

Medway Council
Meeting of Medway Council
Thursday, 18 July 2024
7.00pm to 11.48pm

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 Nestorov)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hamandishe) Councillors Anang, Animashaun, Barrett, Bowen, Brake, Campbell, Clarke, Cook, Coombs, Crozer, Curry, Doe, Etheridge, Fearn, Field, Filmer, Gilbourne, Gulvin, Gurung, Hackwell, Hamilton, Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard, Hyne, Jackson, Jones, Joy, Kemp, Khan, Lammas, Lawrence, Mahil, Mandaracas, Maple, Murray, Myton, Osborne, Paterson, Peake, Pearce, Perfect, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Price, Sands, Shokar, Spalding, Spring, Stamp, Tejan, Van Dyke, Wildey and Williams

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

156 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Browne, Edwards, McDonald and Mrs Turpin.

157 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

Councillor Crozer declared an interest in Motion 8D as he is the Chairman of AMAT UK. Councillor Crozer left the meeting during discussion and determination of the item.

Other interests

There were none.

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158 Record of meeting

The record of the meetings held on 18 April and 15 May 2024 were approved and signed by Worshipful the Mayor as correct, subject to an amendment being made to the minutes of the 15 May meeting to replace an erroneous reference to Councillor Gulvin to read Councillor Perfect (as set out page on 50 of the 18 July 2024 Council agenda).

159 Mayor's announcements

The Worshipful the Mayor of Medway announced that he would be holding a charity tour of Rochester in September, further details would be available from his office.

The Mayor, supported by Members of the Council, moved a suspension of Council Rules. This was to facilitate continuation of the changes set out below to how the meeting would be run. These changes had initially been trialled at the January Council meeting.

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 this evening 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. In summary, the agenda item on motions would be taken after public questions. Any information reports or reports for noting would be 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 – 2

Independent Group – 1

Independent Members – 3

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

160 Leader's announcements

There were none.

161 Petitions

Public:

There were none.

Member:

There were none.

162 Public questions

Question A – Ralph Allison, of Twydall, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

“Will the Council fund the installation of low level barriers to prevent the incursion of vehicles onto the play park area on Sturry Way, Twydall?”

Councillor Curry said he recognised that greenspaces in Medway were subject to unauthorised vehicular access. Medway had over 140 greenspaces, all of which were vulnerable to unauthorised use with physical damage occasionally being used to gain access.

Although there were no known reasonable ways or materials to absolutely prevent misuse of any greenspace, physical obstructions could deter individual and groups from particular sites.

Councillor Curry had asked Medway Norse colleagues to arrange a site inspection with Council Officers to provide advice on what additional steps could be taken to make the site more secure. This would be reviewed and a decision made on the available resources and priority of the remedial work at the site.

No supplementary question was asked as Ralph Allison was not present.

Question B – Sabine Strickland, submitted the following to the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray:

“I’m working as a support worker and do sleep ins too, our minimum wages have been increased through the government but social services in Medway have still not given an answer about the increase for the sleep-in rates, so the question is: Why not!?”

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Councillor Murray said how much she valued the work of everyone involved in the care sector in Medway and that she had made this clear when she had spoken at the Parliamentary launch of the Fair to Care report on pay.

The care sector was experiencing high demand and dealing with increasingly complex clients and Councillor Murray said that little had been done by the previous Government to address the resulting funding crisis, despite the Council and others having made the situation clear to government. The new Government had promised to carry out a review of the sector and Councillor Murray would be working with the three local MPs to ensure that all available information and research was used as part of that work.

The Council issued a fee uplift to care providers each year and it was the responsibility of the care provider to determine rates of pay and pay increases for their staff in line with national legislation.

[Information about working nights, including sleep in shifts](#) could be found on the gov.uk website.

[Help and advice for employees on rights and obligations at work](#), including pay and the National Living Wage, could be provided by ACAS and through trade unions.

No supplementary question was asked as Sabine Strickland was not present.

Question C – Les White, of Wainscott, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson:

“The speed camera on Hollywood Lane has not been working at all for the last three years for, I have been led to believe, cost saving reasons. The road there is fast and schoolchildren with special needs cross the road in wheelchairs.

I am a person with slow walking and at times trying to get across the road is so dangerous. If the camera is working it should help the safety on our roads, therefore I ask that you return the speed camera to working condition.”

