

Medway Council
Meeting of Medway Council
Thursday, 19 October 2023
7.15pm to 12.04am

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, Clarke, Cook,
Coombs, Crozer, Curry, Doe, Edwards, Etheridge, Fearn, Field,
Filmer, Gilbourne, Gulvin, Hackwell, Hamandishe, Hamilton,
Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard, Hyne, Jackson, Jones, Joy, Kemp,
Khan, Lammass, Lawrence, Mahil, Mandaracas, Maple,
McDonald, Murray, Myton, Osborne, Paterson, Peake, Pearce,
Perfect, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Price, Sands, Spalding,
Spring, Stamp, Tejan, Mrs Turpin, Van Dyke and Williams

In Attendance: Richard Hicks, Chief Executive
Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services
Vicky Nutley, Head of Legal Services
Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer

318 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Browne, Shokar and Wildey.

319 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

Councillor Perfect declared an interest in relation to agenda item no. 12 (Annual Review of the School Place Planning Strategy 2022-27) as he is a member of the Beyond Schools Trust and the Inspire Partnership Academy Trust. Councillor Perfect left the room during discussion and determination of the item.

Councillor Lawrence declared an interest in relation to agenda item no. 12 (Annual Review of the School Place Planning Strategy 2022-27) as he is the

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Chair of Trustees of the Inspire Partnership Academy Trust. Councillor Lawrence left the room during discussion and determination of the item.

Councillor Cook declared an interest in relation to agenda item no. 12 (Annual Review of the School Place Planning Strategy 2022-27) as she works with a number of schools mentioned in the report. Councillor Cook left the room during discussion and determination of the item.

Other interests

There were none.

320 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 20 July 2023 was approved and signed by the Worshipful Mayor as correct.

321 Mayor's announcements

The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway announced that Michael Bailey, a former Rochester-Upon-Medway Councillor from 1991 to 1995 had passed away and that both Councillor Anang and Councillor Maple had lost their fathers recently. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor offered her condolences to the families.

The Mayor expressed her shock at the desecration of Chatham Memorial Synagogue cemetery in August and the events currently taking place in the Middle East.

A Minute's silence was held.

The Mayor congratulated everyone involved in achieving the Ofsted 'Good' rating for Medway's Children's Services. She also thanked Gillingham Football Club for supporting the Children's Services celebration event and thanked everyone who had helped make the Medway Pride event a success.

The Mayor announced forthcoming Mayoral events, including a charity quiz due to be held at Medway Rugby Club on 3 November and an evening of Nepalese Culture and Cuisine at Gurkha Brothers in Chatham on 18 November.

The recent Mayor's charity "Call the Midwife" tour had raised over £600 for the Mayoral charities.

The Mayor reminded all Members to conduct themselves during the meeting in a manner befitting public office.

322 Leader's announcements

The Leader said he was pleased to hear that Medway Interfaith Action would be sending out a message to the local community within the next 24 hours

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regarding the situation in the Middle East and that he would share it when published.

323 Petitions

Public:

A petition was submitted on behalf of Medway Liberal Democrats that called on the Council to ensure it recognised different genders on all equality monitoring forms.

Member:

Councillor Brake submitted a petition on behalf of members of the public living in the vicinity of Bullrush Close and the Chester Avenue green space. This called on the Council to look at the security and wellbeing of the public with regards to the nuisance caused by motorcycles and quad bikes being ridden on the green space.

Councillor Spalding submitted a petition on behalf of members of the public that called upon the Council to introduce traffic calming measures along the Ratcliffe Highway through the village of St Mary Hoo.

324 Public questions

Question A – Sandra Fowler, of Chatham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure, Councillor Mahil, the following:

“Some Councillors, particularly those who are football fans, will have visited last year’s well received exhibition at the Guildhall Museum, which celebrated the life and achievements of Strood-born Isaac Newell. There is a growing national and international campaign to erect a statue of Newell in his birthplace.

Will Medway Council offer support to this worthy campaign and in doing so will it help find a site in Strood for this statue?”

Councillor Mahil thanked Mrs Fowler for the question. He said that he was proud of Medway’s association with Isaac Newell and delighted that his historical importance in the development of football in Argentina had been recognised.

The exhibition held at the Guildhall Museum in 2022 had been well received and the Council had continued to promote the importance of Isaac by the setting up of a permanent exhibition at Strood Sports Centre and inducting him into the Medway Hall of Fame at the December 2022 Sports Awards.

Councillor Mahil said the Council would be happy to engage with any organisation interested in further promoting the story of Isaac and he would be happy to discuss options with Mrs Fowler.

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Question B – Jessica McCann, of Hoo, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

“I am concerned at the lack of rail links in Hoo. Our nearest station is 5 miles away and we are forced to drive. Yet money is spent on cycling lanes. In an area where there are no shops or infrastructure for the locals, cycle lanes will not help transport in Hoo. We need better bus routes in the morning. It takes someone 35 minutes on the bus to get to the nearest station.

If you think this is acceptable, please explain why?”

Note: As Jessica McCann was not present, the Mayor stated that they would receive a written response to their question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

Question C – Lindsey Burke, of Rochester, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services, Councillor Price:

“As Medway Council has now entered a SEND Safety Valve Agreement with the Conservative Government, I hope they can reassure parents of SEND children in Medway how they are making sure they are fully compliant with their legal obligations to children and young people with SEND over the five-year safety valve agreement.

Will they explain what this arrangement is in more detail to help us understand better what the safety valve intervention programme means for children and young people’s Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCPs) unlike the current Government’s smoke screen?”

Note: As Lindsey Burke was not present, the Mayor stated that they would receive a written response to their question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

Question D – Peter Harrison, of Rainham, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

“‘Have your say’ would seem to be another complete waste of time, as the Council listen and take absolutely no notice of the general consensus of the majority of Medway residents.

For example, regarding the red route through Rainham, sixty percent of respondents don't think it is needed, yet, the Council is still going ahead at a cost of £805,000 (the total cost for the introduction of the five schemes across Medway).

So, I do wonder what is the point of 'Have your say', I believe that Medway is turning into a communist council, not a democratic council.

Why are you not listening to the residents of Medway?”

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Note: As Peter Harrison was not present, the Mayor stated that they would receive a written response to their question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

Question E - Tracey Wilson, of Strood, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan:

“If you cannot even run a proper facility for shoppers to go to the toilet (In relation to the unusable automatic public convenience (APC) in Newark Yard, Strood – and which has recently been set fire to), how on earth are you supposed to be running Medway?”

