

Medway Council
Meeting of Medway Council
Wednesday, 24 January 2024
7.00pm to 11.42pm

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

In Attendance: Richard Hicks, Chief Executive
Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director, Legal and Governance
Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services
Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer

553 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Curry, Fearn, Filmer, Jones, Lammas, Paterson and Spring.

554 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

Councillor Cook declared an interest in relation to agenda item no. 19 (Appointments to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee) as she has professional interests in the schools mentioned in the report. Councillor Cook left the room during discussion and determination of the item.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

Councillor Crozer declared an interest in relation to agenda item no. 11 (Temporary Accommodation Options - Addition to the Capital Programme) as he is the Chair of Trustees of AMAT UK, a provider of temporary

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accommodation to Medway Council. Councillor Crozer left the room during discussion and determination of the item.

Other Interests

There were none.

555 Record of meeting

The records of the two Full Council meetings held on 19 October 2023 were approved and signed by Worshipful the Mayor as correct.

556 Mayor's announcements

The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway announced that Derek Esterson, a former Rochester upon Medway Councillor from 1995 to 1998 had passed away recently. She said that Members would recall that Derek was the father of Bill Esterson, also a former Medway Councillor.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor offered her condolences to the family.

Councillor Murray addressed the Council in tribute to former Councillor Esterson. She highlighted that other family members had also served as Councillors and that Derek Esterson had also been a Kent County Council Councillor between 1993 and 1998.

The Mayor welcomed the former Mayor of Medway, Jan Aldous, to present cheques to Hands Gillingham and Parkinson's UK following her fundraising during the previous municipal year. Daphne Stearn and Joyce Kemp were in attendance at the meeting representing Hands Gillingham and Alyson Smith and Phil Bungay were representing Parkinson's UK.

£17,532.78 had been raised for the Mayoral charities during Jan Aldous' time as Mayor of Medway. Each charity was, therefore, presented with a cheque for £8,766.39.

The Mayor announced that since the last full Council meeting, she had welcomed Mayors and dignitaries from across the south east and supported local residents in relation to fundraising events in Medway. These had raised over £3,000 for the Mayor's three chosen charities, SSAFA, Medway Help for Ukrainians and Young Medway. The Mayor thanked everyone, including local business, Gurkha Brothers and the local Oasthouse Theatre in Rainham for supporting the Mayoral events.

People involved in organising the Rochester Dickensian Christmas Festival were thanked by the Mayor, including those who had collaborated with the organisers to make it a successful event that had welcomed over 100,000 visitors over a weekend. The next big, free community event would be the Chinese New Year Festival with the main parade taking place on 17 February 2024 in Chatham High Street.

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The Mayor advised the Council that it was proposed to make some changes to the way the meeting was run, following discussions between Group Leaders, Deputy Leaders and Group Whips. These changes were as set out in decisions below.

The Mayor, supported by Members of the Council moved a suspension of Council Rules.

Decision:

The Council agreed to suspend Council rules to facilitate the following changes:

- a) Public questions would be extended from 30 minutes to 40 minutes with a reduction in the time allocations for the Leader's Report from 35 minutes to 30 minutes and the Overview and Scrutiny activity report from 25 to 20 minutes.
- b) Public questioners unable to attend the meeting had been allowed to send a representative to read out their question or the Mayor would put the question on their behalf. Only public questioners attending in person would be able to ask supplementary questions.
- c) The order of business had been changed as indicated on the agenda. This included taking the agenda item on motions after public questions and taking any information reports or reports for noting as the last agenda items.
- d) Limit the number of speakers per motion to the proposer and seconder, plus up to 10% of each group (rounded up) as follows:

Labour and Co-operative Group – 4

Conservative Group – 3

Independent Group – 1

Independent Member – 1

The same number of speakers would be allowed for each amendment to a motion.

The Mayor also advised that a Supplementary Council Agenda had been published after the main agenda. The Supplementary Agenda set out the Cabinet record of decisions of the meeting held on 16 January 2024.

557 Leader's announcements

The Leader welcomed the suspension of Council rules, as agreed by the Council, which he hoped would lead to the meeting running more efficiently.

The Leader announced that a song that had been played before the meeting was called 'Ever Flowing River'. This had been played as the Medway song at

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a recent event in Canterbury attended by the 13 districts and boroughs in Kent and Medway.

The Mayor of Medway had received a letter from Mayor Acharya of Pokhara, Nepal. This letter recognised the Mayor of Medway's achievement as being the first female Nepalese and Gurkha Mayor in the UK. The letter also requested a collaborative relationship between Pokhara and Medway. The Leader said that the Chief Executive and he would be writing to Mayor Acharya to offer a letter of friendship between Medway and Pokhara.

558 Petitions

Public:

There were none.

Member:

There were none.

559 Public questions

Question A – Tim Johnston, of Rochester, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement, Councillor Osborne:

“There has been a rise in shops dedicated to vaping as well as other shops - even takeaways - selling vape products. This is a problem for public health as well as a blight on the high street, particularly in conservation areas such as Rochester High Street.

What powers are already available to close vape shops or restrict the display and advertisement of vapes in Medway?”

Councillor Osborne thanked Tim Johnston for the question. He said that the Council had powers to regulate certain types of advertisement under the town and country planning regulations of 2007 and to control the sale of products such as vapes where there were age restrictions through trading standards legislation. Unlike for tobacco, alcohol and other products there was no formal licensing regime.

Councillor Osborne believed that this needed to change and that an incoming national Labour government would be committed to banning the marketing, promotion and the sale of vapes to children. There was a focus on regulating the vaping industry. As a teacher, he was aware of the significant impacts of vapes in the education space. He considered that retailers who sold vapes to young people under the age of 18 should be subject to review to prevent sellers from operating near schools in that way.

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Councillor Osborne was hopeful that the Council could engage with the government to see if this issue could be further reviewed.

No supplementary question was asked as Tim Johnston was not present.

Question B – Chris Webb, of Rochester, asked the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards, the following:

“Lloyds Bank branch in Strood is closing on 4 April. Lloyds’ Chatham branch will then be its only branch serving Medway, which currently has a population of approximately 280,000. The Strood branch closure will result in severe inconvenience and loss of an essential face to face, in person service, particularly to those customers without the internet who currently rely on this branch for their banking needs.

Will the Council make strong representations to Lloyds Bank, at a senior level, to oppose this unjustified closure?”

Councillor Edwards thanked Chris Webb for the question. She said that, unfortunately, the closure of bank branches was a national trend, with a third of bank branches across the UK shutting since 2010. Not everyone was comfortable using online or telephone banking and local small businesses needed safe access to banks for their deposits. The Strood branch was relied upon by residents in Strood and by those living in Cuxton, Halling, Rochester and on the Hoo Peninsula, for whom the next nearest branch in Chatham was some distance for them to travel.

Councillor Edwards had written to Lloyds Bank to oppose the closure and said that she would do her utmost to ensure the retention of face-to-face banking facilities in Medway town centres. This also included pursuing a plan B to save face-to-face banking by speaking with Link, the UK’s cash access and ATM network, to encourage them to introduce a banking hub in the area.

Chris Webb asked the following supplementary question:

“Does the Council not consider it particularly strange, as it’s a democratically elected body, that Lloyds and other banks don’t consult the people that use it? Is it perhaps that they know the answer?”

Councillor Edwards said that although banks were commercial entities, they needed to engage properly with the people using them to have a true understanding of need. While there had been a consultation or public notices about the matter, she agreed that there was much more that could have been done to understand the impact that such closures would have in view of the significant implications for communities. Councillor Edwards encouraged banks to do more to consult people who would be most affected by such changes.

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Question C – Paul Khera, of Chatham, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

“How does the Labour administration in Medway plan to safeguard Chatham Docks as a functional industrial facility, emphasising the need to protect long-term employment opportunities for local residents and preserving the historical significance of one of the last working docks in Chatham, particularly in the face of potential future redevelopment proposals for housing projects?”

