leader of the Council, who had stated “We’re going to get a load of houses in Capstone anyway.” Councillor Maple suggested that this comment was a result of multiple appeals previously lost by the Council due to its failure to deliver a Local Plan for more than 20 years.

Note: The Mayor stated that since the time allocation for Member questions had been exhausted, written responses would be provided to questions 10H to 10O.

Question H - Councillor Spalding submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple:

“At the end of your first Cabinet meeting you stated categorically, on behalf of the Labour Group “We want ultimate transparency”. During that meeting, Councillor Curry when telling the cabinet about the HIF situation reminded the Cabinet that as part of your election promises you made a “Commitment to deliver a more transparent and inclusive Medway Authority”.

During a subsequent meeting with Councillor Curry I asked for copies of the letter from Homes England with the recommendation to withdraw HIF monies and a copy of the detailed plan which allegedly would achieve the HIF objectives.

Nothing has been provided and despite further requests these documents are still being kept secret.

Barely two months into this administration and you have already broken an election promise. Can you please explain why?”

Question I - Councillor Mrs Turpin submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

“At Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 March 2023, Councillor Curry, in regard to the Housing Infrastructure Fund asked, “Conversations were being had with Homes England, why weren’t we aware of these conversation, why haven’t we been told?”

Later in the same meeting Councillor Murray said, “I’m uncomfortable about all these discussions going on and nobody knowing about it. This Committee needs to send a message to Cabinet to ask them to pause the discussions that everyone is having with Homes England and decide what scheme exactly we are committed to.”

On 13 June at the Cabinet meeting it was announced that the Council had received a letter on 9 June from Homes England advising that they were no longer recommending the funding for Medway’s HIF project, with a final decision being made by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and

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Communities. It was made clear at this meeting that all efforts would be made to persuade Homes England and the Department not to withdraw the funding and that the Leader would be requesting an urgent meeting.

However, except one cancelled meeting, there has been no discussion or updates to Members representing the communities on the Peninsula.

Can the Portfolio Holder provide an update on the current position of discussions with Homes England, including any proposals and plans to communicate this to local members?"

Question J – Councillor Joy submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (including statutory responsibility), Councillor Price:

"Schools across Medway are facing extreme delays from Medway Council in; Firstly, getting an agreement to additional funding needs for children with Special Educational Needs, with schools in some instances waiting for over 6 months incurring additional costs (that they can ill afford) to ensure that they meet their requirements under statutory duties from current legislation.

Secondly, when funding levels are agreed, actually getting the money paid, with schools being owed thousands by Medway Council, with the majority from the last few months.

Please can the Portfolio Holder explain what is being done to speed up the process, including confirmation when all funding currently agreed is paid and the procedures being put in place to ensure that all monies are paid promptly?"

Question K – Councillor Crozer submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple:

"I note that the Cabinet Local Plan Advisory Group is allocated 7 Members using the ration of 4:3 Labour: Conservative, as such it excludes our Independent Group.

You will, I'm sure, be acutely aware of the implications of the Hoo Peninsula being excluded from this advisory capacity.

The Local Plan has been the subject of some difficulty since 2007 when the previous administration began to bring forward its update to include 5000 houses at Lodge Hill on the Peninsula and of course the various failures of Medway to bring forward a successful Local Plan of late, predicated on the back of the Hoo Development Framework and the Housing Infrastructure Fund Project.

After almost 3 years of development of the HIF project, following the grant determination agreement and some circa £18m spent, Homes England recommended its withdrawal citing some 42 points of failure. Deloitte, one of the experts, concluded there are a "considerable number of planning risks that

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remain outstanding since the original HIF submission. A key risk which underpins the entire planning strategy is the delay to the adoption of the Local Plan and risk of legal challenge".

Given that the HIF project has been cancelled it is essential that we, Medway, quickly adopt a sound evidence based Local Plan that we might, once and for all, move forward together.

You have remarked recently that the residents have given Independents a clear mandate that over developing the Peninsula is not acceptable.

We have asked time and time again for transparency and to be part of the process to develop a fair and evidenced based Local Plan. We want to be part of that transparent process. Representation on a Cabinet 'Advisory' Group of the Hoo Peninsula would a step in the right direction together.