Note: As Tracey Wilson was not present, the Mayor stated that they would receive a written response to their question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

Question F – Nicholas Chan, of Gillingham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

“Under Medway Council's contract with Veolia on Dry Mixed Recyclables (DMR), can the Portfolio Holder please set out what means of transport will Veolia use to ship DMR to the Southwark Integrated Waste Management Facility, including details of the carbon footprint of those transportation methods for the October 2022 to October 2024 contract?”

Councillor Curry thanked Mr Chan for the question. He said that accurate information on the carbon footprint was not presently available. As part of an ongoing workstream, the Waste Services Team was working with partner agencies to develop wider Scope 3 Emissions data, which would include this information.

Medway Council placed addressing climate change at the heart of its work, particularly regarding waste management.

Question G – Mathew Broadley, of Chatham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards, the following:

“In 2019, the Tory-run Medway Council purchased the Pentagon Shopping Centre, for £34.8 million.

In 2021, the Tory-run Medway Council purchased Mountbatten House, for £1.975 million.

The cross-party Medway Towns Centres Strategy (2022) has failed already and is not robust enough to weather the storm of national, household brands collapsing and market-behaviours moving towards online shopping. This is evident following Wilko, one of the largest shopping units by floor space, recently closing in the Pentagon.

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At the time of writing, there are a large number of vacant shopping units within the Pentagon, with more long-term tenants indicating that they will shortly be closing up shop.

Kelly Tolhurst, the MP for Rochester and Strood (which includes Chatham Town Centre and the Pentagon Shopping Centre) has recently made an intervention stating that she wants the Pentagon “levelled to free up space for new housing”.

Labour’s response to the 2019 Tory acquisition of the Pentagon was to declare that “a future Labour controlled Council would deliver an effective strategy to revitalise the Pentagon and the wider Town Centre”.

It has been three years since the acquisition, where is Labour’s “effective strategy to revitalise the Pentagon and the wider Town Centre” as the decline appears to be accelerating under this Labour administration?”

Councillor Edwards thanked Mr Broadley for the question and for bringing the comments of the Member of Parliament for Rochester and Strood to the attention of Full Council. While the need for diversity in the centre of Chatham was recognised, including the provision of housing, she said that the Pentagon should not be demolished for housing as the future of its first floor as a place for local people to access vital health services and an innovative place for local startups to work would be key to revitalising Chatham.

Councillor Edwards considered that the comments made by the MP had been deeply unhelpful and reckless. The Council had needed to reach out to partners to assure them that the Council’s plans had not changed and that it remained committed to the future vision for the Pentagon. Any effective strategy to revitalise the Pentagon needed to be built on a foundation of security and confidence for potential partners to be willing to invest.

The new administration had only taken control of Medway Council in May 2023 and had been working hard on plans to revitalise the Pentagon. A number of exciting projects were in development, including a Healthy Living Centre and an Innovation Hub, that would provide co-working spaces and support for the local business community. These plans would help to bring more people to the centre of Chatham, benefiting existing local shops and restaurants in the Pentagon and wider town centre.

Question H – Trish Marchant, of Gillingham, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“Accessibility has been a phrase that multiple administrations, both locally and nationally, have promoted for over a decade.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and The Equality Act (2010) are in place to support the needs of a wide range of people and the Accessibility Regulations (2018) emphasise the need for online resources to “meet accessibility standards” and highlighted that “1 in 5 people in the UK have a

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long-term illness, impairment or disability, many more have a temporary disability”, which is the equivalent of approximately 56,000 people in Medway.

At our last Council meeting my friend’s question could not be asked in person as she was unable to attend due to her disability. Questions not asked receive a written response which I feel falls short of the accessibility expectations of the Council.

The current process thus actively disempowers people who struggle to attend these meetings and so are unable to “exercise their public function”. Disabled people should be able to engage in their democratic duty in the same way as non-disabled people and this needs to be reformed by Medway Council.

Reflecting on the above, will the Leader of the Council now commit to reforming the process by which public questions are asked to:

1. Allow those who have submitted a public question to ask it remotely using an online facility.
2. Allow those who have submitted a public question to appoint a person who can ask the question on their behalf?”

Councillor Maple thanked Ms Marchant for the question. He apologised that her friend had been unable to ask her question at the Council meeting in July, although she had been sent a written response on 26 July 2023 and this written response, along with others, had been published to the Council’s website after the meeting.

Proposals would be brought to the next Council meeting so that members of the public who had submitted questions, but were unable to attend, would receive a response to their question at the meeting. A report due to be considered later in the current meeting would also ask the Council to agree to re-introduce supplementary questions for public questions.

Councillor Maple said that councils did have special dispensation to run online meetings during the Covid pandemic but that this had since been rescinded. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had consulted on the matter but so far there had been no proposals from central government that would allow councils to run remote meetings. An update would be requested from the Department as the issue directly linked to the facilitation of greater public participation.

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

“Would the Council be willing to install a crossing near Bridgewoods ASDA?

People have already broken down the fence at this point to cross to the other side and without the crossing they are having to navigate the Bridgewoods roundabout on foot or walk back to Watson Avenue carrying heavy shopping, not good if you are elderly or disabled.”

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Councillor Curry thanked Ms Parker for the question. He acknowledged the challenges presented by the location of the ASDA store on a busy dual carriageway and accepted that the controlled crossings along this section of the A229 were situated a little distance away. Residents were encouraged to make sustainable transport choices and the Council did what it could to improve accessibility and make choices easier.

A local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan that identified areas of Medway where things could be improved was currently being developed. This would look at the existing walking and cycling network, identify gaps and prioritise routes for improvement. Whilst commitment could not currently be given to installing a crossing near ASDA, Councillor Curry would ensure that the A229 in the vicinity of the store was considered as part of this work.

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

“Can there be a wholesale review of mental health in the Medway Towns?”

As with my Tourette’s, Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), there is no help whatsoever and a lack of knowledge about the condition as well.”

Note: As Carl Dunks was not present, the Mayor stated that they would receive a written response to their question in accordance with Council Rule 8.6.

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

“The Environment Agency’s report TE2100 has stated that flash floods and flooding are projected to rise considerably by 2050.

Land on some parts of the Hoo Peninsula falls 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.

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.

In relation to North Kent Marshes Policy Unit: Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100), on what needs to be done to manage flood risk and adapt to rising sea levels. The North Kent Marshes Policy Unit consists of two large areas north and west of the village of Cliffe. It extends from Gravesend to St Mary’s Marshes and includes Cliffe.

The areas at risk of flooding include freshwater grazing marshes and designated freshwater habitats. There are also designated intertidal habitats along much of the estuary frontage. The marshes also contain valuable historic,

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military and industrial features, such as: Shornemeade Fort, Cliffe Fort and Cliffe Gunpowder Works. TE2100 states that there is currently no riverside strategy for this area.