Responding on behalf of Councillor Curry, Councillor Maple thanked Paul Khera for the question. He said that the Council was currently working on its Local Plan. As part of that work, there had been a call for sites and a Regulation 18 consultation had been undertaken on options for a spatial strategy, as well as re-setting the vision and objectives of the Local Plan. That work was currently being considered by officers.

Chatham Docks had been promoted through the call for sites and was the subject of responses to the recent consultation. The Council was now working through the responses and the evidence base to support the Plan moving forward. It was, therefore, not appropriate to comment directly on Chatham Docks or any other site at present as this would be premature and potentially risk challenge to the Plan. It was a priority for the Council’s administration to move forward and deliver a sound Local Plan.

Councillor Maple had previously committed to a meeting with both Peel and Mittal together, this had taken place on the day before the Council meeting. This had been a positive, constructive meeting and dialogue would continue. Councillor Maple considered that this was a very different approach to that taken by the previous Council administration.

No supplementary question was asked as Paul Khera was not present.

Question D – Michael Evans, of Rochester, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“Medway Foodbank is troubled by the absence of confirmation in the Government’s Autumn Statement there will be a continuation of the Household Support Fund beyond March 2024. The fund plays a vital role providing emergency support to vulnerable Medway households with expenses such as food, school uniforms and utilities, which is all the more important during the Cost-of-Living crisis. We expect to see a spike in foodbank use if it is discontinued.

Will Medway Council seek an urgent assurance from the Department for Work and Pensions that the Household Support Fund will remain in place beyond 31 March 2024?”

Councillor Maple thanked Michael Evans for the question. He said that he was grateful for the work that Medway Foodbank and many other organisations did

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across Medway but that he wished such organisations did not need to exist. Council officers worked closely with the Department for Work and Pensions and were making appropriate representations regarding the future of the Household Support Fund. Answers given in parliament had led to there being concerns.

A motion submitted to this meeting of the Council, which was expected to have cross-party support, recognised the importance of the Fund and called on the Council to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to confirm the future of the Fund at the spring Budget.

Councillor Maple had recently received an email, seeking his signature on a cross party letter from the Local Government Association political groups, which he would be signing.

Michael Evans asked the following supplementary question:

“Often we hear at the food bank that our clients don’t know about the Household Support Fund. So, will the Council explore all avenues to maximise publicity for the fund?”

In response, Councillor Maple said that since May 2023, the new administration had brought forward a Cost of Living Plan, which had amplified those messages, although there was more to be done. Work would be undertaken with the Finance and Communications teams to look at what more could be done with the hope being that the Household Support Fund would continue into the next financial year.

Question E – Andrew James, of Rainham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

“The response to the initial consultation on the Red Route proposal for Rainham has resulted in the creation of three additional loading bays, two of which are at the front tip of existing bus stops (one outside Poulton’s and one outside Lukehurst’s) and the third occupying the full width of one lane outside the Nationwide Building Society. All of these proposed design changes appear, from a resident’s perspective, to have a negative rather than positive impact on public transport and emergency service transit (travelling east), and in the case of the Nationwide loading bay, an increased danger to cyclists who are now being forced into the middle lane.

How have these negative impacts been accounted for in the planning of the proposed design changes?”

Responding on behalf of Councillor Curry, Councillor Osborne thanked Andrew James for the question. He welcomed the significant interest in this issue from residents, including a number of businesses that had been met on recent visits to Rainham. The Red Route proposal was part of the Council’s Moving Streets programme, which included school streets and box junction changes and was

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part of a larger programme to promote vehicle movement in Medway for buses, emergency vehicles, and cars, in addition to cycling and walking.

The Council had been engaging with local residents and business, bus operators and emergency services. The original consultation had sought views on five proposals and several of those had significant cross-party support. As statutory consultees, emergency services were consulted on the proposals and no concerns were raised regarding the impact to their services, with many of them being in support of the proposals.

Councillor Osborne noted that there was already a Red Route programme outside Medway Hospital. Public transport operators had also been engaged during both the informal and statutory consultation processes and local bus companies had expressed support for the proposals. The Council would work with bus companies to look at new routes to promote moving streets.

With regards to the proposed Rainham route, the Council had listened to community feedback and concern and redesigned the proposed Red Route schemes to add an additional five loading bays. The new loading bay along the A2 Rainham high street, outside Nationwide Building Society, was proposed following the informal consultation, due to there being regular monetary collections. It was also in response to The Greedy Banker pub, which received heavy barrels and could not load or unload on Station Road. The carriageway width at this location was wide enough to accommodate a loading bay and still provide a two metre running lane so that there was a significant amount of space for cyclists and other users. This would mean that cyclists could move around the occupied loading bay without impinging on the eastbound lane.

Larger vehicles were currently loading on the wider part of the footway outside the Greedy Banker, which illegally blocked the footway for pedestrians, particularly those with pushchairs or in a wheelchair. This indiscriminate parking also blocked the visibility for pedestrians crossing north to south at the busy signal crossing and it was therefore considered that the proposals put forward in the traffic regulation order were appropriate for the location.

Andrew James asked the following supplementary question:

“Local residents feel that traffic jams are not due to illegal parking, so what quantitative evidence can you provide to back up the claims that a red route will reduce delays?”

Councillor Osborne said that the red routes proposals were located on major artery roads in Medway, where significant road flows had been monitored over a number of years. This was a busy road location with a significant number of businesses and those businesses had regular deliveries, hence why the process had been expanded to allow more loading bays in situ. The fact that this had been necessary in response to the consultation suggested that there was a high traffic flow along the road.

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Engagement had taken place with emergency services. They would have a strong view on these matters and had indicated significant support for this proposal in view of the congestion. Arriva had been very clear that their buses had been caught in congestion and they believed that the proposals would reduce congestion at the location.

A full consultation had been undertaken and the Council remained open to resident views on these matters and debate was welcome. Councillor Osborne looked forward to seeing the full range of views offered to the traffic regulation order which had been consulted upon at the end of 2023.

Question F – Mary Smith, of Gillingham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services, Councillor Price, the following:

“I note, with pleasure, the Council’s stated intention to start helping with the housing of unaccompanied child asylum seekers. Please will the Council now publish a timetable for starting to accept these very vulnerable children?”

Councillor Price thanked Mary Smith for the question. He said that Medway had officially joined the National Transfer Scheme in July 2023 and since that point had accepted 32 young people. All of them had been placed within the allocated timescales of 5 or 10 days, depending on criteria. All eligible young people had an allocated specialist social worker and were housed in a quality assured foster home or Supported Accommodation provision.

Medway Council had worked collaboratively to welcome the young people with support from Children’s Social Care, Education and Public Health. Close work was taking place with the Integrated Care Board to ensure the health needs of the young people were met. Work continued with the Home Office, National Transfer Scheme Team and Department for Education to ensure that young people allocated to Medway were appropriate and that the right services were available to support them to ensure they were welcomed to Medway and would become part of communities.

Mary Smith asked the following supplementary question:

“I’m very pleased to note that my question is to a great degree, out of date, but I would like to ask if all the children that are allocated to Medway are housed in Medway?”

In response, Councillor Price said that Medway had taken young people of a variety of nationalities, although predominantly they came from Afghanistan. The majority of young people were either placed in Medway or within a 20 mile radius.

Question G – Yasmin Khan, of Gillingham, submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple:

“On the evening of 19 December, at a Medway Palestine Solidarity Campaign protest outside the St George’s Centre, four police officers, and at least five

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contract security staff who were paid on an overtime basis, had been drafted in to provide “security”.

I am unaware of this level of security or policing at any Council meeting in the past or indeed at any other Medway Palestine Solidarity Campaign protest.

The police in attendance confirmed that they were not aware of any issues of concern in relation to anyone involved in a demonstration organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in Medway.

I am stunned at Medway Labour’s clearly biased perception of pro-Palestinian protestors and found the level of police and security there insulting, particularly given that our campaign is centred around ending violence and calling for peace.

Equally, it is an appalling waste of strained public funds and police time.