Councillor Paterson said that he shared concerns about those in the community, particularly those who were less able bodied.

Safety cameras had an important deterrent and enforcement role to play. It was not the case that the safety camera on Hollywood Lane had been deactivated. Medway Council was responsible for the yellow roadside camera housings, while Kent Police operated the safety cameras inside. For operational reasons, Kent Police may move their cameras around in different locations. All safety camera locations on Medway's roads were live and any road users exceeding the speed limit risked being detected and issued with a notice by the Police.

No supplementary question was asked as Les White was not present.

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Question D – Ben Pranczke, of Gillingham, submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple:

“I’m sure like me the Leader of the Council is frustrated that both international stations in Kent remain unused for continental travel.

Could Councillor Maple please update on what the latest status is and how this being reopened would benefit Medway?”

Councillor Maple said that he had been engaging with a colleague at Ashford Borough Council who had been leading cross party work on the issue.

The reinstatement of Eurostar services would create a significant economic opportunity for Medway, Kent and the wider region. The cessation of services in 2020 had resulted in the combined loss of 30,000 jobs, or the value of 750 million pounds. The re-introduction of these services could unlock substantial employment prospects and economic growth. Opting for international rail travel over short haul air journeys resulted in approximately 85% less environmental impact per passenger, similar comparisons for car travel gave a 90-95% reduction for international rail travel, depending on how many people were in the car.

In both economic and environmental terms, the reopening of Ashford and Ebbsfleet would have a huge impact. Councillor Maple highlighted the Bring Back Euro Trains campaign. It had gathered over 57,000 signatures. A upcoming meeting of Kent Leaders would look at transport issues and the EU entry/exit system which would have significant potential impacts on Kent.

No supplementary question was asked as Ben Pranczke was not present.

Question E – Charlotte Williamson, of Rainham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Van Dyke, the following:

“The land outside and adjacent to my home in Kenilworth Gardens is being sold (ME8 9DU) by Deadwood Enterprise Limited at auction on 31st July 2024. I would like to ask the Council if they could purchase this land to protect the green space from any potential future development?”

The space is used regularly by the community and is a vital habitat for local wildlife and can be considered a community asset. It can be used freely by all in the local area.

Medway Norse already maintain the area with tree maintenance, grass cutting and emptying the dog waste. The auction is by Auction House London and the starting bid is £1,000.”

Councillor Van Dyke said that the online auctioneer, Auction House London, was selling several plots in Medway. This parcel of land was owned by a third party and although it was identified as publicly maintainable grass on the Council’s maps, it appeared on the tree and grass maintenance plans

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undertaken by Medway Norse. This was not unusual due to the many parcels of land maintained in Medway.

Due to financial constraints, the Council was not in the position to acquire this land but officers were exploring all options to maintain the existing trees. The auctioneers would be contacted to remind them of the requirement to inform potential purchasers of any protective action that the Council had invoked before the auction commenced.

Some residents believed that they may have been gifted part of the land due to it being referenced in the title documents of their properties and in this case they should seek legal advice if they believed that the land should not be sold.

Councillor Van Dyke said that residents were encouraged to act as a community to purchase the land.

Charlotte Williamson asked the following supplementary question:

“Is it possible if local residents can contribute money to the Council to purchase this land on behalf of residents, with a legal agreement that it can be a protected green space for the community?”

Councillor Van Dyke said that the matter could be looked into.

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

“During a Council meeting on the 21st April 2022, the Medway Labour Group proposed a motion calling on Medway Council to halt any future investment in fossil fuel companies in the Council’s Local Government Pension Fund. It also called on the Council to begin the process of divesting its current portfolio of any fossil fuel companies.

This motion was vital if we are going to defeat the threat of climate change and had cross-party support from the Medway Lib Dems and Medway Green Party. Sadly it was defeated by the Conservatives, who made some bizarre statements about bringing fracking back and chaos if we ever gave up petrol.

Now that Medway Labour have been in charge of the Council for over a year, how much of Medway Council’s pension fund has been divested of fossil fuel companies?”