The Council will need to produce strategies either as a standalone document or part of a Local Plan, and be in place by 2030. 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. Decisions taken by the Council in the 2020s will determine the quality of public space along the river for generations.

What strategies will the Council put in place to manage flood risks, for future flood defence requirements, so that communities and businesses are more aware of flood risk and able to adapt, respond and recover from flooding? This is particularly important in areas where flood risk will increase over time with climate change.”

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

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

“We are currently facing a climate emergency and a cost-of-living crisis, where growing your own fruit and vegetables can have a dramatic impact on reducing food miles and providing cheap healthy food. And for those without large gardens allotments have been the only way for many people to do this.

Yet the data I have seen, shows that since 2018 the waiting list has nearly tripled from 695 to 2009 people. And the average waiting time for a new plot is now 2.5 years, whilst some people have been waiting 5 years and have still not got a plot.

It is shocking that so many people want to do the right thing, but are hampered and discouraged.

Can the Portfolio Holder please explain the cause of this ever increasing backlog, setting out what action will be taken to ensure it will be cleared?”

Councillor Curry thanked Mr Bourne for the question. He said that it was not always possible to provide suitable allotment space close to where people live and that demand had historically been greater than supply.

The Council had commissioned a new greenspace study that included an allotment module. This would allow the Council to assess allotment provision across Medway, identifying where demand exceeded provision and where possible, identify if more allotment and community growing spaces could be provided. When plots became available in existing allotments, consideration was given as to whether the plots could be subdivided. In partnership with the

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Allotment Association, work was being completed to bring vacant plots back into good order so that they could be re-let.

The Council was also assessing where its existing greenspaces could be used for allotment space, an example being Cozenton Park where besides the new Tree Nursery, allotments and community growing spaces would be provided.

Medway Council did not have the resources available to satisfy the full demand for allotment space. Through the Local Plan process the Council would be reviewing its policies around allotments and seeking, where appropriate, new allotments and community growing spaces enabled through development and financial developer contributions. As part of the Local Plan process, a public consultation was taking place until the end of October and residents were encouraged to provide their views on the provision of services, including allotments.

Question M – John Castle, of Chatham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement, Councillor Osborne, the following:

“The sewage leaks by Southern Water are a matter that all levels of government should rightly take seriously. Medway has a large estuary and the Medway estuary continues to see regular sewage leaks from Southern Water. This is a health risk and environmentally damaging, Medway Council should not allow the companies to get away with these leaks.

Other councils with rivers and where coastal access is vital to individuals and businesses in their communities have taken action to ensure that Water companies cannot hide from their leaks. Currently, water companies are obliged to test water quality, but can do so at a time of their choosing, allowing them to pick and choose when to carry out the tests.

I trust the Council agrees with me that this is insufficient, therefore, will the Council work with partners to ensure that Water companies cannot get away with marking their own work, including to ensure that regular testing of the estuaries in Medway is carried out?”

Councillor Osborne thanked Mr Castle for the question. He agreed that the discharge of sewage within the Medway Estuary by water companies was not acceptable. In June 2022, Councillor Osborne had submitted a Member’s item and representatives of Southern Water were invited to attend. A Member visit had taken place to Motney Hill sewage works, during which it had been made clear that infrastructure improvements and costs should not fall on the taxpayer and that the water company was expected to do better.

The Member’s item and this visit led to increased engagement and a commitment from Southern Water to improve reporting metrics and to give residents a single point of contact for discharges. Southern Water also agreed to review the impact of discharges on the natural environment and to engage fully in the Council’s Local Plan process. Members also met with leading advocates challenging sewage outflows nationally, including events in Rochester and fully supported the work that advocates were undertaking

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relating to rivers and coasts. While supportive of residents' efforts to challenge the problem, councils had limited powers regarding sewage outflows.

Councillor Osborne said that the Environment Agency had increased their monitoring of water companies and Medway Council had agreed to working with partners to ensure that regular testing of water was undertaken within the estuary to ensure water quality. However, this needed to be more robust and needed national government support. It was important for there to be consistency in the reporting for outflows and a strengthened Environment Agency was needed to engage in mandatory testing across all rivers.

Question N – Onyx Rist, of Rainham, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“Does Councillor Maple agree with Medway Liberal Democrats of the need to be inclusive of the non-binary community on equality monitoring forms?”

Councillor Maple thanked Onyx Rist for the question. He said that Inclusivity of all communities was important. Collecting equality data enabled a better understanding of local communities and the local workforce.

Non-binary was an option included in equality monitoring as part of Medway's recruitment process. Equality monitoring questions used in surveys and consultations aligned with those used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the 2021 Census. The importance of information about gender identity was recognised for policy development and service planning, as well as the need for information on those with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

When consulting with local communities, there was a need to balance asking questions about gender with other obligations, such as data protection. Many of the Council's consultations considered topics that affected everyone. In these instances, collecting information about a person's gender could be disproportionate, as a relatively small number of responses was unlikely to be able to identify statistically significant differences within the wider community. Where it was appropriate to ask about gender identity, alternate methods to collect views may also be considered, such as approaching recognised local groups to ask those who attend to share their views as this qualitative research was likely to identify better information.

Question O – Kate Belmonte, of Gillingham, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

“In 2021 I was part of the Pump Lane Steering Group who successfully fought against AC Goatham's application to destroy 126 acres of prime agricultural land in Rainham.

Medway Council has now published a new Land Availability Assessment report as part of its Local Plan consultation process. I note that within the report it

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recommends that the land, which was saved from development, should proceed to Stage 2 of the assessment process.

Medway Council spent tens of thousands of tax payers' money to protect this land, are they now happy to concrete over the orchards?"

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

325 Leader's report

Discussion:

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

- The team work to secure a good Ofsted rating for Medway Children's Services, the importance of the scrutiny function and Corporate Parenting and the Child Friendly Medway agenda.
- The need to address recruitment and retention challenges in key Council services.
- Financial challenges continuing to affect households across Medway and the importance of the Household Support Fund, which it was hoped would be retained.
- The Council's budgetary situation, including the need to take difficult decisions to address a £17million funding shortfall and the 91% reduction in the Council's government grant, although it was suggested that this had been partially mitigated by Business Rates retention.
- Development of Medway's new Local Plan, the importance of having a robust evidence base and Regulation 18 consultation.
- The development of the One Medway Charter and the determination to work together to deliver high quality services.
- Development of the Docking Station project and the wider development of high value jobs.
- Engagement with the business community and the Federation of Small Business Local Leadership pledge.
- Medway being one of nine areas in the country to be designated a Heritage Place.
- Funding for Christmas lights.
- Planned development of Red Routes and the Call-In of the Cabinet decision.
- Four Elms Hill works including concern about disruption caused.
- The future of sites such as Hoo Library and Deangate Ridge and a request that they not be sold.