I therefore respectfully ask you to carefully consider changing the allocation for the Local Plan Cabinet Advisory Group to that similar to the Climate Change advisory group of 9 in the ratio of 5:3:1."

Question L – Councillor Field submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

"Residents in Cliffe Road in Strood have raised the issue of high vehicular speeds presenting a danger to property and residents. They would like the Council to review speed limits, with a preference for a 20 miles per hour restriction. What measures is the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration taking to ensure that our streets are safe for all?"

Question M – Councillor Williams submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple:

"Despite the recommendation of the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 30 March being a "Refreshed governance structure for the (HIF) project going forward to include relevant community groups such as councillors, parish councillors and other community groups", the Cabinet Report of 11 July advises that the Future Hoo Delivery Board will not be re-established and that where this is the case Cabinet Members will continue to have the necessary dialogue with relevant Members, officers and partners, as applicable, to inform the work of the Cabinet.

Assuming that over the past 4 weeks, discussions have been held with Homes England and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, there has been no such dialogue between Cabinet Members and local ward Councillors.

Despite criticism of the previous administration's governance of this project, it would appear from the withdrawal of the Future Hoo Board and many other Cabinet Advisory Groups, that Governance is going to get increasingly worse

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with this administration. How can the Leader give us reassurance that this is not going to be the case?”

Question N – Councillor Pearce submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

“Will the Council, as a matter of policy, condition all new houses built to include beneficial wildlife measures, such as bat boxes, bee hotels, swift boxes and other wildlife items, to ensure that ecological benefits are realised quickly for local wildlife?”

Question O – Councillor Jones submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services (including statutory responsibility), Councillor Price:

“Please can the Portfolio Holder outline what steps are being taken by Medway Council, to ensure that all Children in Care are treated as if they have a protected characteristic, under the Equalities Act 2010?”

134 Capital Additions Request - The Brook Theatre Refurbishment and Structural Works

Background:

This report requested an addition to the Capital Programme, to facilitate the necessary structural and refurbishment works to the Brook Theatre, to ensure the longevity of a well utilised and iconic community asset.

The Brook Theatre had been awarded £300,000 from the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) and £6.5m from the Levelling Up Fund (LUF), to deliver improvements to the building, focussing on improvements/ refurbishments to performance and training areas, improving the accessibility of the building and enhancing and modernising the digital offer. This would ensure that the building was user friendly and fit for purpose for current and future residents and visitors. The LUF and FHSF programmes were being delivered together to ensure maximum efficiencies and benefits.

The report had previously been considered by the Cabinet on 11 July 2023, the decisions of which were set out at section 5 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council approved the addition of £14.7million to the Capital Programme, to be funded from borrowing if no grant funding from alternative sources could be found, as set out in Option 1 at paragraph 3.1.1 of the report.

135 Capital Additions Request - Waste Fleet Replacement Scheme

Background:

This report requested the addition of £17million to the Capital Programme to fund the replacement bespoke waste vehicle fleet.

It was proposed that prudential borrowing was undertaken to fund the procurement using the Council's procurement framework. This would give the Council flexibility regarding future procurement of the waste collection and cleansing contract.

The report had previously been considered by the Cabinet on 11 July 2023, the decisions of which were set out at section 5 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, supported by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council agreed the addition of £17million to the Council's capital programme, funded from borrowing to procure a Council-controlled waste fleet, and noted that the revenue impact of this procurement would need to be addressed in the 2024/25 budget build.

136 Medway Youth Justice Plan 2023-24

Background:

This report provided details of the annual update of the Youth Justice Plan, which set out how youth justice would be delivered locally within available resources.

The report stated that the Plan was a completely new plan in line with guidance distributed to local authorities in March 2023. The format of the plan followed guidance and headings provided by the National Youth Justice Board.

The report had been considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 June 2023 and its comments were set out at section 6 of the report. The report had also been considered by the Cabinet on 11 July 2023, the decisions of which were set out at section 7 of the report.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken in relation to the Plan and was attached at Appendix 3 to the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (including statutory responsibility), Councillor Price, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Education, Councillor Coombs, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

- a) The Council noted the comments from the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out at section 6 of the report and the decisions made by the Cabinet, as set out at section 7 of the report.
- b) The Council approved the Medway Youth Justice Plan 2023 – 2024 attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

137 Changes to the MedPay Salary Scales

Background:

This report requested approval for improvements to the MedPay salary pay range to ensure the Council attracted, recruited and retained an effective workforce.