Councillor Curry said that Medway’s pensions were part of the Kent Pension Fund which administered by Kent County Council. The Fund had confirmed that the Superannuation Fund Committee appointed external investment managers tasked with getting the best return for the 301 employers and 152,000 individual members of the fund. The Committee had a clear environmental, social and governance policy but the Fund advised that it would be breaching its responsibilities if it placed ethical restrictions on the external investment

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managers. Fossil fuel company shares represented a small proportion of the overall investments. In June 2024, the Kent Pension Fund updated its Responsible Investment Strategy which stated the following relating to Climate Risk which detailed three specific actions:

1. Decarbonisation: the Fund had set a clear ambition to reach net zero portfolio emissions by 2050 and to reduce emissions emanating from its equity allocation by 43% by 2030 and 69% by 2040, which was consistent with the latest (2022) decarbonisation targets required by the latest science to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2100.
2. Transition alignment: The Fund's approach was grounded in the recognition that a reduction in the Fund's portfolio emissions must result from real-world decarbonisation. Investors had an important role to play in driving the transition to a low carbon economy and the Fund would identify opportunities to invest in companies and industries that were aligned with the transition.
3. Climate solutions: the transition to a low carbon economy also presented opportunities for investors, and the Fund sought to explore the potential to enhance portfolio level risk-adjusted returns through climate solutions. The Fund had set an ambition to invest 15% of its portfolio in sustainable assets by 2030, including climate solutions.

In the latest review and update of the Medway Council Climate Change Action Plan, a new action had been added to "Explore joint working with Kent Human Resources network to influence investment of funds in pension scheme". This topic would be an agenda item for discussion at the next meeting of that group.

Stuart Bourne asked the following supplementary question:

"Since Labour have taken over Medway Council, how much additional investment into fossil fuel companies has the Council done?"

Councillor Curry responded that the Council did not have a great deal of investments and that they were at a very low level. He did not have the information to hand but would ensure that it was made available.

163 Motions

Motion A – proposed by Councillor Lawrence and supported by Councillor Tejan:

"The Council notes that:

The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr Maple and Cllr Murray, provided unequivocal support for the Chatham Docks outside this very chamber when the Labour and Co-Operative Group formed the Opposition. This included throughout the last local plan regulation 18 and 19 process under the previous administration.

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The Labour and Co-Operative Group are now refusing to rule out Chatham Docks being earmarked for development within the local plan.

Labour and Co-Operative councillors voted in favour of a planning application to redevelop Basin 3 of the Chatham Docks, which subject to the Secretary of State's call in, has sealed the fate of approximately 150 jobs and an unknown number in the associated supply chain for a promise of industrial units that may never be built.

The community of St Mary's Island, and people across Medway, feel a sense of betrayal at the disregard of previous promises made by the Labour and Co-Operative Group, and woeful responses claiming the Leader of the Council "arranged a meeting" are not enough.

When this Labour administration came to power in May 2023 one of the promises it made to residents was the creation of 1,000 new jobs. In the administration's first year of power, it has created zero new jobs.

During the period of the last Conservative administration 2,500 jobs were created across Medway, despite the challenges of the COVID pandemic and a very tight financial position.

The Council calls on the Leader, Portfolio Holder for Social and Economic Regeneration and Inward Investment, and the wider Cabinet to:

1. Apologise for the Labour and Co-Operative Group's betrayal of the support for businesses and workers in the Chatham Docks.
2. Urgently set out its detailed strategy for Medway's economic development and job creation. This must detail the action it intends to take to replace any jobs lost because of Basin 3 before those losses can be replaced with new employment.
3. Acknowledge that any loss of businesses based in Chatham Docks will result in reducing Medway's GDP and impact families and other businesses.
4. Through the Local Plan process, properly engage with conversations over the Chatham Docks, with stakeholders, including employees, unions, and community representatives, to gather insights and build consensus."

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

For: Councillors Anang, Barrett, Brake, Clarke, Doe, Etheridge, Fearn, Filmer, Gilbourne, Gulvin, Hackwell, Hyne, Joy, Kemp, Lammas, Lawrence, Pearce, Perfect, Spring, Tejan, Wildey and Williams (22)

Against: Councillors Animashaun, Bowen, Campbell, Cook, Coombs, Curry, Field, Gurung, Hamandishe, Hamilton, Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard, Jackson,

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Jones, Khan, Mahil, Mandaracas, Maple, Murray, Myton, Nestorov, Osborne, Paterson, Peake, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Price, Stamp and Van Dyke.
(29)

Abstain: Councillors Crozer, Sands and Spalding. (3)

Note: In addition to the Members named under apologies for absence, Councillor Shokar was not present when the recorded vote was taken.