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

326 Overview and scrutiny activity

Discussion:

Members received a report on overview and scrutiny activity and raised the following issues during debate:

- Concern about the financial challenges faced by the Council, including the difficulties faced by councils nationally in funding their statutory services.
- Importance of the scrutiny function in supporting the Council to address challenges.
- The Ofsted inspection of Medway Children's services, the significant improvements and the need to ensure sustained improvement in children's services.
- The Time to Shine Children in Care event.
- The forthcoming Ofsted inspection of Medway's Youth Justice service.
- Concern about some mental health services moving out of Medway and about the emergency transfer of Medway and Swale Transient-Ischaemic Attack Service.
- Planned development of Red Routes, the Call-In of the Cabinet decision, the concerns raised by businesses in Rainham and whether creation of Red Routes would improve air quality.
- The need for Medway's new Local Plan to be considered by all four overview and scrutiny committees.
- The need to improve public transport and traffic flows in Medway.
- Closure and subsequent reopening of some children's homes in Medway.

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

327 Members' questions

Question A – Councillor Doe asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, the following:

"Several local residents have called me to express their concern about the sudden invasion of the Wigmore Coach Park by a large group of travellers, without any prior consultation with the local Councillors.

I have since been informed that this occupation will last no more than three months while the Council deals with necessary legal duties.

I am deeply concerned that the travellers were moved there without any consultation with residents or local Members.

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Accordingly, can the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Khan, assure me that this site will not be used for this purpose in the future and in doing so, that no permanent traveller site will be permitted at this location?"

Councillor Khan thanked Councillor Doe for the question. She said that when the current administration had taken office, there had been no agreed policy in place with reference to traveller and gypsy communities. The site had been agreed for a period of three months, this had now expired and officers would be pursuing a process to take back possession of the site.

The Council was reviewing its approach to Gypsies and Travellers utilising guidance, best practice and specialist advice. A briefing meeting for Members had taken place in the last month, which outlined these options in more detail. This revised approach may seek to strike a balance between enforcement and a more tolerated approach in locations that were appropriate. Details of this would be brought forwards as and when more information was developed.

Identifying suitable permanent traveller provision was an important part of delivering the Local Plan. Consideration would need to be given to how this would be achieved across a range of sites. No decision had been taken in respect of the site in Wigmore.

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

"“Red routes are nothing more than money making schemes”, a comment made by a constituent during a surgery. The route proposed in Rainham North has been plagued by street-works which are causing utter chaos across our town. As was highlighted by multiple comments on the issue, a serious review of the roads should be undertaken by your administration, not imposing anti-motorist measures which will make no impact on air quality. It is idling and poor road layouts that cause delays and poor air quality, not people stopping on the A2.

What is very interesting is the apparent lack of comprehension of the view set out by the Labour Party in their publication 'A New Britain'. It is stated quite proudly that:

"Our starting point is a modern system of decision making that does not start from the top – but starts from the people and is grounded in new ways of consulting, participating, and deciding."

You consulted.
The public participated.

You decided. You decided to ignore the objections and views of 64% of the respondents and intend to roll this out. You are punishing unnecessarily hard-working people – in the same way your disastrous Mayor of London has punished hard working people in Greater London and the Home Counties.

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Will the Portfolio Holder do the democratic thing (and do as you have already shown your party is capable of doing with the multiple U-turns in your first 100 days, such as on the visitor's parking permits), and reverse the decision to have an unwanted Labour red route in Rainham?"

Councillor Curry thanked Councillor Spring for the question. He said that the Council had engaged the public on a proposal to convert five existing double yellow line routes into double red line routes. Various comments had been received and these had been used to inform amended designs. The proposed red routes had also been discussed at a scrutiny Committee meeting on 18 October. There would be a statutory consultation regarding the revised designs that would illustrate the changes that were made following the initial engagement with the public.

There were serious congestion and pollution problems in the centre of Rainham, which was an AQMA (Air Quality Management Area) with 24,000 cars passing through every day. This had led to impacts on the environment, the health of residents and on Medway's economy. Consultation had been undertaken since May on matters including Red Routes, the Local Plan, Chatham Intra, the Chatham Centre Design Code, Deangate Country Park and school streets and it was therefore not correct to suggest that consultations were not undertaken.

Councillor Curry said that the Government was making U-turns on environmental issues and suggested that there needed to be a focus on the real needs of Rainham residents. Red routes were about promoting sustainable communities; the environment, local communities and people's health and wellbeing and the local economy.

Question C – Councillor Perfect asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Price, the following:

"The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holders have made clear that the administration's "sixth pledge" is the reduction in the use of non-permanent (locum/agency) staff. This is not a new objective and has been a priority of the Council for some time, but the renewed focus is very much welcome. This is something that can support further improvement towards outstanding, following the recent 'Good' ILACs report.

Assuming that there will be a new strategy or plan to underpin this renewed focus and a new target for the number of non-permanent staff within the service, can the Portfolio Holder please update the Council on this matter in relation to Children's Services, with particular focus on the current number of non-permanent staff?"

Councillor Price thanked Councillor Perfect for the question. He said that the Council would continue to strive for a permanent workforce across Children's Services, despite the national and regional shortage of social workers. In 2022, the number of children's social workers directly employed by local authorities

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nationally had decreased for the first time in 5 years by 2.7% (or 900 social workers).

Medway was fully committed to reducing the percentage of agency staff (currently 31% for social work qualified roles) and over the next twelve months, a range of activities were planned to build on the positive outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection, which had included Medway Children's Services being determined as being a 'Good' authority to work for. The activities included a recruitment open day, several events to encourage agency staff to apply for permanent roles and an international recruitment campaign. Recruitment campaigns across Jobs Go Public, the Guardian and social media would continue throughout the year.

Children's Services also planned to increase 'grow our own' initiatives through creating a rolling programme of social worker apprentices and increasing the intake of newly qualified social workers during the next year.

Question D – Councillor Sands asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

"On October 8th 2020, the Labour Party supported my motion to campaign for the Hoo Peninsula to become an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and part of the North Downs AONB, the motion was not supported by the then administration and so defeated.

Now your party is in power here in Medway, will you resolve to start a vigorous campaign to have the Hoo Peninsula recognised as an area of outstanding natural beauty?"

Councillor Maple thanked Councillor Sands for the question. He said that he had previously spoken in favour of the proposal. An AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) did not prevent housing.