In relation to 19 December, at a time when critical budgets are strained, how does Medway Labour justify such security measures, requiring both expenditure on out of hours security staff and use of police time, when our police forces are already under pressure?”

Councillor Maple thanked Yasmin Khan for the question. He said that Arrangements for the Council’s formal meetings were made through the Council’s Democratic Services team and Councillors had no operational involvement in these matters.

Kent Police contacted Council officers on Monday 18 December 2023 to advise that there was a planned protest due at the Cabinet meeting the following evening. In such circumstances, as was normal practice, officers arranged for security to be present and informed Cabinet Members.

Kent Police’s decision to deploy officers was an operational decision made by them.

No supplementary question was asked as Yasmin Khan was not present.

Question H – Jeremy Spyby-Stearns, of Chatham, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“A recent public demonstration saw £618.23 of public money spent on extra security, with questions raised about the cost, or impact, of the police who also attended.

Can you please confirm if you believe that it is an appropriate use of public resources to over-police members of the public exercising their public function in a peaceful manner? Demonstration we might add where the local police themselves have reported no concerns about.”

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Councillor Maple thanked Jeremy Spyby-Stearns for the question and referred to his answer to the previous related public question. He said it was important that those who wished to demonstrate peacefully were able to do so. When Council officers became aware that a demonstration would take place at a Council event they would make arrangements for the security for all persons attending the event. Councillors had no operational involvement in these matters.

Attendance by the police was an operational decision made by the police.

Jeremy Spyby-Stearns asked the following supplementary question:

“The Home Office are currently looking at proposals for the organisers of protests to cover the cost of the policing operations. This has the potential to impact any protest, including those against housing developments or even cuts to Children’s Services. Will the Portfolio Holder commit to writing to the Home Office to express his opposition to these proposals?”

In response, Councillor Maple said that it was well documented that he was not a stranger to protest and demonstration and that he absolutely believed in people’s rights to protest and demonstrate, but it must be peaceful and it must be safe. Councillor Maple hoped any legislation that came forward would not be draconian, but would take into account people’s right to have a safe, peaceful protest.

Question I – Sanjeedah Ahmed, of Chatham, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“As the conflict in Gaza rages on, I can’t help but feel compelled to reinforce the campaign made by the Medway branch of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

Please confirm what assurances you have sought from BAE Systems that parts built in Medway, by the people of Medway, are not being used against the people of Palestine.”

Councillor Maple thanked Sanjeedah Ahmed for the question. He said that people at the meeting and across Medway would be horrified by the situation in Israel and Gaza and the devastating impact it was having on civilians in the region. The right of everyone to protest peacefully was recognised.

BAE Systems operated under the tightest regulation and complied fully with all applicable defence export controls, which were subject to ongoing assessment. BAE had no operations or employees in Israel or Gaza and were not supplying equipment directly to the Israeli government.

BAE were partners on Lockheed Martin’s global F-35 programme, which was manufactured in the US and subject to US export controls. It was a collaborative project, led by the US with participation from the UK and others, including NATO allies Italy, the Netherlands, Canada, Denmark, Norway and Australia. The deployment of F-35 by the Israeli government in the current

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conflict was a question that would need to be put to the UK Government, amongst others.

Labour MP Dan Carden had put this question to the Government, asking for an investigation into whether any British made weapons had been used in acts that would breach human rights in Israel or in Palestinian territories. Their response was:

“The Government takes its defence export responsibilities very seriously and operates some of the most robust export controls in the world. All applications for export licences are assessed on a case-by-case basis against a strategic export licensing criteria. All licences are kept under careful and continual review as standard, and we are able to suspend, refuse or revoke licences as circumstances require. We can and do respond quickly and flexibility changing international circumstances. The government continues to closely monitor the situation in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank”.

Sanjeedah Ahmed did not ask a supplementary question.

Question J – Onyx Rist, of Rainham, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

“The bus services that run near or on Otterham Quay Lane do not meet demand, specifically due to new developments (which are a positive thing, as I live in one). I realise the new Administration has inherited a debt from the previous Administration that means the Council probably can't fund bus services but could the Council have a conversation with commercial bus operators, such as Arriva, about running the 132 service to divert down Station Road, Wakeley Road and Otterham Quay Lane on early mornings, evenings and at weekends to help out elderly or vulnerable residents who might not be able to walk to Mierscourt Road when the Chalkwell or Nu-Venture services do not run?”

Responding on behalf of Councillor Curry, Councillor Murray thanked Onyx Rist for the question. She said that the suggestion made would be raised with Arriva at the next available opportunity. The A2 through Rainham was well served by buses, but it was acknowledged that services along Station Road, Wakely Road and Otterham Quay Lane were limited. There were also challenges around increasing the Council's budget for subsidising bus services in the current financial climate.

Medway was committed to working in partnership with bus operators to review and improve public transport across Medway and make sure, as far as possible, that residents and visitors had access to bus services that met their needs.

No supplementary question was asked as Onyz Rist was not present.

Question K – Bryan Fowler, of Chatham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, the following:

“What resources, including financial contributions, have you been able to secure from the London Borough of Newham or from other sources such as Central Government, to facilitate the housing of people in Anchorage House, Chatham?”

Councillor Khan thanked Bryan Fowler for the question. She said that a fundamental challenge relating to permitted development was that it provided no funding through S106 towards the running of local services. This was a national challenge that Medway alone was unable to solve as it required national legislation.

Councillor Khan had made the position clear to Newham that they were expected to minimise any potential impact on Medway Council. Medway Council officers would meet Newham representatives regularly and would ensure the appropriate escalation of any issues that occurred. Work would also be undertaken with Newham to secure use of units in the block to provide accommodation for Medway residents, further protecting Medway’s resources.

Brian Fowler did not ask a supplementary question.

Question L – Carl Dunks, of Rainham, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards:

“I have noticed an acute lack of investment in Rainham from Medway Council, why is there a lack of opportunity for people such as myself for employment?”

Councillor Edwards thanked Carl Dunks for the question. She said that the new Council administration had supported events and improvements in Rainham to make it a more attractive place to live and to visit. The Council had supported town centre events during the Easter and Summer Holidays and had also provided events for children at Christmas in Rainham Library. Parts of the shopping centre precinct had been refurbished and £12,500 had been provided from the Shared Prosperity Fund to allow the Rainham Town Centre Forum to deliver its own improvements. Councillor Edwards had attended a meeting of the Forum, just ahead of the Council meeting, where it had been agreed how that money would be spent, based on the needs of the local community.

Medway Council was also investing in a new sports centre, which was currently under construction at Cozenton Park. It would offer a range of job opportunities and the Council was keen to see applications from local residents. It was anticipated that vacancies would be advertised from the next month in readiness for the new family friendly centre opening in the summer.

The Council also delivered a variety of work-related courses through Medway Adult Education, to help local residents develop the skills they needed for employment. There was close work with the job centre and other partners to

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ensure a wide variety of programmes to enable support into employment and Mr Dunks would be welcome to contact Councillor Edwards directly so that he could be signposted to those who could support him into good quality jobs.

No supplementary question was asked as Carl Dunks was not present.

Question M – Alan Stockey, of Rainham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

“Since this Council took office, you could assume that it has declared a Road Traffic and Congestion Emergency, putting their foot on the gas in their first 100-day plan to penalise inconsiderate motorists and illegal parking to tackle congestion, with only assumed benefits.

They have, by their actions, made clear the level of commitment needed to substantiate a declared emergency, i.e. hire a strategic lead of Front Line Services, hire consultants and commit millions on new technology and services. In contrast, to the declared Climate Emergency, a Climate Emergency UK Scorecard score of 39%, and making zero progress in publishing or reducing their own greenhouse gas emissions, the Council has decided not to replace the head of the Climate Response Team.

What is this Administration planning to do in the next 100 days to show it remains committed to its declared Climate Emergency and inspire the community to take actions that it, to date, has not?”

