

## Members' Questions

### **Question A – Councillor Campbell will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Price, the following:**

Given the overwhelming cross-party consensus at Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Government should be doing more for upper tier authorities providing children's social care, what is Medway Council doing to lobby Government for more resource?

### **Question B – Councillor Gulvin will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:**

Over the last few years, the Transformation Board was responsible for the permanent removal of £12,000,000 of revenue costs, by means of digital innovation and business change.

Could the Leader of the Council explain what savings are expected from the replacement of the Transformation Board?

### **Question C – Councillor Mrs Turpin will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards, the following:**

Rochester City Forum, like all others for the Medway Towns, is run by volunteers, and is one of the most active and successful in the towns, with a record of success in setting up displays of flowers in the High Street, an artisan market and keeping the Christmas lights going under threat of defunding. It was therefore with sadness that the recent grant distribution of £50,000 from a larger central government fund was not distributed evenly to all the town forums, but that Rochester was the only forum to miss out on the share of the funding, their share being redistributed to the other towns.

Moreover, this was compounded by some unkind comments from a local councillor. Rather than praising the forum for raising thousands of pounds from local residents at short notice to save the Christmas Lights, the Chair of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny committee instead mocked and embarrassed the forum on social media, over the loss of the grant funding for Rochester.

Will the Portfolio Holder ensure this unfortunate situation cannot reoccur when the third round of the UK shared prosperity funding arrives by instructing our town centre liaison officers to leave no stone unturned by assisting every forum fairly, to fill in the application forms in a timely manner?

**Question D – Councillor Perfect will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards, the following:**

Having a thriving business community is important to ensure that all young people in Medway have access to good employment opportunities.

Can the Portfolio Holder please update the Council on actions she has taken since her appointment to maximise employment opportunities at Innovation Park Medway?

**Question E – Councillor Tejan will ask the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Van Dyke, the following:**

Can the Portfolio Holder please update on how the outcomes of the MedPay review are supporting the Council in its drive to reduce locum staff?

**Question F – Councillor Wildey will ask the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, the following:**

The current CEO of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) took up the post in January 2022, transitioning the organisation from the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) to the ICB.

Would the Portfolio Holder please set out her opinion as to which of the achievements of the ICB that benefit Medway residents rate as outstanding.

**Question G – Councillor Filmer will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement, Councillor Osborne, the following:**

At the last Council meeting, this Council approved the Medway-wide Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). On the 10 December Councillor Osborne tweeted 'We are already issuing S.59s and seizing vehicles.'

Can the Portfolio Holder advise the Council how many vehicles have been confiscated and Section 59 notices issued since the PSPO was approved by this Council?

**Question H – Councillor Etheridge will ask the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:**

In 2019 the HIF bid successfully won £170 million funding for infrastructure on the Peninsula. As part of this the previously separate unspent funding of £ 9.279M Local Growth Fund (LGF) funding would be returned to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) for reallocation, as the improvements to the A289 Four Elms to Medway Tunnel which included three roundabouts, the Four Elms, The Sans Pareil and Anthony's Way, would now be carried out using the HIF funding.

When news broke in May 2023 that the government was now withdrawing all HIF funding with immediate effect, this has now left those long-longed improvements in limbo. The Maritime Academy, whose planning permission was predicated on these improvements, has made the situation even more necessary.

When did the Portfolio Holder seek the reimbursement of the return of the LGF funding, explaining the outcome of that request?

**Question I – Councillor Kemp will ask the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:**

Assuming that the proposed Red Route for Rainham High Street is implemented, will he give details of the actual costs of implementing the scheme?

**Question J – Councillor Anang will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement, Councillor Osborne, the following:**

Could the Portfolio Holder announce when traffic executing an illegal right turn from the A2 into Orchard Street in Rainham is going to be monitored and offenders prosecuted?

**Question K – Councillor Barrett will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, the following:**

Could the Portfolio Holder Please update on engagement that she has had with Registered Providers (RPs) since her appointment in May 2023?

**Question L – Councillor Brake will ask the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, the following:**

What engagement has the Portfolio Holder had in relation to the Rainham Healthy Living Centre and the Rainham Primary Care Network (PCN)?

**Question M – Councillor Clarke will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards, the following:**

The Portfolio Holder recently posted on Twitter that she had been looking at Business Improvement Districts around the country.

Please can she update the Council on her plans, taking into account what she learnt following these visits?

**Question N – Councillor Doe will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards, the following:**

Can the Portfolio Holder please update on action in relation to the Gillingham High Street Task Force set up by the administration?

**Question O – Councillor Gilbourne will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, the following:**

The former Wigmore Coach Park is still occupied by the Traveller Group some 8 weeks after they were supposed to leave the site. Councillor Osborne, who took the decision to site the travellers at the Wigmore Coach park without consultation with local Ward Councillors or residents, promised that the travellers would leave the site by 18 October 2023. Councillor Osborne has failed to keep local Ward Members informed as to the progress in recovering the site and has allowed more travellers to use the site.

