

Public Questions

Question A - Vivienne Parker of Chatham will ask the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

Given there are a lot of Medway people who are living in fuel poverty and cannot afford to heat their homes, what is the Council doing to increase the pitifully low number of Medway families who will benefit from Council grants to improve the fuel efficiency of their homes?

Question B – Alan Wells of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

In recent months there has been a number of fly tipping incidents in Strood Rural. The sites targeted that I know of are:

Off Berwick Way approaching Medway City Estate (now cleared). In particular, the land between Hasted Road and Islingham Farm Road approaching the Wainscott Bypass, as well as other sites in the Frindsbury, Wainscott, and Upnor area.

I have seen for myself huge mounds of construction and commercial waste illegally dumped on an industrial scale in the area, which is affecting the immediate environment. Fly-tipping has a detrimental effect on the look and feel of our area and the dumpers, must have made multiple visits, to these sites. Rural paths and views are blocked by lorry loads of commercial and industrial waste.

As reported on KM Online, Medway has the highest amount of fly tipping in Kent, with 5,141 reported incidents, 2019/20,

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/kent/news/revealed-the-fly-tipping-capital-of-kent-247392/>, with residents and landowners forced to deal with the potential health and environmental hazards the rubbish represents. Environmental crime should not be tolerated, and our green spaces should be there to be enjoyed by the whole community.

The Council could install CCTV at the fly-tipping hotspots and introduce a 'Caught on Camera' campaign across Medway to deter and identify fly-tippers, and act to reduce incidents of fly-tipping. This type of approach has proven successful elsewhere, with a 'Wall of Shame' campaign, where video and images of fly-tipping are published on the Council's website, asking residents to help identify the perpetrators. The locations of the cameras based on fly-tipping complaints are monitored to understand reduction in fly-tipping at the sites with CCTV, but also to see if there are any adverse impacts such as fly-tipping increasing elsewhere.

What actions are the Council going to undertake to ensure compliance with environmental legislation, and to crack down on fly tipping?

Question C - Stuart Bourne of Rainham will ask the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

In 2021 Medway Council helped plant 13,842 new tree whips using funds from the Forestry Commission's Urban tree challenge fund. Since then, Medway Council and its councillors have repeatedly used this as an example to the public of what the Council has achieved to offset our carbon and fight against the climate emergency. Even now, nearly two years later, this large figure of 13,842 new trees is used on the Council's website, in your press releases and across your social media.

My question is simple. How many of those 13,842 trees are still alive?

Question D – Sean Carter of Gillingham will ask the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

Why does Medway Council's housing department not deal with housing repairs and housing issues, for example they are not available or hang up the phone?

Question E - Alan Stockey of Rainham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

From a recent survey of buses seen in Rainham during peak school transit hours, it is evident that bus companies supporting Rainham and the MySchool Bus Service (Arriva and ASD) are deploying a significant number of older vehicles (18-22 year old EURO III) and ASD's buses were exclusively EURO III; as well as regularly leaving buses idling in AQMAs and outside school premises.

The Medway Bus Improvement Plan (2021-2026) includes reference to reduction of smoky and higher polluting buses through Medway's AQMAs as well as progressive introduction of less polluting vehicles (EURO V and above).

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm whether bus companies have committed to Medway Council that the measures in the plan will be met, including what is Medway Council's position on including minimum emission requirements in future contract negotiations, such that cleaner air corridors can be created for children walking and cycling to school at peak times?

Question F - Paul O'Neill of Chatham will ask the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

New proposed laws will introduce a new criminal offence where a person resides or intends to reside on any public or private land without permission. Currently Medway does not provide adequate temporary traveller sites which leads to inappropriate areas being used by travellers.

The Council could acquire land for this purpose, for example, it could use compulsory purchase powers to acquire the site on Gillingham Business Park behind Aldi.

How does the Council intend to fulfil its requirements to the traveller community in the local plan?

Question G - Mark Jones, on behalf of Medway Trades Union Council, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake, the following:

We understand NHS Commissioners are undertaking a review of the proposed reconfiguration of stroke services, locally, as determined by the former Secretary of State (Sajid Javid), which could mean twelve months delay in implementing stroke services reorganisation. We believe that under the current proposal, Medway Maritime Hospital wouldn't provide urgent care, but will offer rehabilitation services.

Will the Portfolio Holder assure us that Medway Council are actively pressing, during the latest review and beyond, for - at minimum - the adoption/ retention of those stroke services which it had been determined, would be based locally?