Responding on behalf of Councillor Curry, Councillor Maple thanked Alan Stockey for the question. He said that over the next 100 days, work was planned across a range of areas within his Portfolio. This included:

- Consulting on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for 6 weeks from 22 January. Government funding had been received for Active Travel initiatives, which was being used to deliver a programme of activities to encourage and promote walking and cycling. Details of the consultation were available on the Council’s website.
- Solar Together Kent would be launched. This would be the fourth year that Medway supported promotion of the scheme to enable homeowners to install solar panels on their properties and save on their energy bills. Homeowners could register their interest in the scheme via the Council website.
- Medway’s campaign "What’s good for the climate is good for me" would be promoted through social media and in the Council’s climate change e-newsletter. The campaign provided examples of healthy lifestyle changes that would also help residents reduce their carbon footprint.
- Continuing to refresh the Climate Change Action Plan – Best practice was being considered to inform the refresh, including learning from the Climate Emergency UK assessment. Medway’s score of 39% was higher than the

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single tier average of 35%, although it was acknowledged that there was still more work to do to make progress on the climate agenda. A score of 81% for collaboration and engagement placed it joint 5th out of 186 UK single tier authorities. As a continuation of this positive work, Medway would be launching an engagement programme which would include a range of opportunities for the community to help shape the plan.

- Two new groups had been established to support the vision for community level input and action on the climate emergency:
 - Members of the new Climate Change Working Party would be finalising their individual Climate Action Ward Improvement Plans with the aim of supporting and encouraging local climate action within their communities and networks.
 - The Community Climate Working Group, made up of representatives from key sectors across Medway would continue to meet. The aim of the group was to share information and inspire all communities in Medway to take action. The Working Group would be invited to comment on the priorities for the Action Plan.

More information about the Council's approach to driving the climate agenda forward could be found in the agenda for the meeting of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 January 2024 and this was available on the Council's website.

Alan Stockey asked the following supplementary question:

"It's fantastic that that work is going on. But I think we need to understand the Council stance on taking its own medicine and being able to illustrate and inspire that particularly on emissions, which is where the community working group is being focused, that they're doing what they can to reduce their own footprint, do you agree that that inspiration is still needed?"

In response, Councillor Maple considered that if Councillor Curry had been at the Council meeting, he would have said that his passion for the issue would ensure that the Cabinet, Council and local community would need to make positive progress and it was right to say that the Council did need to hold itself to account. In relation to matters such as procurement, Councillor Curry would be making relevant representations to colleagues during the relevant processes.

Question N – Mathew Broadley, of Chatham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, the following:

"I am alarmed to see some recent questionable announcements regarding housing in Medway.

Since the last Council meeting, we have seen plans from the Labour-led Medway Council to sell off two car parks. At the same time the Council-owned Medway Development Company has published the preliminary proposal for the Strood Waterfront, providing zero Council housing.

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I note that Gravesham Labour has delivered hundreds of new council homes across multiple sites, yet the Strood Waterfront, being delivered by the Council-owned Medway Development Company, is expected to deliver no social housing as part of this development in a prime location.

Can the Portfolio Holder explain why Medway Labour has failed to ensure that council housing is being delivered as part of the Strood Waterfront proposal, in order to reassure residents who voted Labour that campaign promises to deliver essential council housing will not be a casualty of Labour's campaign to "balance the books"?"

Councillor Khan thanked Matthew Broadley for the question. She said that it was incorrect to state that Medway Development Company would deliver no affordable housing as part of the development of the former Civic Centre site in Strood. MDC had to operate within the same national and local planning policies as any other developer. In that respect, there was a policy requirement to secure 25% of the homes on site to be affordable. That would be providing a mix of tenures and dwelling types to help meet the needs of Medway residents.

There was a national housing crisis, including the delivery of affordable homes and that was felt particularly in the South East. The administration was focussed on addressing this very basic need of providing homes for people, which Councillor Khan considered was a fundamental right. The Council continued to require developers to deliver affordable homes as part of their developments and that included MDC schemes. New council homes continued to be delivered with a strategy and pipeline that would grow council stock over the coming years, as well as the Cabinet agreeing proposals that would increase the amount of temporary accommodation owned by the Council.

Matthew Broadley asked the following supplementary question:

"Given the fact that Medway Labour announced a couple of days before it was leaked that Newham was going to be delivering Council housing in Medway, are we going to be in a situation by the end of this term where London Labour councils are delivering more council housing in Medway than Medway Labour Council are?"

In response, Councillor Khan said that the issue was that there was a conflation of different types of housing that were being delivered. MDC was under the rules that developers faced and would have to be subject to planning policies around affordable homes. There was a pipeline of council housing which sat outside that. With reference to temporary accommodation there was a report on that elsewhere on the Council agenda. This looked in detail at how Medway Council would like to address the issue of temporary accommodation, which is what had happened in relation to the London borough of Newham. They were not delivering Council housing in Medway but were looking at temporary accommodation risks.

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Question O – Trish Marchant, of Chatham, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure, Councillor Mahil:

“Medway Labour has been a keen contributor and supporter of cultural events across the Medway Towns for many years, from Christmas lights to various festivals and celebrations.

Following the controversy of the Council withdrawing funding from the towns’ Christmas lights at short notice will Councillor Mahil confirm what other events, that Medway Labour and the Council have supported historically, will now be subject to cuts or withdrawal of funding, by this Labour Council, in 2024/25?”

Councillor Mahil thanked Trish Marchant for the question. He said that in view of the budget position, all services across the Council, including Medway’s festivals and events programme, were being reviewed and considered as part of savings proposals to meet the financial gap for 2024/25 budget. Final decisions would be submitted to Cabinet on 13 February and Full Council on 29 February.

No supplementary question was asked as Trish Marchant was not present.

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

“Thankfully, the Christmas household waste collection is now sorted. However, the households had faced a headache with their household waste for weeks when Medway Council had made repeated promises of weekly waste collection. Regrettably, as I went along streets like Delce Road and some patches like Henry Street and William Street after the Christmas and New Year holidays, I’ve seen uncollected household waste spilling over onto the streets. Uncollected household wastes are normally dealt with by contractors on the next day. But the saga surely has meant it cost residents more for the Council to clean up the streets.

This demonstrated that Council contracts need more comprehensive considerations other than going to the lowest bidder. A waste collection contract that fails to collect means unclean streets, a contract that emits more carbon footprint will cost more on public health in Medway.

As Medway Council prepares for a new dry waste recycling contract, will the Portfolio Holder lead and ensure that a new contract will be comprehensively beneficial to Medway residents?”

Answering on behalf of Councillor Curry, Councillor Maple said that the suspension of Christmas waste collections on 5 and 6 January 2024, following a waste disposal supply chain failure, was extremely disappointing.

It was important to highlight that contract failures for waste services were extremely rare and Councillor Curry had personally been involved in discussions with Veolia to hold them accountable for the incident. The matter

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would also be reported in the Leader's report, elsewhere on the Council meeting agenda.

The Council followed robust contracting procedures when procuring services and all contract awards sought the best possible deal for Medway residents. This would always take into account the service delivery model, value for money, available local infrastructure and interest from suppliers.

Nicholas Chan did not ask a supplementary question.

560 Motions

Motion A – proposed by Councillor Hackwell and supported by Councillor Perfect:

“The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration is railroading through a red route scheme for Rainham High Street. There is clear unequivocal opposition to the scheme from residents and local traders, evidenced through the Council's consultation and the recent Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18th October 2023.

The Council instructs the Director of Place to publish:

1. Evidence that the Rainham scheme will improve traffic flow, journey times, and reduce pollution.
2. Current baseline data on:
 - a. Traffic flow.
 - b. Journey times.
 - c. Air pollution.
3. Target KPIs in these three measurements above that justify the Rainham scheme.
4. Current revenue assumptions for the red route in Rainham.

The Council recommends to Cabinet to consider all responses to the consultation and not impose a small geographical location thus preventing many who use, travel through and visit Rainham.

The Council notes that the Conservative Government and Transport Secretary intends to tackle anti-car measures where there is clear opposition to the scheme through the “Plan for Drivers”.

The Council further recommends to Cabinet to cancel the scheme in Rainham the Director of Place is unable to provide the requested information.”