The report set out that following Medway Council having moved away from the National Joint Council Terms and Conditions for pay and introduced its own pay structure, called MedPay, in 2014, there was no incremental progression through pay grades and upon appointment, employees could be appointed anywhere within the band's range.

The report explained that this approach could create inconsistencies across departments and within teams whereby newly appointed employees could be offered a higher salary than some long serving employees, purely to match the salary they were currently earning elsewhere. Changes proposed included the introduction of a Range 8 pay band, the introduction of 3 spot points for each pay band range 3-8, and 2 spot points in range 2.

This matter had initially been reported to Employment Matters Committee on 6 June 2023, the comments of which were set out at section 6 of the report.

Councillor Hamilton, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Van Dyke, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council approved the following changes, with effect from 1 August 2023:

- a) The introduction of a Range 8 pay band.
- b) The introduction of 3 spot points for each pay band range 3-8, and 2 spot points in range 2, with a £500 pay gap at the bottom of pay bands 5-8.

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- c) An uplift to the bottom of the service manager salary scale to £55,455 to facilitate the introduction of a range 8 pay band.

138 Review of the Constitution

Background:

This report set out a review of some sections of the Council's Constitution at the request of the Leader of the Council. The changes proposed included amendments to Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference, public questions and to the rules for the nomination of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

The report also set out a proposal to hold a special Council meeting on 19 October 2023 for the purpose of conferring freedom of the borough on Medway NHS Foundation Trust on behalf of the staff at the Medway Maritime Hospital.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, supported by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

- a) The Council approved the changes to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees' terms of reference, as set out in Appendix A to the report.
- b) The Council agreed to convene a Special meeting of the Council at 6.30pm on Thursday 19 October 2023 (to be followed by the ordinary Council meeting at 7.30pm) to consider a proposal to grant the freedom of Medway to the Medway NHS Foundation Trust on behalf of the staff of Medway Maritime Hospital, as set out in paragraph 2.12 of the report.
- c) The Council agreed to take forward without discussion, for debate at the next ordinary meeting of the Council (as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report), approval of changes to the Council Rules, as set out in Appendix B to the report in respect of changes to arrangements for the nomination of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and supplementary questions.

139 Use of Urgency Provisions

Background:

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

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council noted the use of urgency provisions as set out in sections 3 and 4 of the report.

140 Motions

Motion A – proposed by Councillor Edwards and supported by Councillor Paterson

“Standing up for Responsible Tax Conduct

Full Council notes that:

1. The pressure on organisations to pay their fair share of tax has never been stronger.
2. Polling from the Institute for Business Ethics finds that “corporate tax avoidance” has, since 2013, been the clear number one concern of the British public when it comes to business conduct.
3. Two thirds of people (66%) believe the Government and local councils should at least consider a company’s ethics and how they pay their tax, as well as value for money and quality of service provided, when awarding contracts to companies.
4. Around 17.5% of public contracts in the UK have been won by companies with links to tax havens.
5. It has been conservatively estimated that losses from multinational profit-shifting (just one form of tax avoidance) could be costing the UK some £17bn per annum in lost corporation tax revenues.
6. The Fair Tax Mark offers a means for business to demonstrate good tax conduct, and has been secured by a wide range of businesses across the UK, including FTSE-listed PLCs, co-operatives, social enterprises and large private businesses.

Full Council believes that:

1. Paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn’t be.
2. Tax enables us to provide services from education, health and social care, to flood defence, roads, policing and defence. It also helps to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.
3. As recipients of significant public funding, local authorities should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct; be that by ensuring

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contractors are paying their proper share of tax, or by refusing to go along with offshore tax dodging when buying land and property.

4. Where councils hold substantive stakes in private enterprises, influence should be wielded to ensure that such businesses are exemplars of tax transparency and tax avoidance is shunned.
5. More action is needed, however, as current and proposed new UK procurement law significantly restricts councils' ability to either penalise poor tax conduct (as exclusion grounds are rarely triggered) or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.
6. UK cities, counties and towns can and should stand up for responsible tax conduct - doing what they can within existing frameworks and pledging to do more given the opportunity, as active supporters of international tax justice.