Councillor Maple questioned what a vigorous campaign would entail and highlighted the current financial pressures facing the Council. Recognising those issues, that the Labour and Co-operative Group would be voting in favour of the motion due to be considered later in the meeting in relation to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) and that there would be some work that might be able to be used for both applications, campaigning for the Hoo Peninsula to become an AONB was something that could be considered. This could be discussed further with the leaders of the other political groups of the Council.

Question E – Councillor Spalding asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

"Roadworks and Streetworks projects seem to always over run time and are planned such that they cause maximum inconvenience to residents and businesses.

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Given current contracts do not apparently contain penalty clauses, what is the Portfolio Holder doing to ensure future works are delivered on time, on budget, with the least amount of disruption?”

Councillor Curry thanked Councillor Spalding for the question. The adopted highway network in Medway covered 827 kilometres spread over 2,500 individual roads and streets. Roadworks in Medway were co-ordinated by the Streetworks team, using a permit scheme, which was self-funded by permit fees charged by utilities companies.

The permit scheme gave the Council legal powers to dictate when all roadworks could be carried out in order to keep disruption to a minimum. However, in certain circumstances, due to the nature or location of the work, some disruption would be inevitable. Penalty charges for overrunning roadworks were charged to the utility companies in line with current legislation. For Medway Council highway works, there were no penalty charges that could be levied under the contract in place.

Consideration was being given to contacting the government, in partnership with other authorities, with regards to enhancing the current regulations and giving the Council greater control to address problems in Medway.

Councillor Curry said that the previous administration had left Medway with a seriously degraded road infrastructure, due to underfunding by the government. Addressing the condition of the infrastructure would take time.

Question F – Councillor Lawrence asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“At the Council meeting of the 20th July 2023, in the Leader’s Report, the Leader of the Council made the following very bold statement:

“We have got to grip with GP services...”

Can he tell the Council exactly how he got to grip with GP Services, including setting out what is the net increase in GPs operating in Medway based surgeries serving the people of Medway?”

Councillor Maple thanked Councillor Lawrence for the question. He said his comments at Full Council in July, reflected his view that the new Administration would work constructively and in partnership with GPs and other NHS colleagues. The recommendations of the GP Access Task Group were proactively being taken forward with NHS partners. This Task Group had a number of actions that would assist in addressing the issues local residents faced in terms of GP access.

The Task Group had looked at:

- (i) Access
- (ii) Primary Care Networks

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- (iii) Workforce Training & Development
- (iv) Quality & Safety
- (v) Technology and
- (vi) Finance and Investment in partnership with the NHS Kent and Medway ICB

The Council was also using its strategic role in the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Partnership to work closely with those responsible for commissioning GP services and to build upon previous work to deliver a new Healthy Living Centre in the Pentagon Centre. The work with ICB partners would mean the ICB would take account of the Medway Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which informed target setting and local priorities. Whilst GP numbers were not at the desired level, they were increasing in Medway and it would take time to reach the required level. Baseline data on GP numbers and trends in Medway was currently:

1. Total GP Head Count - 162
2. GP Head Count excluding Trainees and Locums - 123
3. Full time equivalent Total GPs - 109.68

This data was updated monthly. In terms of a net increase, this would depend on the baseline date used to calculate increases. Further information on historic baselines and trends in recruitment and retention could be found in the [Medway GP workforce data](#).

Question G – Councillor Pearce asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

“Lordswood and Walderslade Community Litter Group is apparently set to cease operating because Medway Council is making it more difficult for these volunteers to continue litter-picking - with regards to the collection of their sacks of litter.

Myself and former Peninsula Ward Councillor, Tony Watson, founded the Hoo Clean Up litter-picking group in January 2012 and this is one of the longest running groups in the local authority area. If Medway Council refuses to collect the black sacks from this litter-picking group - the volunteers have already told me that they will have no problem in dropping off those sacks to the front door of Gun Wharf.

Although collecting litter is a key priority for litter-picking groups - many of those who take part, who are of all ages and different backgrounds, regard the sessions as really important for their physical and mental health and they value the time they spend mixing with other residents and positively contributing to where they live.

Will the Portfolio Holder reverse the Council's regressive decision and join me in showing solidarity to all of our much-loved community litter-picking groups by guaranteeing that bags of litter from different volunteer groups will continue to be collected in the same way as previously agreed?”

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Councillor Curry thanked Councillor Pearce for the question. He said that the Council celebrated the important work that community litter picking groups did in Medway. It was recognised that the benefits of these groups extended beyond the collection of litter, such as the wellbeing and community enhancement aspects. The Council continued to collect the gathered materials in the black bags used by the groups. It was important for wider service delivery that this was undertaken in a sustainable way and officers always worked with volunteer groups to develop reasonable local collection arrangements.

Where individual litter picking groups had ongoing concerns about their litter picking arrangements they could contact Ian Gilmore, Head of Regulatory and Environmental services, who would work with them to support their activities.

Councillor Curry said he had been an active litter picker for many years in Medway and that the Council had always worked closely with groups across Medway. He had met with the Lordswood and Walderslade group and the Council's environment engagement team had also reached out to them. This collective work to keep Medway clean and tidy, and to help volunteers would continue.

Question H – Councillor Anang asked the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards, the following:

“Did the Portfolio Holder consult the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), before revoking the Monday free parking in Medway?”

Councillor Edwards thanked Councillor Anang for the question. She said that quick and decisive action was needed to address the Council's £17million budget deficit that had been inherited from the previous administration. Some difficult decisions would have to be taken which least impacted the Council's most critical services.

The Council continued to engage with the FSB on a number of initiatives to support the Local Leadership Pledge, such as extensive business support programmes, workshops, grants with further support being implemented to help Medway Businesses with their net zero ambitions, funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Programme. Councillor Edwards looked forward to continuing the Council's good working relationship with the FSB.

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

Question I – Councillor Tejan submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards:

“We are becoming more and more concerned about decisions made by Medway Council since Labour took charge in May 2023. It seems that they are spending on unnecessary projects like the Red Routes that nobody wants or needs and have even made the decision to extinguish the beloved Christmas lights across the Medway towns.

This Labour administration is turning Medway into Halloween Towns for Christmas, and we do not know if they prefer a more traditional festive look or the spookier version.

Explaining why, if they have not, has the portfolio holder considered engaging with businesses and communities across our towns to seek sponsorship for the Christmas lights and considered the reversal of this disastrous decision?”

Question J – Councillor Barrett submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple:

“At the Council meeting of the 20th July 2023 in the Leader’s Report, the Leader of the Council made the following very bold statement:

“We have started to tackle the excessive use of consultants and locums in many Council Departments...”