Councillor Field supported by Councillor Hamandishe proposed the following amendment:

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~~The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration is railroading through a red route scheme for Rainham High Street. There is clear unequivocal opposition to the scheme from residents and local traders, evidenced through the Council's consultation and the recent Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18th October 2023 overseeing the possible introduction of Red Routes across Medway. There is clear interest in this from some in our community.~~

~~The Council instructs the Director of Place to publish:~~

- ~~1. Evidence that the Rainham scheme will improve traffic flow, journey times, and reduce pollution.~~
- ~~2. Current baseline data on:
 - ~~a. Traffic flow.~~
 - ~~b. Journey times.~~
 - ~~c. Air pollution.~~~~
- ~~3. Target KPIs in these three measurements above that justify the Rainham scheme.~~
- ~~4. Current revenue assumptions for the red route in Rainham.~~

~~The Council recommends to Cabinet to consider all responses to the consultation and not impose a small geographical location thus preventing many who use, travel through and visit Rainham.~~

~~The Council notes: that the Conservative Government and Transport Secretary intends to tackle anti-car measures where there is clear opposition to the scheme through the "Plan for Drivers".~~

~~The Council further recommends to Cabinet to cancel the scheme in Rainham the Director of Place is unable to provide the requested information~~

- ~~• That a business case was prepared for the previous Administration in December 2022 (as noted by Councillor Gulvin during Council on 19 October 2023) which sets out the case for Red Routes in Medway, including Rainham. This business case was de facto adopted as policy by the previous administration via its inclusion in the budget, agreed by their Members at both Cabinet and two successive Full Council meetings.~~
- ~~• That the Conservative Government is cynically using traffic controlling and road safety measures as a 'wedge issue' with voters, despite being adopted by local authorities of all political colours across the country.~~

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Amended motion reads:

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration is overseeing the possible introduction of Red Routes across Medway. There is clear interest in this from some in our community.

“The Council notes:

- That a business case was prepared for the previous Administration in December 2022 (as noted by Councillor Gulvin during Council on 19 October 2023) which sets out the case for Red Routes in Medway, including Rainham. This business case was de facto adopted as policy by the previous administration via its inclusion in the budget, agreed by their Members at both Cabinet and two successive Full Council meetings.
- That the Conservative Government is cynically using traffic controlling and road safety measures as a ‘wedge issue’ with voters, despite being adopted by local authorities of all political colours across the country.”

In accordance with Rule 12.4 of the Council Rules, a recorded vote on the amended motion was taken:

For: Councillors Animashaun, Bowen, Browne, Campbell, Cook, Coombs, Edwards, Field, Gurung, Hamandishe, Hamilton, Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard, Jackson, Khan, Mahil, Mandaracas, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Myton, Nestorov, Osborne, Peake, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Price, Shokar, Stamp and Van Dyke (30)

Against: Councillors Anang, Barrett, Brake, Clarke, Doe, Etheridge, Gilbourne, Gulvin, Hackwell, Hyne, Joy, Kemp, Lawrence, Perfect, Tejan, Mrs Turpin, Wildey and Williams (18)

Abstain: Councillors Crozer, Pearce, Sands, Spalding, (4)

Decision:

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

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration is overseeing the possible introduction of Red Routes across Medway. There is clear interest in this from some in our community.

The Council notes:

- 1) That a business case was prepared for the previous Administration in December 2022 (as noted by Councillor Gulvin during Council on 19 October 2023) which sets out the case for Red Routes in Medway, including Rainham. This business case was de facto adopted as policy by the previous administration via its inclusion in the budget, agreed by their members at both Cabinet and two successive Full Council meetings.

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- 2) That the Conservative Government is cynically using traffic controlling and road safety measures as a 'wedge issue' with voters, despite being adopted by local authorities of all political colours across the country.

Motion B – proposed by Councillor Coombs and supported by Councillor Gulvin:

“Medway Council welcomes the £4,524,926 it has received through the Household Support Fund from the Government which helps to support the most vulnerable in our community through the cost-of-living crisis during the 2023/2024 financial year.

Medway Council was concerned that the government's Autumn Financial Statement was unable to commit to continuing this support through into the next financial year, at a time when people are still feeling the pressure of years of high inflation and record energy costs.

Medway Council notes that there is still an opportunity for the government to continue to fund this much needed support before it is due to run out, as part of the Spring Budget.

Medway Council agrees to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to confirm the long-term future of this vital fund at the Spring Budget. This will allow local authorities, who are most attuned to their constituents' needs, to make vital interventions which help support families and individuals at this time.”

During discussion it was requested that the letter to be submitted to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, subject to the motion being agreed by the Council, should be signed by the Leaders of the three political groups and by the Chief Executive.

Decision:

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

561 Leader's report

Discussion:

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

- A letter received from Michael Gove MP in relation to progress on the Medway Local Plan and the disappointment regarding this in the context of the ongoing work as well as concern about previous progress.
- Issues experienced in relation to residential waste collections over the Christmas period. An apology was given to Medway residents.
- The status of Chatham Docks and the need for employment land.
- The need for house building targets to be sustainable.
- The importance of backing Medway businesses in the context of the financial climate.

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- The challenges facing the Council in the context of the £17million budget gap, which had been reduced to £12million.
- The development of the Kent and Medway Business Fund and the need to ensure that Medway got a good deal following the forthcoming closure of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Progress on development of the top floor of the Pentagon Shopping Centre and redevelopment of the former Debenhams store.
- The use of Shared Prosperity Funding for projects in the five Medway town centres.
- The ongoing development at Rochester Riverside and the Paddock, Chatham.
- Implementation of Red Routes in Medway.
- Concern about development on the Hoo Peninsula.
- Funding for Christmas lights.
- A suggestion that the model for Medway Norse providing services to the Council be looked at.

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

562 Members' questions

Question A – Councillor Campbell asked 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?”

Councillor Price thanked Councillor Campbell for the question. He said that the Provisional Local Government Settlement published in December confirmed that the Council would receive some additional social care grant, as projected in the Council’s draft budget, and that local authorities could continue to levy a 2% Adult Social Care Precept on the Council Tax. The overall impact of the Settlement, however, was a reduction in the Council’s overall funding by £1.7million compared to the draft budget, worsening the Council’s financial position. Medway Continued to work lobby the government through all available avenues.

The Council was part of F20, a cross party group of councils, representing the twenty most poorly funded authorities in the country, who were lobbying the government to implement a fairer method of distribution of the national allocations of funding for local government.

Following a motion agreed by Full Council in October 2023, the Chief Executive wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking him “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

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to cut jobs and services in the short, medium and long term.” In January 2024 a robust response was submitted to the government’s consultation on the Provisional Settlement.

The Director of People held both the statutory Director of Children’s Services (DCS) role and the statutory Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) role and was therefore a member of the Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS).

The ADCS was the national leadership Association in England for statutory directors of children’s services and other children’s services professionals in leadership roles. The ADCS had taken a robust and proactive role in lobbying government regarding the need for funding for Children’s Services since its inception in 2007. This included a range of lobbying activity, including evidence-based research which exposed the true costs of Children’s Services and highlighted the funding gaps created by current funding arrangements.

The independent review into Children’s Social Care had been commissioned by central government in 2020 and published its findings in 2022. The review set out the case for large scale increases in funding, which the ADCS had been a strong advocate in seeking to lobby the government to deliver on. Critical areas included sufficiency in children’s social workers and placements for children, both of which were significant issues driving up local authority spend, but which required a national response. It was considered that the government’s response to both of these issues in 2023, had been much less robust than the local government sector had lobbied extensively for.

Question B – Councillor Gulvin asked 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?”

Councillor Maple thanked Councillor Gulvin for the question. He said that the Transformation Board had originally been formed to support the 3-year Transformation Programme that ran from 2016 to 2019, which had a one-off capital budget of £6m and achieved revenue savings of £7m. These were recurring savings as they were removed from the Council’s base revenue budget.

