

## **COUNCIL**

**21 JULY 2011**

### **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

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#### **Summary**

To set out the public questions received for this meeting.

#### **1. Background**

1.1 Section 8.3 of the Council Rules, as laid out in the Council's constitution, sets out the rules for the receipt of public questions as follows;

- At any one meeting no person may submit more than two questions and no more than two questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation. Members of the public who have not submitted questions before will be given priority over those who have, and second questions will only be dealt with when all first questions have been dealt with. Any questions that have not been dealt with within the time limits will receive a written reply after the meeting.

1.2 The questions received for this meeting are set out in below in the order they were received, allowing for the rules above.

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

2.1 **Miss K Mason of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

Where and when is the proposed school to be built in the Rochester and Chatham area and what is the proposed catchment area?

2.2 **Miss K Green of Gillingham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

Does Medway Council have any future plans to close St. Peter's?

**2.3 Mrs B Franqueira of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

18 months ago, council officers were predicting a decline in birth rate numbers. Now they are saying there is a rise. Were they wrong then or are they wrong now?

**2.4 Angie Burdett of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

Councillor Wicks, I hear that Medway Council are planning to build new schools in the Chatham area due to a shortage of available school places. If this is true, please could you explain to me why I, along with other parents, spent over a year and a half, fighting you and Medway Council from closing St John's CEVC Infant School, which is in Chatham Central?

**2.5 Tony Jeacock of Rainham will ask the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Jarrett, the following question:**

When deciding that Medway Council employees should no longer receive paper-based salary slips, did those responsible for this decision consider that some employees may have no internet access by which to download this vital monthly information, or that other personal inconveniences may be forthcoming, and if not, why not?

**2.6 Lawrence McVeigh of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

Has Medway Council had any preliminary discussions with possible sponsors of a new school in the Rochester/ Chatham area?

**2.7 Cathy Hyland of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

How does Medway council plan to support St Peter's - a good and popular school - in the future?

**2.8 Mr T Hopper of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

Are there any schools in the Rochester area under threat of closure?

**2.9 Mrs J Worrall of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

In Medway Council's own presentation to Council it claims the birth rate in Medway increased by over 10% between 2005 and 2009 from 3122 births to 3375 births. Why was this information not made public during the previous school closure campaigns?"

**2.10 Mrs C Newman of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

In light of the birth rate figures, and St Peter's being over subscribed for September 2011, does Medway Council accept that St Peter's is a 'viable school' in a thriving community?

**2.11 Mrs E Dhiman of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

Please could the Portfolio Holder detail the full cost to the taxpayer for the previous public consultation process for Ridge Meadow, St Peter's & St John's School proposed closures?

**2.12 Julia Finch of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

Could the portfolio holder please confirm the final figure for the cost of the rebuild of Walderslade Primary School?

**2.13 Mrs A Paterson of Rochester will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Wicks, the following question:**

Can the Portfolio Holder detail what statistical basis was used for point 2.32 of the new Draft School Organisational Plan which states: 'By 2016 demand for denominational places is expected to rise in line with the trend for all primary schools, which may result in the demand for denominational places exceeding supply.'

**2.14 Tony Jeacock of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following question:**

Due to the current state of the economy, if, as statistics suggest, private landlords fall into mortgage arrears due to the knock-on effect of tenants falling into rental arrears, ultimately resulting in their Buy-to-Let properties being repossessed, what contingency plans, if any, has Medway Council set aside to ensure tenant families can remain securely housed?

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**Background papers**

None