

Members' Questions

Question A – Councillor Edwards will ask the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation, Councillor Chitty, the following:

Vibrant High Streets are key to Medway's economic success. Yet even our more successful High Streets are plagued by empty buildings that sit idle and do not contribute to the local economy.

Can the Portfolio Holder tell me how many empty retail properties there are on High Streets in Medway, including how many of those are owned by Medway Council?

Question B – Councillor Johnson will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services – Lead Member, Councillor Mrs Josie Iles, the following:

Given the financial and other pressures on the Early Years Sector in Medway, driven by a dysfunctional market, 'free' places that are not fully funded, ownership and governance structures that sometimes do not support effective provision, and staffing challenges caused by the government's poor record on workforce planning, what measures has the Portfolio Holder taken personally to support this sector which is so vital for families in Medway?

Question C – Councillor Curry will ask the Portfolio Holder for Inward Investment, Strategic Regeneration and Partnerships, Councillor Rodney Chambers OBE, the following:

It is my understanding that the current deadline for the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to be spent is spring 2025.

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm that this is the case, that the Council will meet this deadline, explaining what the consequences are for Medway if not?

Question D – Councillor Van Dyke will ask the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Councillor Doe, the following:

During the pandemic the use of our greenspaces across Medway increased significantly, and this pressure on these areas' invaluable spaces has continued.

Why does the Portfolio Holder feel that by not increasing the greenspaces budget, it is appropriate to cut the funding in real terms to one of our most important community resources?

Question E – Councillor Mahil will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

The state of Medway's roads has now become a standing joke, with them being described as Swiss Cheese and suitable for plastic ducks! This has an impact not just on the condition of people's vehicles but on the overall economy and reputation of Medway.

Can the Portfolio Holder please tell us what are the plans to rectify this very serious infrastructure problem, not just for the immediate future, but for the long term?

Question F – Councillor Howcroft-Scott will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services – Lead Member, Councillor Mrs Josie Iles, the following:

We have seen many areas coming forward across the UK with enhanced free school meals provision above the current statutory minimum.

Could you explain why Medway doesn't have such provision in place?

Question G – Councillor Murray will ask the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services, Councillor Filmer, the following:

Why did the Portfolio Holder wait until the election period to order a pothole blitz and leave residents all over Medway struggling with unsightly and dangerous potholes for the last 4 years?

Question H – Councillor Maple will ask the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services, Councillor Brake, the following:

As the Local Government Association rightfully said it was disappointing that the 2023/24 Public Health Grant was only published on 15th March, long after this Council set its budget. Across the country there has been £770 million real terms reduction in funding between 2015/16 and 2022/23.

With inflation currently running at around 10%, does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that the below inflation 3.2% increase will mean even greater pressure on our already under-resourced Public Health team in Medway, whose role is crucial to trying to reduce the persistent health inequalities in Medway?