

Members' Questions

Question A – Councillor Hamilton will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson, the following:

Given the roll out of the new measures to enforce Saturday traffic restrictions on Rochester High Street, will he consider extending the restrictions to Sundays as well?

Despite Sundays being just as busy along the High Street for pedestrians with as many people walking in the road, not having standardised restrictions across the weekend seems like an obvious omission which the new Labour administration should address.

Question B – Councillor Perfect will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

Under the last Government, then Conservative led Medway Council secured a record £14.4m funding through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Levelling Up Fund. This will deliver/has delivered The Docking Station, the restoration of the Brook Theatre, and the Fitted Rigging House (South).

Please can the Leader of the Council update the Council on how he intends to lobby and work with the new government to secure future capital funding for our towns and villages?

Question C – Councillor Hackwell will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson, the following:

The Leader of the Council has stated in this chamber that if he had more money, then he would fill more potholes, and indeed along with Councillor Curry, wrote to Guy Opperman, then Minister for Roads and Local Transport, to request more funds.

Despite having a highways budget of £13.6m last year, this budget was underspent by nearly £2m, why wasn't this money spent repairing the dreadful state of the roads in Medway?

Question D – Councillor Tejan will ask the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

In April 2019, Medway Council declared a climate emergency and committed to several goals:

- Reduce its carbon footprint.
- Provide the local community with a clean, green future.
- Make Medway a place where people want to work and live, ensuring a sustainable future.

Under the last conservative administration, the Council set out 11 priority areas and started to deliver on those priorities including the installation of LED lighting across the borough and the planting of trees to name a few.

What specific actions has the portfolio holder taken since May 2023 to monitor CO2 emissions, including any specific monitoring methods of emissions, energy usage, and progress towards Medway's net-zero carbon goal?

Question E – Councillor Spring will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson, the following:

'You asked me once,' said O'Brien, 'what was in Room 101. I told you that you knew the answer already. Everyone knows it. The thing that is in Room 101 is the worst thing in the world'.

This reminds me of your administration. It reminds me that your administration is suffocating the life out of the town centre of Rainham. You seem completely blind to the destruction that you and your administration has created. You cannot blame the past; you created the present mess and the mire that will no doubt flow in the future with your budget and it is seriously flawed - as you were told. Increasing the parking charges by 85% and prohibiting the free parking Monday charges. It is these that my constituents and business owners have told me is a primary reason that footfall has seriously reduced in the town centre. You are destroying this once vibrant town centre.

Please can the Portfolio Holder update me on the engagement he has had with the business community around parking charges, ensuring charges don't further cripple businesses in the 2025/26 budget?

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

As members of the Health and Wellbeing Board, I'm sure the Deputy Leader is as disappointed as I am that the Medway Women's Health Hub was not selected by the Integrated Care Board for funding. Once again, Medway appears to be at the bottom of regional healthcare priorities. It must be made clear to the Integrated Care Board that this Council expects to see women front and centre in the creation and design of services that are at the end of the day for them.

Will the Deputy Leader undertake an investigation as to why the Medway Women's Health Hub did not reach the threshold for funding?

Question G – Councillor Joy, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Price, the following:

Ensuring our young people have timely access to Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments is vital.

Please can the Portfolio Holder update on progress around improving the assessment backlog?

Question H – Councillor Gilbourne will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councilor Paterson, the following:

The Portfolio Holder may be aware of the Lazybones Boot Fair that operates on the edge of Hempstead Village 14 weeks a year. Last year, the operation of the boot fair caused significant disruption to traffic at the junction of Hempstead Road, Lidsing

Road and Capstone Road with some residents rightly complaining that they could not get off their drives, whilst through traffic was severely delayed.

Cllr Lawrence and I, as Members for Hempstead & Wigmore, made representation to officers requesting some action to manage the traffic, to ensure that those attending the boot fair could enjoy the day and residents were caused as little disruption as possible.

Can the Portfolio Holder please attend a future boot fair with me to better understand the traffic issues faced by residents in Hempstead?

Question I – Councillor Fearn will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson, the following:

The Portfolio Holder will be aware that enforcement action taken by the Council has fallen to very low levels. Under this Labour and Co-operative administration comparing 2021/2022 to 2023/2024 prosecutions and sanctions are down 45%, district enforcement is down 26%.

Can the Portfolio Holder explain why enforcement action has decreased since he became the Portfolio Holder when the complaints about littering/fly tipping etc remain a large part of Councillors' inboxes, reaffirming that enforcement is an essential tool for dealing with maintaining the quality of life in Medway.

Question J – Councillor Anang will ask the Portfolio Holder for Education, Councillor Coombs, the following:

Education is the closest thing to a silver bullet in ensuring that all of Medway's children and young people can secure well paid and secure jobs, allowing them to play a productive role in the economy. The Portfolio Holder will be aware of the wide differences in Progress 8 scores across Medway's secondary schools.

Can the Portfolio Holder please inform the Council if she has challenged poor performing schools and in doing so what commitment has she been able to secure for future improvements?

Question K – Councillor Cook will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson, the following:

I was excited to see measures in the Labour Manifesto which would help tackle antisocial behaviour issues like that experienced by people in my ward. How will the Portfolio Holder work with Medway's Labour MPs and the new government to tackle this issue?

Question L – Councillor Field will ask the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

Does the Portfolio Holder believe that there is a great advantage for local authorities like Medway to use the powers that are proposed by the incoming Labour Government, which is supported by all 3 Medway MPs, to take back control over bus services rather than leave the planning, provision and operation of bus services to the private sector without local accountability?

Question M – Councillor Mandaracas will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services, Councillor Price, the following:

Given we now have a Labour government and 3 Labour MPs across Medway, how would you work with those MPs and government to ensure ‘children matter in Medway’?

Question N – Councillor Spalding will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

In 2021 the ruling Conservative Cabinet and its leadership supported bringing a draft local plan to full Council.

Member after member gushed enthusiasm for this long awaited document.

A document which the Conservative group should be reminded included provisions leading to the closure of Chatham Docks and the loss of hundreds of jobs.

A document which had reports missing and was littered with errors such as paragraph 1.1.10 which stated Medway’s population had grown to two hundred and eighty thousand in 2020 and would reach two hundred and eighty eight million in 2037.

Unsurprisingly said proposed plan was pulled at the last minute.

Can the Leader of the Council assure us that when the current local plan proposals are brought to Council it will not contain any of the above?

Question O – Councillor Pearce will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

The One Medway Council Plan 2040 explains our local population is expected to grow by 3.9% between 2021 and 2040. This figure suggests we only need to build around 8,500 new houses to meet this growth.

Does the Leader of the Council agree with the new Government’s centrally imposed housing target of around 30,000 new houses by 2041?

Question P – Councillor Jones will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson the following:

Good to see the turnout for Chatham Carnival on 6 July, both enjoyable to those attending and providing a focus for the spatial improvements being made to our City Centre.

Whilst visiting Chatham High Street, businesses have expressed concerns to me about increased parking charges and what effect this might be having, on trade.

Please can the Portfolio Holder set out the usage levels for Chatham Centre Council car parks, March, April, May 2024 against comparable months in 2023?