Full Council resolves to:

1. Approve the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration (attached at Appendix 2.)
2. Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities.
3. Ensure IR35 is implemented robustly and contract workers pay a fair share of employment taxes.
4. Not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.
5. Undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately by suppliers as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.
6. Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers.
7. Promote Fair Tax Mark certification especially for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
8. Support Fair Tax Week events in the area, and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses are proud to promote responsible tax conduct and pay their fair share of corporation tax.
9. Support calls for urgent reform of UK procurement law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.
10. Request that the Cabinet receives a report in due course regarding the implementation of the measures set out in points 1-9 above."

Councillor Doe, supported by Councillor Gulvin, proposed the following amendment:

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Add the following to section 10 (final paragraph):

“Request that the Cabinet receives a report in due course regarding the implementation of the measures set out in points 1-9 above and that the Cabinet refers the report to Full Council.”

Amended Motion reads:

“Standing up for Responsible Tax Conduct

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4. Around 17.5% of public contracts in the UK have been won by companies with links to tax havens.
5. It has been conservatively estimated that losses from multinational profit-shifting (just one form of tax avoidance) could be costing the UK some £17bn per annum in lost corporation tax revenues.
6. The Fair Tax Mark offers a means for business to demonstrate good tax conduct, and has been secured by a wide range of businesses across the UK, including FTSE-listed PLCs, co-operatives, social enterprises and large private businesses.

Full Council believes that:

1. Paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn’t be.
2. Tax enables us to provide services from education, health and social care, to flood defence, roads, policing and defence. It also helps to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.
3. As recipients of significant public funding, local authorities should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct; be that by ensuring contractors are paying their proper share of tax, or by refusing to go along with offshore tax dodging when buying land and property.
4. Where councils hold substantive stakes in private enterprises, influence should be wielded to ensure that such businesses are exemplars of tax transparency and tax avoidance is shunned.

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5. More action is needed, however, as current and proposed new UK procurement law significantly restricts councils' ability to either penalise poor tax conduct (as exclusion grounds are rarely triggered) or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.
6. UK cities, counties and towns can and should stand up for responsible tax conduct – doing what they can within existing frameworks and pledging to do more given the opportunity, as active supporters of international tax justice.

Full Council resolves to:

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3. Ensure IR35 is implemented robustly and contract workers pay a fair share of employment taxes.
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6. Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers.
7. Promote Fair Tax Mark certification especially for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
8. Support Fair Tax Week events in the area, and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses are proud to promote responsible tax conduct and pay their fair share of corporation tax.
9. Support calls for urgent reform of UK procurement law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.
10. Request that the Cabinet receives a report in due course regarding the implementation of the measures set out in points 1-9 above and that the Cabinet refers the report to Full Council."

On being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

Decision:

Upon being put to the vote the substantive motion was carried:

Standing up for Responsible Tax Conduct

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Full Council notes that:

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5. More action is needed, however, as current and proposed new UK procurement law significantly restricts councils’ ability to either penalise poor tax conduct (as exclusion grounds are rarely triggered) or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.

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Full Council resolves to:

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9. Support calls for urgent reform of UK procurement law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.
10. Request that the Cabinet receives a report in due course regarding the implementation of the measures set out in points 1-9 above and that the Cabinet refers the report to Full Council.

Motion B – proposed by Councillor Spalding and supported by Councillor Perfect

“This Council fully supports the proposal from Rivermead Inclusive Trust to take over the vacant buildings and site of Stoke Primary School in order to provide much needed additional places for those pupils requiring supported education and requests a letter be sent to the Regional Schools Commissioner confirming this full support.”

Council, 20 July 2023

Decision:

Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried, subject to 'Regional Schools Commissioner' being amended to read 'Regional Schools Director':

This Council fully supports the proposal from Rivermead Inclusive Trust to take over the vacant buildings and site of Stoke Primary School in order to provide much needed additional places for those pupils requiring supported education and requests a letter be sent to the Regional Schools Director confirming this full support.

Motion C – proposed by Councillor Lammas and supported by Councillor Perfect

“Neurological Diversity and SEND

This Motion stems from my personal experience as a recipient of SEN support growing up and learning at Medway schools, my recent visit to Maundene Primary School in my ward of Princes Park and my wish that neurodiverse children reach their full potential in Medway.

Background

Neurological diversity or 'Neurodiversity' describes people that experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits.