Residents are rightly concerned that this matter is going to drag on for months more. Would the Portfolio Holder promise to expedite regaining possession of the site, apologising to residents for the previous broken promise?

**Question P – Councillor Hackwell will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:**

As the Leader often tries to remind anybody that will listen to his rhetoric that the Council is broke, even though this is causing some reputational damage to the Council, when in fact the reality of the situation is the Council was in a worse position financially against the budget, at the same point last year, and the Council has considerably more reserves than it did in 2018.

In the draft Budget for 2024/25, the Leader has said that there will be some tough decisions to be made, why then has the Leader allocated £10,000,000 for Medway Council Staff pay rises, this equates to roughly on average an increase of £5,000 per person a year, or around £100 a week each.

Can the Leader explain to this chamber and to the hard-working tax payers of Medway, how he finds it acceptable that such an enormous pay rise is given to Medway Council staff, which has to be paid for by the hard-working tax payers of Medway when they themselves could be struggling to pay the bills?

**Question Q – Councillor Hyne will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, the following:**

Can the Portfolio Holder please advise of any costs so far incurred due to the Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) situation at Gun Wharf?

**Question R – Councillor Joy will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards, the following:**

Please can you explain why you instructed the Town Centre Manager to send an email to Rainham Town Centre Partnership (RTCP) members with regards to red routes in Rainham on 8 November, requesting a response by 9 November but did not include all members of the RTCP.

**Question S – Councillor Lammas will ask the Portfolio Holder for Education, Councillor Coombs, the following:**

Can the Portfolio Holder please update on the pass rate for the most recent Medway Test?

**Question T – Councillor Lawrence will ask the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, the following:**

The Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy finally reached Cabinet on 19 December. The Portfolio Holder was effusive in her praise for the strategy. A strategy, 18 months in the gestation is one thing but delivering on the cerebral and unambitious targets is another. An example of the lack of ambition is in Shared Outcome 3:-

‘By 2028 the rate of emergency admissions for those who are frail will have reduced by at least 1.5% to the rate it was in 2018.’

Would the Portfolio Holder agree with me that this strategy needs more ambition, more work to make it fit for purpose and clearer lines of accountability?

**Question U – Councillor Spring will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards, the following:**

Can the Portfolio Holder please update us on the current occupancy rate of Rainham Shopping Centre?

**Question V – Councillor Williams will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement, Councillor Osborne, the following:**

When will the people of Medway see the proposed Community Wardens?

**Question W – Councillor Fearn will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, the following:**

What engagement has the Portfolio Holder had with her counterparts at Newham to discuss Anchorage House, given that the Labour Mayor of Newham decided to press ahead with this plan without consulting Medway Council?

**Question X – Councillor Cook will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement, Councillor Osborne, the following:**

Can the Portfolio Holder update Council on the progress of the Medway-wide Public Space Protection Order agreed at our last meeting.

I know this will be of particular concern to my constituents in Wayfield and Weedswood who have experienced significant anti-social behaviour with vehicles in Barnfield?

**Question Y – Councillor Pearce will ask the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:**

Deangate Ridge continues to suffer from unauthorised access and use by quad-bikes and dirt-bikes.

Can the Portfolio Holder and Council officers work with Ward Members to strengthen the security of the site and its boundaries to ensure local residents can enjoy Deangate Ridge safely and no damage is caused?

**Question Z – Councillor Sands will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Price, the following:**

Hoo Village Hall has a new committee in place and is keen, with the support of Ward Councillors, for the Medway Council provided youth club and service to utilise this community facility.

Will the Portfolio Holder and officers from the Youth Service meet with the Committee and Ward Councillors to discuss this and the enhancement of this vital service for our local youth?

**Question AA – Councillor Spalding will ask the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:**

While dealing with the refuse collection fiasco, which was before it snowed and certain others even thought about the subject, I raised the issue of gritting roads during cold weather. I am grateful the salt bins, where available, were filled up.

However, save for Allhallows, the other villages and hamlets in my ward, Grain, St Mary Hoo, Upper Stoke, Middle Stoke and Lower Stoke do not have a single salt bin between them. This Labour administration promised fairness and inclusivity.

What is the Portfolio Holder going to do to ensure all of my ward and indeed all the rural areas are treated fairly when it comes to provision of salt bins and road gritting?

**Question AB – Councillor Mandaracas will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Price, the following:**

People who are care leavers can face additional challenges in their lives.

What work is Medway Council undertaking to ensure Care Leavers are treated as having a protected characteristic, giving vulnerable young adults the best start in the next stage of their lives?