Can he tell the Council exactly how many consultants and locums have been dismissed or transferred to Council employment contracts, setting out the annualised net saving to the Council taxpayer?”

328 Public Space Protection Order - Nuisance Vehicles

Background:

The report set out outcomes of a public consultation carried out seeking views on the introduction of a Medway wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to address anti-social behaviour from vehicles. The orders were created in relation to areas within the local authority’s jurisdiction, where activities were taking place that were, or were likely to be, detrimental to the local community’s quality of life. PSPOs imposed conditions or restrictions on people within that area. A breach of a PSPO was an offence punishable by a fixed penalty notice and/or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

The report stated that over the past 18 months there had been an increase in complaints related to nuisance vehicles, on road and off road. This had precipitated consideration of the powers currently available to police and the Council to address the issues that these vehicles caused. Public consultation had been undertaken on the proposal, details of which were set out in Appendix 2.

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The report had previously been considered by the Cabinet on 26 September 2023, the decisions of which were set out at section 6 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement, Councillor Osborne, supported by Councillor Peake, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

- a) The Council noted the responses to the consultation to introduce a Medway wide PSPO, as detailed in section 8 and at Appendix 2 of the report.
- b) The Council approved the introduction of a Medway wide PSPO to tackle nuisance vehicles.

329 Annual Review of the School Place Planning Strategy 2022-27

Background:

This report provided an update on the progress made against the School Place Planning Strategy 2022 - 2027, highlighting areas of demand for school places and made recommendations to ensure that sufficient good quality school places would be available through to 2027. The report set out options to fund the proposals.

This annual review report and the recommendations in it were based upon the annual round of forecasting undertaken in April 2023, using the latest available data.

The report had previously been considered by the Cabinet on 26 September 2023, the decisions of which were set out at section 14 of the report.

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

Decisions:

- a) The Council approved the addition to the Capital Programme of a project to provide additional dining capacity at Leigh Academy Rainham, as set out in paragraph 10.7 of the report.
- b) The Council noted the overspend on Wayfield Primary School, as set out in paragraph 18.9 of the report and approved the addition of £39,806 onto this project within the capital programme, to be funded from the Basic Need Grant.
- c) The Council noted the retention payment for Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School, as set out in paragraph 18.10 of the report and

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approved the addition of £5,734.64 to the capital programme, to be funded from the Basic Need Grant.

- d) The Council noted the overspend on Maundene Primary School, as set out in paragraph 18.11 of the report and approved the addition of £14,377.49 spending onto this project within the capital programme, to be funded from available s106 funds.
- e) The Council noted the increasing costs at Maritime Academy due to building control and fire risk assessment works, as set out in paragraph 18.12 of the report and approved the addition of £140,000 onto this project within the capital programme, to be funded from available s106 receipts.
- f) Due to escalating construction costs and resultant insufficient funding being available to complete all SEND projects previously approved, the Council noted that the Cabinet had approved the withdrawal of the resourced provision at the Howard School [Decision No. 161/2023 refers] and agreed the virement of £1.2m of funding to the Rivermead expansion onto the former Stoke Primary School site, as set out in paragraph 12.2 of the report.
- g) The Council approved the removal of the remaining budget of £1,533,208.69, funded by prudential borrowing, from the SEND New Places Scheme and agreed that £1,533,208.69 of SEND grant for the Strood Academy SEND scheme be converted to prudential borrowing.

330 Adoption of Outdoor Events Fees and Charges

Background:

The report proposed the adoption of a new Outdoor Events Policy and proposed new standardised fees and charges.

The report explained that outdoor events in Medway were currently managed by the services responsible for the various areas of land across Medway e.g. Norse Greenspaces, Heritage Team and the Town Centre Management Team. Each service had its own set of criteria for allowing an event to happen. Fees, charges, and processes could vary significantly and the support that event organisers would receive differed depending on the skills and experience of officers in each team.

This new policy brought all outdoor events under a single standardised framework for professional and community event organisers that would support the coordinated growth of outdoor events across Medway. This new policy also recognised the changes required as a result of Martyn's Law and also encompassed the RSPCA Pets for Prizes recommendations.

The report had previously been considered by the Cabinet on 8 August 2023, the decisions of which were set out at section 6 of the report.

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A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken in relation to the Policy, details of which were set out in Appendix 4 to the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure, Councillor Mahil, supported by Councillor Hamandishe, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council approved the Medway Outdoor Events fees and charges, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

331 Contactless Payment Facilities in Taxis

Background:

The report set out the results from the consultation on amending the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy to include a mandatory condition for all licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles to have a functioning cashless payment facility available for fare paying passengers.

The report had previously been considered by the Licensing and Safety Committee on 23 August 2023, which recommended the policy change to Full Council for approval.

The minutes of the discussion at Licensing and Safety Committee were set out at section 7 of the report.

Councillor McDonald, supported by Councillor Fearn, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council approved the inclusion of the following requirement in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy:

“Card Payment Machines

All licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers must provide a card payment facility in accordance with the Guidance for Electronic Payment Devices.”

332 Amendments to the Capital Programme

Background:

The report requested Council approval for amendments to the Capital Programme as recommended by Cabinet on 8 August 2023.

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.

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Decisions:

- a) The Council agreed to remove the unallocated balance of £49.751million from the MDC programme.
- b) The Council agreed to remove the completed Platters Farm Panels (£7) and Rainham Signage (£190) schemes, and the unallocated balance of £262,000 from the Members Priorities capital programme.

333 Legal Services Structural Review and Budget Addition

Background:

The report set out the findings of a review of MedPay, the Council's staff appraisal scheme. It proposed a reorganisation of legal services to better aid retention, succession planning, training and consistent quality of advice, and the challenges presented to meet the resource gap due to a significant increase in demand by Children's Services.

This report stated that this would require an addition to the revenue budget for Legal Services of £656,887, however, this would represent a reduction on the projected cost to Medway of operating the service in the current model in 2023/24, which was forecasting an overspend in excess of £1 million.

The report had previously been considered by the Cabinet on 8 August 2023, the decisions of which were set out at section 9 of the report.

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

Decision:

The Council agreed the changes to the Legal Services' 2024/25 revenue budget, as set out in paragraph 14.4 of the report.

334 Review of the Constitution

Background:

The report set out a review of the Council Rules, which formed part of the Council's Constitution.

This item had been included on the agenda for the Council meeting held on 20 July 2023 at the request of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple. At that meeting, the Leader, supported by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, proposed the recommendations set out in section 1 of the report. As these proposals recommended changes to the Council Rules, these matters had been taken forward without discussion for debate at this Council meeting.

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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:

The Council approved the changes to the Council Rules as set out in Appendix A to the report in respect of changes to arrangements for the nomination of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and supplementary questions, in relation to public questions.