The word neurodiversity can be broad and include those suffering brain injury, but it is often used in the context of those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as well as other neurological or developmental conditions such as Attention Deficit, Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

Neurodiverse children and young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are often supported in mainstream schools to help meet their learning needs. This additional support is funded through 'high needs' funding, which the Council appropriate and distribute.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans are for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support in a mainstream setting. EHC Plans help identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

Council, 20 July 2023

This Motion seeks to

1. **Remind** the Council of their statutory responsibilities as a local authority and employer under the Autism Act 2009, Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014 and the Health Care Act 2022.
2. **Promote** the understanding of the needs of neurodiverse children, young adults and adults in Medway.
3. **Ensure** that the Council never places barriers to accessing SEND support high needs funding for schools.
4. **Improve** the length of time between high needs funding applications and receipt by schools.
5. **Enhance** the Council's communication with schools, as well as parents of children and young people with SEND, and young people themselves.

Council Notes:

1. It has statutory responsibility as a local authority and employer under the Autism Act 2009, Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014 and the Health Care Act 2022 and other guidance to support those with SEND both as an education authority and an employer.

Council Commits:

1. To promote the understanding of the needs of neurodiverse children, young adults and adults in Medway through the training for all staff on the statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities.
2. To work to ensure the most appropriate support is provided to SEND children and young adults in education. Medway Council will never use Education, Health and Care plans as barrier to accessing support in mainstream schools or high needs funding.
3. To revise internal procedures to reduce the time between the submission of application for high needs funding from schools and receipt.
4. To ensure that any changes to SEND provision and high needs funding arrangements in Medway are made in close consultation and co-production with the schools and colleges which will be affected. The local Schools' Forum is one way through, but the Council will consult with parents of children and young people with SEND, and young people themselves."

Councillor Howcroft-Scott, supported by Councillor Mandaracas, proposed the following amendment:

Council, 20 July 2023

“Add the following new section 2 to “Council Notes” and new section 5 to “Council Commits”:

Neurological Diversity and SEND

This Motion stems from my personal experience as a recipient of SEN support growing up and learning at Medway schools, my recent visit to Maundene Primary School in my ward of Princes Park and my wish that neurodiverse children reach their full potential in Medway.

Background

Neurological diversity or ‘Neurodiversity’ describes people that experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one “right” way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits.

The word neurodiversity can be broad and include those suffering brain injury, but it is often used in the context of those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as well as other neurological or developmental conditions such as Attention Deficit, Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

Neurodiverse children and young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are often supported in mainstream schools to help meet their learning needs. This additional support is funded through ‘high needs’ funding, which the Council appropriate and distribute.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans are for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support in a mainstream setting. EHC Plans help identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

This Motion seeks to

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2. **Promote** the understanding of the needs of neurodiverse children, young adults and adults in Medway.
3. **Ensure** that the Council never places barriers to accessing SEND support high needs funding for schools.
4. **Improve** the length of time between high needs funding applications and receipt by schools.

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5. **Enhance** the Council's communication with schools, as well as parents of children and young people with SEND, and young people themselves.

Council Notes:

1. It has statutory responsibility as a local authority and employer under the Autism Act 2009, Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014 and the Health Care Act 2022 and other guidance to support those with SEND both as an education authority and an employer.
2. That the Conservative government's Austerity Regime has resulted in cuts to SEND budgets for schools making it much harder to deliver timely ECHP assessments and to put support in place for SEND students.

Council Commits:

1. To promote the understanding of the needs of neurodiverse children, young adults and adults in Medway through the training for all staff on the statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities.
2. To work to ensure the most appropriate support is provided to SEND children and young adults in education. Medway Council will never use Education, Health and Care plans as barrier to accessing support in mainstream schools or high needs funding.
3. To revise internal procedures to reduce the time between the submission of application for high needs funding from schools and receipt.
4. To ensure that any changes to SEND provision and high needs funding arrangements in Medway are made in close consultation and co-production with the schools and colleges which will be affected. The local Schools' Forum is one way through, but the Council will consult with parents of children and young people with SEND, and young people themselves.
5. To work in partnership with Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board on the development and Implementation of the all ages Learning Disability and Autism Strategy."

