

## Members' Questions

### **Question A – Councillor Crozer will ask the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:**

Could the Portfolio Holder update us on any progress with the UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site status bid, for East Coast Wetlands, and a bid for Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) status - both benefiting the Hoo Peninsula?

### **Question B – Councillor Mandaracas will ask the Portfolio Holder for Education, Councillor Coombs, the following:**

Given the national struggles post-pandemic, what progress has the Council's education team had on increasing attendance rates in the last year?

### **Question C – Councillor Animashaun will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:**

How many Medway employees who are also resident in Medway will be receiving a 5% cost-of-living pay increase in their wages next week, thanks to the budget passed by the Labour and Co-operative Group in February?

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

The Leader of the Council talks a good game on the administration's so called "sixth pledge" of reducing locums. Following the response given to the Member question at the October 2023 Council meeting, what further progress is being made in this area?

### **Question E – Councillor Hackwell will ask the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:**

Since March 11th, the new Safer Streets Scheme has been introduced in one of the primary schools in my ward. As expected, this has made the situation even worse than it was before, the parents are now coming earlier parking in adjacent roads which are making these adjacent roads, even more congested and dangerous than the road that is now closed to non-residential traffic.

Although some residents, particularly in the road that has now been closed to traffic at school times are supportive of the scheme, the ones who live in adjacent roads are not.

Will the Portfolio Holder please urgently review the effectiveness of the Safer Street Scheme and if deemed necessary, remove it, to make the streets safer for our young people attending this school, before there is a serious accident?"

### **Question F – Councillor Wildey will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Property, Councillor Khan, the following:**

How much did Labour borrow to fund the scheme to buy housing to home the homeless, was it £50 million?

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

This current administration has been claiming to be the champions in fighting climate change with Simon Curry as the “most passionate about the environment”.

I would like to ask the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, how the Council is looking to working with relevant private individuals, voluntary organisations, and civic actors in the area of climate change to produce an updated local air management action plan which will be readily available to members of the community.

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

Please can the Portfolio Holder confirm the timelines around the Local Plan, and specifically when it will be submitted for examination?

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

Medway Labour made it a clear plank of the local election campaign to deal with the shortage of GPs serving the people of Medway. Councillor Maple stated in his first full Council that he was on top of the issue.

Following the response given to the Member question at the October 2023 meeting, can Councillor Murray provide a further update to the Council as to the current number of GPs now operating in Medway and the increase or decrease since May 2023 providing the target for recruitment as the context?

**Question J – Councillor Perfect will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services, Councillor Price, the following:**

Medway’s recent SEND inspection demonstrates the progress made under the previous Portfolio Holder and officers on SEND services, particularly in relation to positive co-production within the service.

Please can the Portfolio Holder update on what he will do to support further improvements as laid out in the Ofsted report from 2nd April?

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

In light of the Labour and Co-Operatives group’s high-profile campaign over many years in support of the docks, supported by Sir Keir Starmer. The Association of Chatham Docks, which includes commercial entities, have shared their proposals for the future of the Docks with two thousand high value jobs protected.

Could the Portfolio Holder update the Chamber on the current number of people employed in a “high skilled job” at Chatham Docks as well as the number of high skilled job vacancies there currently are at Chatham Docks?

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

What steps will the Council take to improve the consistency of outcomes for children with SEND across Medway, given the recent OFSTED Inspection found Medway's Local Area Partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities?

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

Further to the response given at the January 2024 Full Council meeting, which did not set out a start date, is the Portfolio Holder now able to advise when we will see the promised wardens out on the streets of Medway?

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

There is not a road across the length and breadth of Medway that can be identified as being free of potholes. From Halling to Grain, Walderslade to Cliffe and Strood through to Rainham and the surrounding villages and communities, it is recognised there is much to be done.

With over half a million pounds allocated to Medway by Central Government to assist with dealing with this issue, would Councillor Curry please advise how and where this money has been spent?

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

Seeing as you stated in a recent scrutiny meeting that you were having meetings with officers and other Portfolio Holders in relation to the Local Plan, can you elucidate on any of your proposals that have received support?