335 Motions

Motion A – proposed by Councillor Gulvin and supported by Councillor Lammas:

“Background:

1. Voluntary groups in Medway are responsible for a significant proportion of the cleanliness of Medway’s environment. Voluntary groups more generally contribute greatly to the upkeep of our parks and other open spaces which are enjoyed by our residents.
2. The hours worked by Medway’s volunteers are a significant and underappreciated resource. At a time when budgets are tight, their contribution is worth more than ever to us all.
3. In Lordswood and Walderslade, the local litter picking group over the last two and a half years have made a huge contribution to making the area clean and tidy. It is a great shame that they are no longer able to provide this service to our community.

Full Council resolves to:

1. Thank voluntary groups for the work they do here in Medway.
2. Request the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration to engage with the Lordswood and Walderslade litter picking group to resolve the present situation which has halted their operations.”

Councillor Curry supported by Councillor Jones proposed the following amendment:

“Background:

1. Voluntary groups in Medway are responsible for a significant proportion of the cleanliness of Medway’s environment. Voluntary groups more generally contribute greatly to the upkeep of our parks and other open spaces which are enjoyed by our residents.

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2. The hours worked by Medway's volunteers are a significant and ~~underappreciated~~ appreciated resource. At a time when budgets are tight, their contribution is worth more than ever to us all.
3. In Lordswood and Walderslade, the local litter picking group over the last two and a half years have made a huge contribution to making the area clean and tidy. ~~It is a great shame that they are no longer able to provide this service to our community.~~

Full Council resolves to:

1. Thank voluntary groups for the work they do here in Medway.
2. Request the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration to continue to engage with the Lordswood and Walderslade litter picking group to resolve the present situation. ~~which has halted their operations."~~

Amended Motion reads:

"Background:

1. Voluntary groups in Medway are responsible for a significant proportion of the cleanliness of Medway's environment. Voluntary groups more generally contribute greatly to the upkeep of our parks and other open spaces which are enjoyed by our residents.
2. The hours worked by Medway's volunteers are a significant and appreciated resource. At a time when budgets are tight, their contribution is worth more than ever to us all.
3. In Lordswood and Walderslade, the local litter picking group over the last two and a half years have made a huge contribution to making the area clean and tidy.

Full Council resolves to:

1. Thank voluntary groups for the work they do here in Medway.
2. Request the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration to continue to engage with the Lordswood and Walderslade litter picking group to resolve the present situation."

On being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

Decision:

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

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Background:

1. Voluntary groups in Medway are responsible for a significant proportion of the cleanliness of Medway's environment. Voluntary groups more generally contribute greatly to the upkeep of our parks and other open spaces which are enjoyed by our residents.
2. The hours worked by Medway's volunteers are a significant and appreciated resource. At a time when budgets are tight, their contribution is worth more than ever to us all.
3. In Lordswood and Walderslade, the local litter picking group over the last two and a half years have made a huge contribution to making the area clean and tidy.

Full Council resolves to:

1. Thank voluntary groups for the work they do here in Medway.
2. Request the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration to continue to engage with the Lordswood and Walderslade litter picking group to resolve the present situation.

Motion B – Proposed by Councillor Spalding and supported by Councillor Spring:

“Medway Council should scrap plans to introduce Red Routes into Medway and use part of the cost savings to fund Christmas Lights this year, not just in the five towns but also in the rural communities as well.”

Councillor Spalding proposed an alteration to his previously submitted motion. In accordance with Council Rule 11.4.1, the meeting's consent was signified without discussion, therefore, the altered motion was considered as follows:

“Medway Council should seriously consider scrapping plans to introduce Red Routes into Medway and use part of the cost savings to fund Christmas Lights this year, not just in the five towns but also in the rural communities as well from the same to,

- 1) further expand the Moving Traffic Enforcement because the same objective of the Red Routes scheme, namely effective enforcement of discriminate parking can be achieved by more effective deployment of parking enforcement officers and there is a clear need for Moving Traffic Enforcement not just in the areas already proposed but also for example along the whole length of Chatham High Street from the junction to the Brook to Waterfront Way.
- 2) use the savings of annual costs to fund Christmas Lights this year in all areas of Medway, including the five towns and all rural parishes, that are not benefitting from crowdfunding and so called 'commercial

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sponsorship' if said sponsorship funds are insufficient to provide Christmas lights to all areas.

Background

Red Routes

The objective of the Red Routes scheme is to stop indiscriminate parking in order to help reduce congestion and delays to bus services, improve road safety and improve air quality.

The total implementation cost is approximately £805K.

A breakdown of these costs has been set out below:

- £475K for the purchase of ANPR cameras
- £95K for Design, stakeholder engagement, Consultation, and statutory traffic management orders.
- £90K for data collection and monitoring including traffic, pedestrian and air quality
- £100K for infrastructure improvements of signage and markings
- £45K for Engagement and Communications on the implementation enforcement program.

In addition to the initial costs above, there will be the annual cost of operating the ANPR cameras, the costs of maintaining the cameras and the signage plus an amount for depreciation in respect of future replacement.

The same objective can be achieved without these costs by more efficient deployment of enforcement officers and better traffic management.”

Altered motion to read as follows:

“Medway Council should seriously consider scrapping plans to introduce Red Routes into Medway and use the cost savings from the same to,

- 1) further expand the Moving Traffic Enforcement because the same objective of the Red Routes scheme, namely effective enforcement of indiscriminate parking can be achieved by more effective deployment of parking enforcement officers and there is a clear need for Moving Traffic Enforcement not just in the areas already proposed but also for example along the whole length of Chatham High Street from the junction to the Brook to Waterfront Way.
- 2) use the savings of annual costs to fund Christmas Lights this year in all areas of Medway, including the five towns and all rural parishes, that are not benefitting from crowdfunding and so called ‘commercial sponsorship’ if said sponsorship funds are insufficient to provide Christmas lights to all areas.

Background

Red Routes

The objective of the Red Routes scheme is to stop indiscriminate parking in order to help reduce congestion and delays to bus services, improve road safety and improve air quality.

The total implementation cost is approximately £805K.

A breakdown of these costs has been set out below:

- £475K for the purchase of ANPR cameras
- £95K for Design, stakeholder engagement, Consultation, and statutory traffic management orders.
- £90K for data collection and monitoring including traffic, pedestrian and air quality
- £100K for infrastructure improvements of signage and markings
- £45K for Engagement and Communications on the implementation enforcement program.

In addition to the initial costs above, there will be the annual cost of operating the ANPR cameras, the costs of maintaining the cameras and the signage plus an amount for depreciation in respect of future replacement.