Amended Motion reads:

"Neurological Diversity and SEND

This Motion stems from my personal experience as a recipient of SEN support growing up and learning at Medway schools, my recent visit to Maundene Primary School in my ward of Princes Park and my wish that neurodiverse children reach their full potential in Medway.

Background

Neurological diversity or 'Neurodiversity' describes people that experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits.

The word neurodiversity can be broad and include those suffering brain injury, but it is often used in the context of those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as well as other neurological or developmental conditions such as Attention Deficit, Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

Neurodiverse children and young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are often supported in mainstream schools to help meet their learning needs. This additional support is funded through 'high needs' funding, which the Council appropriate and distribute.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans are for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support in a mainstream setting. EHC Plans help identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

This Motion seeks to

1. **Remind** the Council of their statutory responsibilities as a local authority and employer under the Autism Act 2009, Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014 and the Health Care Act 2022.
2. **Promote** the understanding of the needs of neurodiverse children, young adults and adults in Medway.
3. **Ensure** that the Council never places barriers to accessing SEND support high needs funding for schools.
4. **Improve** the length of time between high needs funding applications and receipt by schools.
5. **Enhance** the Council's communication with schools, as well as parents of children and young people with SEND, and young people themselves.

Council Notes:

1. It has statutory responsibility as a local authority and employer under the Autism Act 2009, Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014 and the Health Care Act 2022 and other guidance to support those with SEND both as an education authority and an employer.

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2. That the Conservative government's Austerity Regime has resulted in cuts to SEND budgets for schools making it much harder to deliver timely ECHP assessments and to put support in place for SEND students.

Council Commits:

1. To promote the understanding of the needs of neurodiverse children, young adults and adults in Medway through the training for all staff on the statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities.
2. To work to ensure the most appropriate support is provided to SEND children and young adults in education. Medway Council will never use Education, Health and Care plans as barrier to accessing support in mainstream schools or high needs funding.
3. To revise internal procedures to reduce the time between the submission of application for high needs funding from schools and receipt.
4. To ensure that any changes to SEND provision and high needs funding arrangements in Medway are made in close consultation and co-production with the schools and colleges which will be affected. The local Schools' Forum is one way through, but the Council will consult with parents of children and young people with SEND, and young people themselves.
5. To work in partnership with Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board on the development and Implementation of the all ages Learning Disability and Autism Strategy."

On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried.

Decision:

On being put to the vote, the substantive motion was agreed.

Neurological Diversity and SEND

This Motion stems from my personal experience as a recipient of SEN support growing up and learning at Medway schools, my recent visit to Maundene Primary School in my ward of Princes Park and my wish that neurodiverse children reach their full potential in Medway.

Background

Neurological diversity or 'Neurodiversity' describes people that experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits.

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The word neurodiversity can be broad and include those suffering brain injury, but it is often used in the context of those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as well as other neurological or developmental conditions such as Attention Deficit, Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

Neurodiverse children and young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are often supported in mainstream schools to help meet their learning needs. This additional support is funded through 'high needs' funding, which the Council appropriate and distribute.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans are for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support in a mainstream setting. EHC Plans help identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

This Motion seeks to

1. **Remind** the Council of their statutory responsibilities as a local authority and employer under the Autism Act 2009, Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014 and the Health Care Act 2022.
2. **Promote** the understanding of the needs of neurodiverse children, young adults and adults in Medway.
3. **Ensure** that the Council never places barriers to accessing SEND support high needs funding for schools.
4. **Improve** the length of time between high needs funding applications and receipt by schools.
5. **Enhance** the Council's communication with schools, as well as parents of children and young people with SEND, and young people themselves.

Council Notes:

1. It has statutory responsibility as a local authority and employer under the Autism Act 2009, Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014 and the Health Care Act 2022 and other guidance to support those with SEND both as an education authority and an employer.
2. That the Conservative government's Austerity Regime has resulted in cuts to SEND budgets for schools making it much harder to deliver timely ECHP assessments and to put support in place for SEND students.

Council Commits:

1. To promote the understanding of the needs of neurodiverse children, young adults and adults in Medway through the training for all staff on the

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- statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities.
2. To work to ensure the most appropriate support is provided to SEND children and young adults in education. Medway Council will never use Education, Health and Care plans as barrier to accessing support in mainstream schools or high needs funding.
 3. To revise internal procedures to reduce the time between the submission of application for high needs funding from schools and receipt.
 4. To ensure that any changes to SEND provision and high needs funding arrangements in Medway are made in close consultation and co-production with the schools and colleges which will be affected. The local Schools' Forum is one way through, but the Council will consult with parents of children and young people with SEND, and young people themselves.
 5. To work in partnership with Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board on the development and Implementation of the all ages Learning Disability and Autism Strategy.