After 2019, the Business Change team had transitioned to “business as usual” and continued to support the Council in achieving efficiencies, which were tracked and monitored by individual services and finance colleagues as part of the financial budget monitoring process. In 2023, the decision was made to disband the Transformation Board as it did not have any formal decision-

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making powers and there was no longer a defined Transformation Programme underway.

The administration had demonstrated ongoing commitment to transformation by renaming the “Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee”, which was now called “Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee”. This Committee would now provide oversight of a new Transformation Roadmap.

The scope, project plans, funding requirements, and savings expectations for this Transformation Roadmap were currently being developed to support the budget setting process for 2024/25 and beyond.

Once this roadmap had been developed, it would be presented to Cabinet and then the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with regular progress updates given by the Chief Information Officer. The relevant Portfolio Holder would also attend the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny committee to be held to account as part of the committee process.

Question C – Councillor Mrs Turpin asked 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 Chairperson 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?”

Councillor Edwards thanked Councillor Mrs Turpin for the question. She said that Medway Council distributed money from its Shared Prosperity Fund allocation between all the Town Centre Forums that had applied for UKSPF funding. Rochester Forum did not receive any funding because it had not applied. The Chairperson of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee had simply pointed this out on social media.

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The UKSPF Scheme had been heavily promoted through social media and the Council's Website, with press releases distributed to networks through the communications team and a launch event held at Rochester's Corn Exchange on 18 May 2023, which was attended by over 100 stakeholders, including some of those who sat on Rochester Forum steering group. The UKSPF communications response was followed up with all the town centre forums, who liaised with their respective town centre managers and a number of applications were raised by the town centre managers acting on behalf of the town centre forums. The communication effort was very successful given that 68 applications were received in total, from a wide range of community groups and businesses who put a lot of effort into their applications.

While it had not been possible to support every project that had been suggested, Councillor Edwards thanked all those who had applied and engaged with Council officers who had worked hard to distribute the funds. There had been some difficult decisions involved as there had been so many fantastic applications.

A third year of funding would be available in the current year and the Rochester Forum was encouraged to consider submitting an application and to work with the town centre management team to do so.

Question D – Councillor Perfect asked 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?”

Councillor Edwards thanked Councillor Perfect for the question. She said that Medway Council remained wholly committed to supporting the growth of businesses in Medway and was proud of the fact that there were more than 14,000 businesses in Medway, who were the lifeblood of the local economy, which was now worth £5.9bn. It was hoped that this figure would grow in the future.

The commitment to Medway businesses had been reaffirmed in recent months by signing the Federation of Small Businesses Local Leadership Pledge, supporting the relaunch of the Kent and Medway Business Fund and the Partners for Growth Scheme, amongst other initiatives, and there would continue to be a prioritisation of securing high-value job growth. Councillor Edwards had recently discussed this matter with the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce.

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The North Kent Enterprise Zone had been designated by Government in Autumn 2015 and came into operation on 1 April 2017, with sites in Ebbsfleet Garden City, Maidstone and the Innovation Park Medway.

Since becoming a Cabinet Member, Councillor Edwards had had many discussions with businesses and local universities and colleges to ensure that Innovation Park Medway would realise its full potential in the future. A review was being undertaken of the most sustainable development options for the Medway Enterprise Zone sites going forward.

Question E – Councillor Tejan asked 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?”

Councillor Van Dyke thanked Councillor Tejan for the question. She said that the Medpay review alone would not change the locum position across Medway Council. Other factors such as market drivers would play a leading role in the availability of various professions, an example of which was the challenging national and local social work market.

Evidence from the MedPay Review pilot showed that turnover had greatly reduced in the first three service areas that were implemented on or before 1st July 2023, but it was too early to judge whether this would happen for all phase 1 pilot areas.

It was too soon to tell whether the review had made an overall positive effect on recruitment and retention for many of the phase 1 teams but there had already been some measurable impact noted by some teams. Legal Services, for example, which had undertaken a restructure simultaneously, reported a 17% reduction in locums, with an anticipated further 5%. This targeted approach was estimated to result in savings of £10,000 per week, equating to an estimated £140,000 per quarter.

Data on turnover and recruitment campaigns and the impact on locum reduction was intended to be gathered at six monthly and yearly intervals from the introduction of the new career progression frameworks and would be presented to the Employment Matters Committee. However, it could not be assumed that the Medpay review was the only process required to reduce locum reliance.

Question F – Councillor Wildey asked 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?

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Councillor Murray thanked Councillor Wildey for the question. She said that the question did not make clear whether it was referring to services commissioned by the ICB or the performance of the Board itself and the answer would therefore cover both aspects.

The ICB and the ICP had just completed their first year of operation and were still developing. The Council, working with health partners had agreed a framework of health outcomes. While all elements were still developing, Councillor Murray considered that there had been very good progress on the Integrated Care Strategy and GP access, with the latter having been discussed at the previous week's meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This had included detailed reporting and strong personal contributions from clinical colleagues, which illustrated the huge and continuing challenges faced in primary care. There was more to do and with increasing patient demand, it was regrettable that Government funding restraints were forcing the ICB to make 30% cuts across its services.

In terms of quality assurance, the ICB and ICP would be overseen by the Care Quality Commission. Pilot assessments were taking place in two areas and these would then be rolled out across the country.

Councillor Murray said she was concentrating on ensuring that there was positive engagement at Board and partnership level, using extensive data and research provided by Public Health experts to evidence demand and areas of health improvement needed for Medway.

Question G – Councillor Filmer submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement, Councillor Osborne:

“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?”

As Councillor Filmer was not present, the Mayor announced that he would receive a written response to his question, in accordance with Council rule 9.1.

Question H – Councillor Etheridge asked 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

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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?"

Responding on behalf of Councillor Curry, Councillor Murray thanked Councillor Etheridge for the question. She said that the A289 Four Elms Roundabout to Medway Tunnel project had received an allocation of £11.1million Local Growth Fund via SELEP in 2015. The original A289 LGF business case funding package had included £7million of S106 developer funding in relation to the proposed Lodge Hill development. The developer had withdrawn the application, as approval had been called in by the Secretary of State. In 2018, SELEP had approved an initial £3.5m allocation for a revised scope smaller scale business case for the project. Alongside this, the Medway City Estate Connectivity Improvement Measures LGF project delivered a new free flow slip at the Anthony's Way roundabout.

In February 2020, the SELEP Board required unspent LGF funding to be returned for reallocation to other projects. It was not possible to seek reimbursement as funding had been reallocated across the SELEP. Loss of the HIF funding in July 2023 meant that SELEP rated the A289 project high risk of not delivering the outputs and considered clawback of the £1.8m LGF. At the January 2024 SELEP Accountability Board, it was agreed that Medway Council had provided compelling justification to retain the £1.8m LGF spent.

The Council was actively exploring alternative funding sources and had had positive discussions with central Government and other funding bodies. S106 receipts for permitted development amounting to circa £3m had already been secured and identified as appropriate for supporting the improvements to Four Elms. Future development and S106 funding opportunities would be reinforced via further iterations of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Question I – Councillor Kemp asked 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?”

Responding on behalf of Councillor Curry, Councillor Osborne thanked Councillor Kemp for the question. He said that there were several implementation costs associated with the introduction of Red Routes. This included the design, undertaking engagement and consultation, associated

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advertisement costs, a statutory consultation, CCTV infrastructure, carriageway changes and new signage.

Whilst finance information was not available to the level requested, total implementation cost was approximately £805,000 across all the proposed Red Route sites. This included the purchasing of ANPR Cameras, designs, stakeholder engagement, numerous consultations and statutory traffic management orders, data collection and monitoring of traffic, pedestrian and air quality, infrastructure improvements of signage and markings, and engagement and communications of the implementation of the enforcement programme.

Question J – Councillor Anang asked 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?”

Councillor Osborne thanked Councillor Anang for the question. He said that use of technology to ensure safer and moving streets was a commitment of the Council's administration. He confirmed that ANPR cameras had been installed at the A2/Orchard Street junction to capture vehicles ignoring the right turn ban and tests were being carried out to ensure the cameras linked up with the back-office software. Once testing was complete a 'go live' date would be identified for camera enforcement, which was likely to be in February 2024. There was a communications plan around this, which included letters to residents and business, social media activity and website activities and updates.