The amendment was lost.

Decision:

Upon being put to the vote the motion was lost.

Motion B – proposed by Councillor Sands and supported by Councillor Murray:

“In the 1995 Pensions Act, the Government increased State Pension age for women from 60 to 65, with a further increase to 66 in the 2011 Pensions Act.

- The change was not properly communicated to 3.8m women born in the 1950s until 2012, giving some only one year’s notice of a six-year increase in their anticipated retirement age. Approximately 5000 of the affected women are in our own authority area.
- The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) has found the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to have committed maladministration through its failure to adequately communicate State Pension age increases to women born in the 1950s.
- The PHSO has concluded the DWP should apologise to women affected and pay compensation as a result.
- The DWP has refused to accept the findings of the PHSO, which has now led the independent watchdog to lay its findings before Parliament, encouraging MPs to intervene to deliver a remedy to affected women.
- The All-Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality for Women has concluded that “the impact of DWP maladministration on 1950s-born women has been as devastating as it is widespread. The APPG believes that the case for category 6 injustice (£10,000) is overwhelming and clear. Women have had their emotional, physical, and mental circumstances totally obliterated by a lack of reasonable notice.
- As of April 2024, more than 275,000 women have died waiting for justice since the campaign began in 2015.

This Council believes this injustice has not only had a profound effect on the individuals involved but on the wider community in Medway and on local government, not least because:

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- Women who would have looked after older relatives or partners are unable to afford to do so, with a knock-on impact on local social care.
- Women who would have retired and engaged in caring responsibilities for grandchildren are having to continue working, increasing the childcare burden on the state locally.
- Women who have been left in poverty are struggling to meet their housing costs, with a knock-on impact on local housing stock.
- There is a broader impact on voluntary services of all kinds locally, which are missing out on able, active volunteers who would otherwise have been able to retire from full-time work as planned.
- Our local economy is negatively affected by the reduced spending power and disposable income the uncommunicated State Pension Age changes has brought about among women born in the 1950s.

This Council supports:

- A swift resolution to this ongoing injustice before more and more women die waiting for compensation.
- The conclusion of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality that women born in the 1950s have suffered a gross injustice, affecting their emotional, physical, and mental circumstances in addition to causing financial hardship.
- The WASPI campaign and All-Party Parliamentary Group's calls for an immediate one-off compensation payment at category 6 injustice on the PHSO's financial remedy scale (£10,000) to those affected.
- The PHSO's recommendation for the DWP to issue a formal apology to those affected and provide an opportunity for MPs to urgently debate the APPG's recommendations, and any others, in Parliament.

This Council asks:

The Leader of the Council to write to local Members of Parliament; the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions; and Leader of the House of Commons; to outline the effects of the injustice to 1950s born women on the community and to seek:

- Urgent proposals from the DWP, outlining how they will deliver compensation for affected women.
- For all MPs to be given an opportunity to debate and vote on these proposals."

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

"In the 1995 Pensions Act, the Government increased State Pension age for women from 60 to 65, with a further increase to 66 in the 2011 Pensions Act.

- The change was not properly communicated to 3.8m women born in the 1950s until 2012, giving some only one year's notice of a six-year increase in their anticipated retirement age. Approximately 5000 of the affected women are in our own authority area.
- The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) has found the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to have committed maladministration through its failure to adequately communicate State Pension age increases to women born in the 1950s.
- The PHSO has concluded the DWP should apologise to women affected and pay compensation as a result.
- The DWP has refused to accept the findings of the PHSO, which has now led the independent watchdog to lay its findings before Parliament, encouraging MPs to intervene to deliver a remedy to affected women.
- The All-Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality for Women has concluded that "the impact of DWP maladministration on 1950s-born women has been as devastating as it is widespread. The APPG believes that the case for category 6 injustice (£10,000) is overwhelming and clear. Women have had their emotional, physical, and mental circumstances totally obliterated by a lack of reasonable notice.
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- Women who have been left in poverty are struggling to meet their housing costs, with a knock-on impact on local housing stock.