Motion D – proposed by Councillor Pearce and supported by Councillor Crozer:

"Wednesday 21st June marked ten years since Medway Council's Core Strategy (Local Plan) was found unsound by the Planning Inspector. This Plan included the destruction of the Lodge Hill Bird Sanctuary with a new 5,000 home town on the Hoo Peninsula.

Lodge Hill is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This is a nationally protected and incredibly important haven for wildlife, containing rare grassland, insects, flora and fauna. It is specifically the best and most important site for Nightingales in the whole of Britain. A truly wonderful and culturally iconic bird which appears in several of Shakespeare's plays.

"Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day. It was the nightingale, and not the lark, That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear. Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree. Believe me, love, it was the nightingale." - Romeo and Juliet (3:5 2098-2102).

Lodge Hill was not just rejected by the Inspector because it was a special and nationally protected site - the Council had also failed to properly consider alternative locations for the development, including in less harmful locations, and was too narrowly focused on the Hoo Peninsula.

Following two failed Core Strategies (Local Plans) and a failed planning application to destroy Lodge Hill, Medway Council rightly declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019. If the Lodge Hill Plan had succeeded this beautiful wildlife habitat would currently be in the process of being destroyed - at the

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same time as the declaration. The natural world is now at the forefront of people's minds and decision making.

On reflection, this new Council believes the previous promotion and allocation of the Lodge Hill site for development by former Councils was fundamentally unsound and clearly went against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Moving forward, this new Council will champion and celebrate our wonderful Nightingales and other wildlife here on the Hoo Peninsula.”

Councillor Perfect, supported by Councillor Spring, proposed the following amendment:

~~“Wednesday 21st June marked ten years since Medway Council's Core Strategy (Local Plan) was found unsound by the Planning Inspector. This Plan included the destruction of the Lodge Hill Bird Sanctuary with a new 5,000 home town on the Hoo Peninsula.~~

Lodge Hill is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This is a nationally protected and incredibly important haven for wildlife, containing rare grassland, insects, flora and fauna. It is specifically the best and most important site for Nightingales in the whole of Britain. A truly wonderful and culturally iconic bird which appears in several of Shakespeare's plays.

"Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day. It was the nightingale, and not the lark, That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear. Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree. Believe me, love, it was the nightingale." - Romeo and Juliet (3:5 2098-2102).

~~Lodge Hill was not just rejected by the Inspector because it was a special and nationally protected site – the Council had also failed to properly consider alternative locations for the development, including in less harmful locations, and was too narrowly focused on the Hoo Peninsula.~~

-

~~Following two failed Core Strategies (Local Plans) and a failed planning application to destroy Lodge Hill, Medway Council rightly declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019. If the Lodge Hill Plan had succeeded this beautiful wildlife habitat would currently be in the process of being destroyed – at the same time as the declaration. The natural world is now at the forefront of people's minds and decision making.~~

-

~~On reflection, this new Council believes the previous promotion and allocation of the Lodge Hill site for development by former Councils was fundamentally unsound and clearly went against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).~~ Moving forward, this new Council will continue to champion and celebrate our wonderful Nightingales and other wildlife here on the Hoo Peninsula and across Medway.”

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Amended Motion reads:

"Lodge Hill is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This is a nationally protected and incredibly important haven for wildlife, containing rare grassland, insects, flora and fauna. It is specifically the best and most important site for Nightingales in the whole of Britain. A truly wonderful and culturally iconic bird which appears in several of Shakespeare's plays.

"Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day. It was the nightingale, and not the lark, That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear. Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree. Believe me, love, it was the nightingale." - Romeo and Juliet (3:5 2098-2102).

Moving forward, this new Council will continue to champion and celebrate our wonderful Nightingales and other wildlife here on the Hoo Peninsula and across Medway."