The same objective can be achieved without these costs by more efficient deployment of enforcement officers and better traffic management.”

Decision:

Upon being put to the vote the motion was lost.

Motion C – Proposed by Councillor Pearce and supported by Councillor Crozer:

“This Council welcomes and supports the inclusion of the proposed East Coast Wetlands designation, covering wetland habitat from the Humber to the Thames and Medway estuaries, on the UK’s Tentative List of World Heritage Sites.

Inclusion on this exclusive list is the first step towards joining UNESCO’s (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) World Heritage List, which recognises cultural and natural heritage across the globe considered to be of outstanding universal value to humanity.

The application was initiated in 2022 by the RSPB, National Trust and Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), with endorsement from local authorities and The Crown Estate, following a report authored by marine and coastal habitat consultants ABPmer - which highlighted the area as one of the world’s most important places for nature.

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This Council will work with a group of partners to enable a full proposal to be developed, alongside local communities and conservation organisations, and submit this to UNESCO for consideration over the coming years.”

Decision:

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was agreed.

Motion D – proposed by Councillor Maple and supported by Councillor Murray:

“Full Council notes that:

1. Local government fulfils a vital role and should be funded in such a manner as to enable it to continue to do so.
2. Since 2010, Medway Council has seen a 91% reduction to its revenue support grant from Government.
3. Councils now face a funding gap of £3.19 billion for 2023-24. In Medway this is set to be between £7m and £15m.
4. The gap is likely to increase to £5 billion in 2024-25 without considering increased energy costs and inflationary pressures. In Medway this is set to be £39m.

Full Council believes that:

1. Councils will be confronted with the unacceptable choice of cutting services.
2. Councils will have to use already worryingly declining reserves to balance their budgets.
3. Councils will be forced to sell off valuable assets, which can only be used to help balance budgets once.

Full Council resolves to:

Write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ensure that adequate funding is provided to local authorities as part of the Autumn Statement, in order to ensure that local authority budgets are future-proofed against the need to cut jobs and services in the short, medium and long term.”

Councillor Gulvin supported by Perfect proposed the following amendment:

“Full Council notes that:

1. Local government fulfils a vital role and should be funded in such a manner as to enable it to continue to do so.
2. In 2010, the UK national budget deficit was £103billion. Over the past thirteen years, successive governments have taken measures to reduce this, which ensured the UK could get through the COVID-19 pandemic, with record funding such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.
3. Between 2010/11 and 2023/4, Medway Council's core spending power, excluding the dedicated schools grant, has increased from £184m to £243m.
4. ~~Since 2010, Medway Council has seen a 91% reduction to its revenue support grant from Government.~~
5. Upper Councils tier councils now face a funding gap due to increasing social services costs. of £3.19 billion for 2023-24. In Medway this is set to be between £7m and £15m.
6. His Majesty's Government remains committed to Medway, having invested record capital funding in recent years. This has included £14.4m just this year under the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Levelling Up fund for The Docking Station, the Restoration of the Brook Theatre and the Fitted Rigging House. The gap is likely to increase to £5 billion in 2024-25 without considering increased energy costs and inflationary pressures. In Medway this is set to be £39m.

Full Council believes that:

1. The Leader and Portfolio Holders have a responsibility to talk honestly and professionally in relation to the council's finances, ensuring they follow the Council's constitution and the Nolan Principles.
2. Between 2000 and 2023, previous leaders and portfolio holders have always fought for more funding for Medway.
3. His Majesty's Government and the Prime Minister are taking long term decisions for a brighter future for Medway and the whole United Kingdom, including through funding works for the remodelled A229 Blue Bell Hill.
4. ~~Councils will be confronted with the unacceptable choice of cutting services.~~

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- ~~2. Councils will have to use already worryingly declining reserves to balance their budgets.~~
- ~~3. Councils will be forced to sell off valuable assets, which can only be used to help balance budgets once.~~

Full Council resolves to:

Write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to thank him for the government's ongoing record capital investment into Medway, and ask him to ensure that adequate further revenue funding is provided to local authorities as part of the Autumn Statement, in order to ensure that local authority social services budgets are future-proofed ~~against the need to cut jobs and services in the short, medium and long term.~~"

Amended motion reads:

"Full Council notes that:

1. Local government fulfils a vital role and should be funded in such a manner as to enable it to continue to do so.
2. In 2010, the UK national budget deficit was £103billion. Over the past thirteen years, successive governments have taken measures to reduce this, which ensured the UK could get through the COVID-19 pandemic, with record funding such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.
3. Between 2010/11 and 2023/4, Medway Council's core spending power, excluding the dedicated schools grant, has increased from £184m to £243m.
4. Upper tier councils now face a funding gap due to increasing social services costs. In Medway this is set to be between £7m and £15m.
5. His Majesty's Government remains committed to Medway, having invested record capital funding in recent years. This has included £14.4m just this year under the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Levelling Up fund for The Docking Station, the Restoration of the Brook Theatre and the Fitted Rigging House.

Full Council believes that:

1. The Leader and Portfolio Holders have a responsibility to talk honestly and professionally in relation to the council's finances, ensuring they follow the Council's constitution and the Nolan Principles.
2. Between 2000 and 2023, previous leaders and portfolio holders have always fought for more funding for Medway.

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3. His Majesty's Government and the Prime Minister are taking long term decisions for a brighter future for Medway and the whole United Kingdom, including through funding works for the remodelled A229 Blue Bell Hill.

Full Council resolves to:

Write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to thank him for the government's ongoing record capital investment into Medway, and ask him to ensure that further revenue funding is provided to local authorities as part of the Autumn Statement, in order to ensure that local authority social services budgets are future-proofed in the short, medium and long term."

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

Decision:

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

Full Council notes that:

1. Local government fulfils a vital role and should be funded in such a manner as to enable it to continue to do so.
2. Since 2010, Medway Council has seen a 91% reduction to its revenue support grant from Government.
3. Councils now face a funding gap of £3.19 billion for 2023-24. In Medway this is set to be between £7m and £15m.
4. The gap is likely to increase to £5 billion in 2024-25 without considering increased energy costs and inflationary pressures. In Medway this is set to be £39m.

Full Council believes that:

1. Councils will be confronted with the unacceptable choice of cutting services.
2. Councils will have to use already worryingly declining reserves to balance their budgets.
3. Councils will be forced to sell off valuable assets, which can only be used to help balance budgets once.

Full Council resolves to:

Write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ensure that adequate funding is provided to local authorities as part of the Autumn Statement, in order to ensure

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that local authority budgets are future-proofed against the need to cut jobs and services in the short, medium and long term.”

Mayor

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