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- There is a broader impact on voluntary services of all kinds locally, which are missing out on able, active volunteers who would otherwise have been able to retire from full-time work as planned.
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- ~~The WASPI campaign and All-Party Parliamentary Group's calls for an immediate one-off compensation payment at category 6 injustice on the PHSO's financial remedy scale (£10,000) to those affected~~ Government reflecting on the recommendations of the PHSO regarding compensation.
- The PHSO's recommendation for the DWP to issue a formal apology to those affected and provide an opportunity for MPs to urgently debate the APPG's recommendations, and any others, in Parliament.

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Altered motion to read as follows:

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- The change was not properly communicated to 3.8m women born in the 1950s until 2012, giving some only one year's notice of a six-year increase in their anticipated retirement age. Approximately 5000 of the affected women are in our own authority area.

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- The PHSO has concluded the DWP should apologise to women affected and pay compensation as a result.
- The DWP has refused to accept the findings of the PHSO, which has now led the independent watchdog to lay its findings before Parliament, encouraging MPs to intervene to deliver a remedy to affected women.
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- The conclusion of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality that women born in the 1950s have suffered a gross injustice, affecting their emotional, physical, and mental circumstances in addition to causing financial hardship.
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- For all MPs to be given an opportunity to debate and vote on these proposals.”

Note: A Member expressed disappointment that only one female Member had been able to speak in relation to this issue.

Decision:

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

In the 1995 Pensions Act, the Government increased State Pension age for women from 60 to 65, with a further increase to 66 in the 2011 Pensions Act.

- The change was not properly communicated to 3.8m women born in the 1950s until 2012, giving some only one year's notice of a six-year increase in their anticipated retirement age. Approximately 5000 of the affected women are in our own authority area.
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- The All-Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality for Women has concluded that “the impact of DWP maladministration on 1950s-born women has been as devastating as it is widespread. The APPG believes that the case for category 6 injustice (£10,000) is overwhelming and clear. Women have had their emotional, physical, and mental circumstances totally obliterated by a lack of reasonable notice.
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- For all MPs to be given an opportunity to debate and vote on these proposals.

Motion C – proposed by Councillor Spalding and supported by Councillor Sands:

“Medway has a proud military history and a tradition of hosting wonderful and memorable military experiences.

Recent events, however, have in the eyes of many, particularly in the veteran and military community, fallen below the standard we have come to know and expect.

This Council resolves that hereinafter going forward, Medway Council will, for all events of, or connected to a military nature, engage well in advance of the event with local veterans’ groups and military establishments including cadet units to ensure such events are not just ‘good’ but ‘outstanding’.”

Decision:

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

Motion D – proposed by Councillor Louwella Prenter and supported by Councillor Jones:

“The last Labour Government made huge strides in ending homelessness. In 1999 the Rough Sleepers Unit set an ambitious target to reduce the number of people sleeping rough by at least two-thirds by 2002. By 2002 this target was exceeded, with a 70% reduction in rough sleeping.

Under the Conservatives, that progress has been undone, with rough sleepers an all-too-common sight in our towns, and a sharp rise in hidden homelessness.

The introduction of the Rough Sleeping Initiative in 2018 had started to reverse this trend. However, the cost-of-living crisis has driven numbers in Medway back to the same level as when it was introduced.

Currently, the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) supports Medway Council in tackling rough sleeping through a multi-agency approach, funding outreach

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teams, and providing immediate off-the-street accommodation and long-term housing solutions. RSI-funded services include an in-house rough sleepers' team, an outreach team, the Medway Assessment Centre, Housing First, and enhanced hostels. At any one time, approximately 100 people currently or previously sleeping rough are being supported through this provision. However, RSI funding is set to end in March 2025, which could lead to increased rough sleeping due to the loss of critical support services.

Medway Council notes that:

- Labour Governments have a strong track record in tackling rough sleeping.
- Whilst the funding provided by previous the Conservative Government was vital in supporting rough sleeping, the structural issues to prevent rough sleeping weren't adequately addressed.
- Building on the lessons of the past, Labour will develop a new cross-government strategy, working with Mayors and Councils across the country, to put Britain back on track to ending homelessness.

Medway Council believes that:

- Tackling the structural issues which drive the causes of rough sleeping will be a priority for the new Labour Government.
- The huge reversal which is needed is unlikely to have happened before March 2025 when the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding is due to end.