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

Councillor Edwards, supported by Councillor Khan, proposed the following amendment:

Wednesday 21 June November 2023 will mark 10 years since the Council withdrew its core strategy following Natural England confirming Lodge Hill as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Sunday 14th May marked ten twenty years since Medway Council's Core Strategy (Local Plan) was found unsound Council last agreed a local plan.

This council notes that infrastructure is a key requirement for Medway to progress as a community and will be a key consideration when moving forward with our much needed updated local plan.

This council is deeply disappointed by the Planning Inspector. This Plan included the destruction of decision by Homes England and the Lodge Hill Bird Sanctuary with a new 5,000 home town on Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to withdraw £170 million of funding from Medway for infrastructure through the Hoo Peninsula Housing Infrastructure Fund.

Lodge Hill is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This is a nationally protected and incredibly important haven for wildlife, containing rare grassland, insects, flora and fauna. It is specifically the best and most important site for Nightingales in the whole of Britain. A truly wonderful and culturally iconic bird which appears in several of Shakespeare's plays.

"Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day. It was the nightingale, and not the lark, That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear. Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree. Believe me, love, it was the nightingale." - Romeo and Juliet (3:5 2098-2102).

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~~Lodge Hill was not just rejected by the Inspector because it was a special and nationally protected site – the Council had also failed to properly consider alternative locations for the development, including in less harmful locations, and was too narrowly focused on the Hoo Peninsula.~~

~~Following two failed Core Strategies (Local Plans) and a failed planning application to destroy Lodge Hill, Medway Council rightly declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019. If the Lodge Hill Plan had succeeded this beautiful wildlife habitat would currently be in the process of being destroyed – at the same time as the declaration. The natural world is now at the forefront of people's minds and decision making.~~

~~On reflection, this new Council believes the previous promotion and allocation of the Lodge Hill site for development by former Councils was fundamentally unsound and clearly went against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Moving forward, this new Council will champion and celebrate our wonderful Nightingales and other wildlife here on the Hoo Peninsula. This council agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to share our deep disappointment in his department's decision and call for urgent alternative funding for much needed infrastructure for Medway.~~

Amended motion reads:

“November 2023 will mark 10 years since the Council withdrew its core strategy following Natural England confirming Lodge Hill as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Sunday 14th May marked twenty years since Medway Council last agreed a local plan.

This council notes that infrastructure is a key requirement for Medway to progress as a community and will be a key consideration when moving forward with our much needed updated local plan.

This council is deeply disappointed by the decision by Homes England and the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to withdraw £170 million of funding from Medway for infrastructure through the Housing Infrastructure Fund.

This council agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to share our deep disappointment in his department's decision and call for urgent alternative funding for much needed infrastructure for Medway.”

A Member raised concern that the amendment appeared to be a new motion as it had been substantially changed from the original motion and that it should, therefore, not be accepted as a valid amendment. The Assistant Director, Legal

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and Governance advised that he was satisfied that the amendment was within the scope of the Council rules that covered full Council meetings.

On being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

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

For: Councillors Animashaun, Bowen, Campbell, Cook, Coombs, Curry, Edwards, Field, Gurung, Hamandishe, Hamilton, Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard, Jackson, Jones, Khan, Mandaracas, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Myton, Nestorov, Osborne, Paterson, Peake, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Price, Shokar, Stamp and Van Dyke (31)

Against: Councillors Anang, Barrett, Brake, Crozer, Doe, Etheridge, Fearn, Filmer, Gilbourne, Gulvin, Hackwell, Hyne, Joy, Kemp, Lamma, Lawrence, Pearce, Perfect, Sands, Spring, Tejan, Mrs Turpin and Williams (23)

Abstain: Councillor Spalding (1)

Note: In addition to the Councillors named in the minutes of agenda item no. 2, Apologies for Absence, Councillor Wildey was not present for the recorded vote.

Decision:

November 2023 will mark 10 years since the Council withdrew its core strategy following Natural England confirming Lodge Hill as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Sunday 14th May marked twenty years since Medway Council last agreed a local plan.

This council notes that infrastructure is a key requirement for Medway to progress as a community and will be a key consideration when moving forward with our much needed updated local plan.

This council is deeply disappointed by the decision by Homes England and the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to withdraw £170 million of funding from Medway for infrastructure through the Housing Infrastructure Fund.

This council agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to share our deep disappointment in his department's decision and call for urgent alternative funding for much needed infrastructure for Medway.

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Mayor

Date:

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