This enforcement was part of our Safer, Healthier Streets programme, and better enforcement of these contraventions would make the roads safer and less congested and help to meet the Council's wider transport objectives. ANPR cameras would be installed to catch vehicles not complying with traffic signs and road markings so that the driver could be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). Before issuing a PCN, footage would be reviewed by trained staff. There would be a warning period while drivers became familiar with the enforcement changes. This was an approach that Council teams were regularly trained upon and one that had been undertaken for a number of years.

Road users breaking the rules within the first 6 months of a camera location 'going live' would receive a warning letter for their first contravention, and a PCN for any repeat offences. All income generated by moving traffic fines would be used for highway repairs, public transport infrastructure and environmental projects.

The Medway Highways report published two years previously had highlighted a massive deficit in relation to roads infrastructure, caused by a pothole crisis over the last 14 years and a lack of investment in roads. Residents demanded that roads be looked after and cared for. It was therefore hoped that increased

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revenues from inappropriate parking would be able to fund improved infrastructure across Medway. The police would continue to enforce moving traffic restrictions, including at locations where there was a camera and Medway Council would work closely with other enforcement agencies.

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

Question K – Councillor Barrett submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan:

“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 submitted the following to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray:

“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 submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards:

“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 submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards:

“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 submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan:

“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.

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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 submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple:

"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 submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan:

"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 submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Edwards:

"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 submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Education, Councillor Coombs:

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

Question T – Councillor Lawrence submitted the following to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray:

"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

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

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

Question V – Councillor Williams submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement, Councillor Osborne:

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

Question W – Councillor Fearn submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan:

"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 submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement, Councillor Osborne:

"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 submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

"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 submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Price:

“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 submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

“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 submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Price:

“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?”

563 Temporary Accommodation Options - Addition to the Capital Programme

Background:

The report set out three initiatives - to purchase further units of temporary accommodation, to take on leases for the use of temporary accommodation and the setting up of a lettings department with a view to managing and generating business and ensure certainty around availability of units of accommodation.

The report explained that increased demand and cost for providing homeless households with temporary accommodation had led to budget pressure. There

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was a clear need to address the financial pressures faced by the housing service and implement new initiatives that would relieve/reduce the pressure on the budget.

The report had been considered by the Cabinet on 16 January 2024, the recommendations to the Cabinet were set out in section 6 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, supported by Councillor Campbell, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council agreed to add £41,925,000 to the Capital Programme (funded by prudential borrowing) for the purchasing of approximately 150 further homes.

564 Pentagon Shopping Centre - Addition to the Capital Programme and Virements

Background:

This report requested a capital addition to deliver the Healthy Living Centre (HLC) in the Pentagon Centre, a cost which would be reimbursed by the NHS. The report also sought approval for virements for reporting clarity purposes.

The report advised that HLC designs had progressed and that following further design work and subsequent cost inflation, further funding was required to enable the tender exercise to be undertaken to build out the HLC.

The report had previously been considered by the Cabinet on 16 January 2024. The recommendations to the Cabinet were set out in section 6 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, supported by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

- a) The Council agreed an addition to the Capital Programme, of £2,752,000 for the delivery of the Healthy Living Centre in the Pentagon Centre, noting this figure would be reimbursed by the NHS and is subject to NHS final approvals and S106 contributions.
- b) The Council agreed the following virements from the existing Pentagon Centre future works budget, to deliver the diversification of the first floor of the Pentagon Centre:
 - A. £1,245,900 to deliver the Healthy Living Centre
 - B. £1,811,366 to deliver the Innovation Hub

565 Amendments to the Capital Programme

Background:

This report requested Council approval for amendments to the Capital Programme as recommended by Cabinet on 21 November 2023.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, supported by Councillor Browne, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council agreed the removal of the following budgets relating to schemes that were either complete or no longer required:

- a) Motorway Signage, £60,000 funded from Capital Receipts.
- b) World Heritage Site & GLHP, £31,000 funded from Capital Grants.
- c) Civic Centre Decant, £24,000 funded from Reserves.
- d) Mountbatten House Purchase, £92,000 funded from Borrowing.
- e) MDC Queen Street, £20,000 funded from Borrowing.
- f) MP St Marys Amateur Boxing Club, £40,000 funded from Capital Receipts.

566 Revised Planning Enforcement Policy

Background:

This report set out the proposed revised Planning Enforcement Policy, which the Council was requested to approve.

The report advised that the revised Policy set out updated service standards in accordance with up-to-date, relevant legislation, which in turn would improve the Council's position in dealing with complaints and enforcement investigations.

The report had previously been considered by the Planning Committee on 22 November 2023, the minutes of which were set out at section 6 of the report and by the Cabinet, the decisions of which were set out at section 7.

The proposed revised Planning Enforcement Policy was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. A Diversity Impact Assessment in relation to the Policy was attached at Appendix 2.

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

Decision:

The Council approved the Planning Enforcement Policy 2023.

567 Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

Background:

This report recommended a revised schedule of polling districts and polling places to reflect the new Parliamentary constituency boundaries that would come into place for the next General election and comments made after the Local and Parish elections in May 2023,

The report also updated the Council on the likely allocation of polling stations by the Returning Officer in preparation for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections scheduled for 2 May 2024.

Appendix 1 to the report set out the principles of the review and Appendix 2 set out the Polling District and Places Schedule for Parliamentary and Local Elections.

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

Decisions:

- a) The Council approved the scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, in respect of Parliamentary elections and designated the Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places as the Polling Districts and Polling Places for Local Government elections.
- b) The Council noted the designation of all polling stations recommended by the Returning Officer as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
- c) The Council authorised the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Informal Working Group on Polling Districts and Polling Places to designate a Polling Place where no suitable polling station was available within the original Polling Place.
- d) The Council noted that the Chief Executive would consult with the Informal Working Group on Polling Districts and Polling Places if it was necessary to change any polling stations prior to the elections on 2 May 2024.

568 Independent Remuneration Panel - Report on Members' Allowances Scheme

Background:

This report set out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the Members' Allowances Scheme.

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The report explained that the Panel had undertaken a review of the Members' Allowances Scheme, following the local elections earlier in 2024, including the Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs), subsistence and travel allowances, rates for childcare and dependent adult care, as well as the annual up rating index. The Panel had also reviewed the allowances payable to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor even though they were not formally covered by the Scheme.

The Panel's report was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. A Diversity Impact Assessment in relation to the outcome was attached at Appendix 2 and the existing Members' Allowances Scheme was attached as Appendix 3.

It was requested that the Councillor Conduct Committee undertake a review of claims made under the Member Allowances Scheme at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

Councillor Maple, supported by Councillor Hamilton proposed the recommendations set out in report, subject to the following alteration to the recommendations:

Revised recommendations as follows:

- 1.4 The Panel's recommendations set out in paragraph 10.3 of their report, that the benchmark for the SRA relating to cabinet portfolio holders be increased from 150% to 160% be not implemented with effect from 1 April 2024.
- 1.5 The Panel's recommendations set out in paragraphs 10.4 and 10.5 of their report that the benchmark for the SRA for Chairpersons of Overview & Scrutiny Committees is increased from 100% to 120% be not implemented with effect from 1 April 2024.
- 1.7 The table below showing the benchmarks for each SRA against the basic allowance that take effect from 1 April 2024 until 31 May 2027.