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

Could Councillor Curry confirm what engagement the administration has had with the Lordswood and Walderslade litter picking group after the Full Council meeting where it was confirmed, via an amended motion, that the Administration will engage with them along with ward Councillors Lammas and Hyne?

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

Councillors in Rainham have had feedback from residents on the proposed cycle lane for Maidstone Road and most of it has been negative. Given Councillor Curry's track record of ignoring feedback he does not agree with, can he advise Council how he intends to keep cyclists and other road users safe in his new cycle lane given the

large number of parked cars and heavy traffic using Maidstone Road and the narrowing of the road that would occur from the introduction of the cycle lane?

In giving his answer, I would expect Councillor Curry to provide evidence that cyclists would use the cycle lane in sufficient numbers that makes the costs worthwhile.

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

Can the Portfolio Holder please update the Council on what businesses and inward investment she has secured for Medway since her appointment in May 2023?

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

Can the Portfolio Holder please confirm how regularly she meets with primary and secondary Headteachers?

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

The travellers located at the former Wigmore Coach Park remain in situ several months after the end of the temporary licence granted in July.

Can Councillor Khan please update the Council with the action taken since last full Council and legal costs incurred in attempting to seek possession of the land?

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

What initiatives are the Council bringing forward to reduce litter in our towns?

**Question V – Councillor Joy will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:**

How are things progressing in relation to the discussions around the next steps in relation to the exceptional financial support?

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

In the Administration's budget, it was stated that you are scrapping the free swimming for the over 60s and under 16s. This was despite strong and proven evidence that this could have been protected.

It was also announced that parking charges across Medway would increase as of 8 April by up to 85%.

I have had constituents communicate to me that they are very concerned about the increase in charges as they feel it may deter people from using the local shops thus damaging the local family run businesses and the larger national companies.

It is this deterrent that is a current concern. Constituents are already alive to the fact that your administration has made multiple U-turns. The Cozenton Park Sports Centre (which from many I have spoken to in the Rainham North ward consider the re-naming to be a waste of money and will be called Splashes (and the administration is going to spend unnecessary costs amending all the street signs)), constituents are worried that, albeit it has been stated that the parking at the venue will remain free as it has always been.

They fear that in line with your apparent anti-car policies you will do a U-turn and put them in.

They fear that by doing so you discourage residents from attending. This fear along with the scrapping of the free swimming will not be well received by constituents.

Can the Portfolio Holder categorically confirm to my constituents that for the remainder of your time in administration you will not place any parking charges at the Cozenton Park Sports Centre (Splashes) given that they have never been there previously?

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

Further to the response given at the October 2023 Council meeting which was before the statutory consultation was undertaken, could the Portfolio Holder confirm if any further action has been taken on listening to the results of the public consultation on the Rainham Red Route where the overwhelming number of respondents were against such a proposal, or do the administration still intend to railroad this plan through despite genuine concerns of the public and businesses?

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

Further to the road closure on Frindsbury Hill, one week later there was another road closure on Medway City Estate due to the need for resurfacing. This could have been predicted and the risk eliminated by timely resurfacing ahead of the major and long-term road closure on Frindsbury Hill. Instead, traffic issues were inevitably exacerbated as there were then two road closures in close proximity. Therefore, can the Portfolio Holder ensure that the Council, before any planned major road closures of long duration, diversion routes are surveyed and roads so that any resurfacing can be prioritised before the road closure takes place?

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

What is the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services doing following the announcement that British Youth Council will be closing after 75 years, due to financial challenges?

**Question AA – Councillor Jones will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:**

Building on the points raised at the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 April 2024, regarding spending reserves to balance

the budget, and the point that the budget which needs to be balanced this year is that of the outgoing administration, and whose Leader has alluded in media interviews, to cutting huge amounts from Directorates on the day of Council budget setting meetings, leaving officers with the challenge of closing this gap over the financial year, there being no plan in place as to how to make these savings.

Are you confident that the collaborative approach you have taken in setting the budget with the corporate management team, from the bottom up, will lead to a better outturn position?