

**APPENDIX II**

**Council 19 February 2014 - Questions submitted by Members**

<b>Question No.</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b>Question to:</b>	<b>Service area:</b>
1	Cllr Andy Booth	The Members' Grants are a real sign of localism in action. Does the Cabinet Member for Localism agree with me that the grants are a valuable way for members of this council to assist local projects that may otherwise struggle financially?	Cllr Mike Whiting (Cabinet Member for Localism)	Emma Wiggins
<p><b>Response:</b> Members' Grants, which are an amalgamation of two previous grant schemes, provide each member with £2,250 to make available to groups in their ward, or to combine with other members to support larger bids that benefit a wider community. I believe they are, as suggested in the question, a valuable way for members of this council to assist local projects that may otherwise struggle financially.</p> <p>£105,750 was allocated in May 2013 to the scheme and so far this year, 133 applications for funding have been received, ranging from football nets in Upchurch, to toilets for Faversham Scouts and wool for a knitting club in Sheerness. Members' grants also help saved vital services such as Faces of Kent, a support service for young carers in Sittingbourne and Sheppey.</p> <p>The Members' Grant Scheme used to run in four tranches of applications per year. This built a delay into processing applications, so I have amended the scheme and applications are now run continuously to help speed things up. A list of applications is now updated weekly on the Swale website to better inform members and applicants of the progress of their requests for funding. To further assist members and applicants, a link to the grants web page and the weekly update has been placed on each councillor's information page on the Swale website.</p>				
2	Cllr Mike Haywood	Does the Cabinet Member for Housing agree that the Bedroom Tax has been an abject failure for the 213 local families hit by it who have applied to downsize but have been told there are no properties for them to move into?	Cllr John Wright (Cabinet Member for Housing)	Amber Christou
<p><b>Response:</b> The Social Sector Size Criteria is not a Tax, but a reduction in Housing Benefit Subsidy for households under occupying social homes. The national policy is designed to encourage paid employment and address the unfairness of those in private rented accommodation, often paying considerably higher rent than social tenants, being awarded the level of housing benefit allowed for the size of household, and where they</p>				

are considered to be under occupying, having to either pay extra or move to smaller accommodation. Social tenants facing this reduction in their housing benefit due to this new policy have several options, including paying the difference between their Housing Benefit and their rent and moving to smaller accommodation. While it is accepted that finding smaller social rented homes may be difficult the policy only affects those in receipt of housing benefit and not those paying the rent themselves. To date we have paid 233 Discretionary Housing Payments to Swale households under occupying social rented homes to alleviate financial hardship while they are supported by the Housing Options Team to find suitable long term housing solutions, and all of those who wish to move have been awarded priority on the housing register.

3	Cllr Tony Winckless	At a time of spending cuts, does the Cabinet Member for Community Safety think that reducing the number of Hawk Eye cameras in the borough will help in the fight against crime and anti-social behaviour?	Cllr Pugh (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health)	Emma Wiggins
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**Response:** There are currently 6 mobile CCTV cameras (Hawkeye) in the borough which is a reduction from the 11 cameras that were operational in March 2013. The cameras have reduced due to retiring off old equipment that is not economically viable to repair. Partners involved in the Swale Community Safety Partnership have funded 6 replacement cameras which provide a better quality image and also have 3G/4G capability which provides enhanced capability to remote monitoring and downloading of footage by the CCTV Control Centre. Despite the reduction in cameras the CSU continue to deploy cameras in the most appropriate areas to assist with tackling crime and disorder.

4	Cllr Mike Haywood	How does the Cabinet Member for Health think we can make a difference in tackling the crisis that has beset our local NHS?	Cllr Pugh (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Health)	Amber Christou
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**Response:** We are already making a real difference in tackling local Health issues. We continue working very closely with Canterbury and Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group to prevent the closure of the Faversham Minor Injuries unit and remain very optimistic that not only will the Unit remain open, but that services will improve as a result of our partnership working with the CCG and Faversham Residents.

We are fully engaged in the consultation regarding the review of outpatient services in East Kent and have made the strongest representation that we oppose any moves to cut services within the Borough. The Council's cabinet is fully behind residents and will take every opportunity to work with Health partners, including both Clinical Commissioning groups and the Health and Wellbeing Boards to prevent service reductions and closures.