POSITION (and number of Councillors entitled to receive allowance)	BENCHMARK AS % OF BASIC ALLOWANCE	
Basic Allowance (59)	100	
Leader of the Council (1)	300	
Deputy Leader (1)	200	
Cabinet Portfolio Holder (8)	460 150	
Chairperson of	120	

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Planning Committee (1)		
Opposition Group Leader (more than 20% of members) (1)	120	
Chairperson of Health & Wellbeing Board (1)	120	Only payable if held by Councillor who is not Cabinet member
Chairperson, Overview & Scrutiny Committee (4)	120 100	
Chairperson of Audit Committee (1)	70	
Deputy Opposition Group leader (more than 20% of members) (1)	60	
Overview & Scrutiny Spokespersons (group more than 20% of members) (4)	60	
Opposition Group Leader (more than 10% of members) (0)	60	Not currently payable
Vice-Chairperson of Planning Committee (1)	50	
Opposition Group Spokesperson for Planning Committee (>20% of members) (1)	50	
Chairperson of Employment Matters Committee (1)	35	
Vice-Chairperson of Overview & Scrutiny Committee (4)	35	
Ruling Group Whip (1)	15	
Opposition Group Whip (>20% of members) (1)	10	
Independent Person on	10	

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Audit Committee		
Mayor (1)	125	
Deputy Mayor (1)	60	

On being put to the vote, the amendment was won.

Decisions:

The Council approved:

- a) The Panel's recommendations that paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Members' Allowances Scheme remain unchanged.
- b) The Panel's recommendations relating to the formula for the calculation and indexing of the basic allowance, as set out in paragraphs 9.4-9.16 of their report.
- c) The Panel's recommendations set out in paragraph 10.3 of their report, that the benchmark for the SRA relating to Cabinet Portfolio Holders be increased from 150% to 160% be not implemented with effect from 1 April 2024.
- d) The Panel's recommendations set out in paragraphs 10.4 and 10.5 of their report that the benchmark for the SRA for Chairpersons of Overview and Scrutiny Committees be increased from 100% to 120% be not implemented with effect from 1 April 2024.
- e) The Panel's recommendations set out in paragraphs 10.6 and 10.7 of their report that an annual SRA be paid to an Independent Person, if appointed to the Audit Committee, at a benchmark of 10%.
- f) The table below showing the benchmarks for each SRA against the basic allowance that would take effect from 1 April 2024 until 31 May 2027.

POSITION (and number of Councillors entitled to receive allowance)	BENCHMARK AS % OF BASIC ALLOWANCE	
Basic Allowance (59)	100	
Leader of the Council (1)	300	
Deputy Leader (1)	200	
Cabinet Portfolio Holder (8)	150	
Chairperson of Planning Committee (1)	120	

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Opposition Group Leader (more than 20% of members) (1)	120	
Chairperson of Health & Wellbeing Board (1)	120	Only payable if held by Councillor who is not Cabinet member
Chairperson, Overview & Scrutiny Committee (4)	100	
Chairperson of Audit Committee (1)	70	
Deputy Opposition Group leader (more than 20% of members) (1)	60	
Overview & Scrutiny Spokespersons (group more than 20% of members) (4)	60	
Opposition Group Leader (more than 10% of members) (0)	60	Not currently payable
Vice-Chairperson of Planning Committee (1)	50	
Opposition Group Spokesperson for Planning Committee (>20% of members) (1)	50	
Chairperson of Employment Matters Committee (1)	35	
Vice-Chairperson of Overview & Scrutiny Committee (4)	35	
Ruling Group Whip (1)	15	
Opposition Group Whip (>20% of members) (1)	10	
Independent Person on Audit Committee	10	
Mayor (1)	125	
Deputy Mayor (1)	60	

- g) The Panel's recommendation set out in paragraphs 11.1 and 11.2 of their report that the SRA to the Chairperson of Licensing and Safety Committee and members of the Licensing Hearing Panel and Licensing

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1982 Panel Hearings from 1 April 2024 would continue to be index-linked to the median Council staff hourly pay until 31 May 2027.

- h) The Panel's recommendation set out in paragraph 1.5 of their report that paragraph 7.1.2 of the Scheme relating to what the basic allowance was intended to cover would remain unchanged.
- i) The Panel's recommendations set out in paragraphs 17.1 – 17.4 of their report that Councillors on the Fostering Panel would receive an SRA from 1 April 2024 and that the SRA be the equivalent of, and index-linked to, the median Council staff hourly pay until 31 May 2027.
- j) The Panel's recommendations set out in paragraphs 10.6 and 10.7 of their report that should the Council agree to appoint an Independent Person to Audit Committee and wish to pay that person an allowance to reflect the time and effort involved, an annual allowance benchmarked at 10% of the basic allowance against which it should be index-linked to the median Council staff hourly pay until 31 May 2027.
- k) The Panel's recommendation set out in paragraph 12.1 of their report that a Member of the Council was only entitled to receive one Special Responsibility Allowance at any one time.
- l) The Panel's recommendations set out in paragraphs 13.1 – 13.8 in their report relating to dependent carer's allowance such that (a) Councillors may claim the actual expenses incurred including the existing provision to cover up to one hour travel time and that appropriate proof of payment be provided; and (b) that the existing requirement that the allowance would not apply where the carer is a member of the Councillors' own household still applies; and (c) the existing provisions in the Scheme setting out the maximum that could be claimed in any one 24 hour period while attending a conference be removed.
- m) The Panel's recommendations set out in paragraph 14 that (a) paragraphs 7.3 and 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 of the Scheme, the list of duties qualifying for travelling and subsistence allowances in Appendix 1 and the subsistence rates set out in Appendix 2 remain unchanged and be indexed against those payable to Council staff for a maximum of four years to 31 May 2027; and (b) Appendix 3 setting out the rates per mile be amended to indicate that the rate for use of all models of electric cars would be £45p; and (c) the mileage rates be indexed against the HMRC Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) rate until 31 May 2027.
- n) The Panel's recommendation set out in paragraph 15 of their report that paragraphs 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the Members' Allowances Scheme relating to Conference expenses, duties for which allowances could and could not be claimed and how to claim would remain unchanged.
- o) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Legal and Governance to amend the Members' Allowances Scheme as it appeared

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in the Constitution, in accordance with the decisions of this meeting of Full Council.

569 Arrangements for 2024/2025 Municipal Year - Selection of Mayor and Deputy Mayor and Schedule of Meetings

Background:

This report set out the results of the calculations under Council Rule 20 to select the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

The report also set out the provisional programme of meetings for the 2024/25 municipal year.

Councillor Myton, supported by Councillor Hamilton, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

- a) The Council noted the entitlement of the Labour and Co-operative Group to nominate a Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 2024/2025 municipal year and that the entitlement would be accepted or declined at the Council meeting on 29 February 2024.
- b) The Council agreed a provisional programme of Council and Committee meetings for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, for recommendation to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 15 May 2024.

570 Audit Committee - Review of Terms of Reference including the Appointment of an Independent Member

Background:

This report sought approval to amend the Audit Committee's terms of reference including the appointment of an Independent Member, as recommended by the Audit Committee.

Councillor Browne, supported by Councillor Bowen proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council approved the revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, including the provision for an Independent Member to be appointed by the Audit Committee on a fully non-voting basis and on a term not exceeding 4 years (renewable once).

571 Appointments to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Background:

This report sought approval to amend the Audit Committee's terms of reference including the appointment of an Independent Member, as recommended by the Audit Committee.

Councillor Browne, supported by Councillor Bowen proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council approved the revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, including the provision for an Independent Member to be appointed by the Audit Committee on a fully non-voting basis and on a term not exceeding 4 years (renewable once).

572 Report on Overview and Scrutiny Activity

Background:

This report provided a summary of the work of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees since the last report to Council on 19 October 2023.

Councillor Tejan, supported by Councillor Howcroft-Scott proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

573 Treasury Management Strategy Mid-Year Review Report 2023/24

Background:

This report provided an overview of treasury management activity since 1 April 2023 and presented a review of the Treasury Strategy approved by Council on 23 February 2023.

The report had previously been considered by the Audit Committee on 29 November 2023, the minutes of which were set out at section 9 of the report and by the Cabinet on 19 December 2023, the decisions of which were set out at section 10 of the report.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, supported by Councillor Browne, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

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Decision:

The Council noted the report, including the comments of the Audit Committee and Cabinet decision set out at sections 9 and 10 of the report respectively.

Mayor

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