Medway Council resolves to:

Work closely with the Labour Government to achieve the same levels of reduction in rough sleeping that occurred when Labour was last in power.

Medway Council calls on the Government to:

Continue the funding provided by the Rough Sleeping Initiative which sits at just under £1 million for Medway, either through the existing policy, or any replacement strategy, for the financial year 2025-2026 so that Medway Council can continue the vital work of providing critical support services.

Councillor Gulvin, supported by Councillor Doe, proposed the following amendment:

~~The last Labour Government~~ By working together, local and national government have made huge great strides in ending homelessness. In 1999 reducing the Rough Sleepers Unit set an ambitious target to reduce the number level of people rough sleeping rough by at least two-thirds by 2002. By 2002 this target was exceeded, with a 70% reduction in rough sleeping.

~~Under the Conservatives, that progress has been undone, with rough sleepers an all-too-common sight in our towns, and a sharp rise in hidden homelessness.~~

~~The introduction of the Rough Sleeping Initiative in 2018 had started to reverse~~

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~~this trend. However, the cost-of-living crisis has driven numbers in Medway back to the same level as when it was introduced~~ much more work needs to be done.

Currently, the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) supports Medway Council in tackling rough sleeping through a multi-agency approach, funding outreach teams, and providing immediate off-the-street accommodation and long-term housing solutions. RSI-funded services include an in-house rough sleepers' team, an outreach team, the Medway Assessment Centre, Housing First, and enhanced hostels. At any one time, approximately 100 people currently or previously sleeping rough are being supported through this provision. However, RSI funding is set to end in March 2025, which could lead to increased rough sleeping due to the loss of critical support services.

Medway Council notes that:

- ~~• Labour Governments have a strong track record in tackling rough sleeping.~~
- ~~• Whilst the funding provided by previous the Conservative Government was vital in supporting rough sleeping, the structural issues to prevent rough sleeping weren't adequately addressed.~~
- ~~• Building on the lessons of the past, Labour will develop a new cross-government strategy, working with Mayors and Councils across the country, to put Britain back on track to ending homelessness.~~

Dealing with the issue of rough sleeping is very complex. According to St Mungo's and ONS figures, six in ten rough sleepers have a drug or alcohol dependency, often combined with mental health issues. This requires a multi agency approach, and certainty of funding so that the necessary facilities can be put in place.

Medway Council believes that:

Tackling Continuity of Government funding is needed to continue the structural issues which drive the causes of reduction in rough sleeping will be a priority. In order to give the programme in place in Medway certainty for the new Labour future, the Government The huge reversal which is needed is unlikely to have happened before must confirm that funding will continue beyond March 2025. when the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding is due to end.

Medway Council resolves to:

Work closely with the Labour His Majesty's Government to achieve the same levels of a continuing reduction in rough sleeping that occurred when Labour was last in power.

Medway Council calls ~~on~~ upon the Government to:

Continue the funding provided by the Rough Sleeping Initiative, which sits at just under £1 million for Medway, either through ~~the~~ existing policy, or any replacement strategy, for the financial year 2025-~~2026~~26, so that Medway Council can continue the vital work of providing the critical support services

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required.”

Amended motion reads:

“By working together, local and national government have made great strides in reducing the level of rough sleeping. However, much more work needs to be done.

Currently, the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) supports Medway Council in tackling rough sleeping through a multi-agency approach, funding outreach teams, and providing immediate off-the-street accommodation and long-term housing solutions. RSI-funded services include an in-house rough sleepers’ team, an outreach team, the Medway Assessment Centre, Housing First, and enhanced hostels. At any one time, approximately 100 people currently or previously sleeping rough are being supported through this provision. However, RSI funding is set to end in March 2025, which could lead to increased rough sleeping due to the loss of critical support services.

Medway Council notes that:

Dealing with the issue of rough sleeping is very complex. According to St Mungo’s and ONS figures, six in ten rough sleepers have a drug or alcohol dependency, often combined with mental health issues. This requires a multi agency approach, and certainty of funding so that the necessary facilities can be put in place.

Medway Council believes that:

Continuity of Government funding is needed to continue the reduction in rough sleeping. In order to give the programme in place in Medway certainty for the future, the Government must confirm that funding will continue beyond March 2025.

Medway Council resolves to:

Work closely with His Majesty’s Government to achieve a continuing reduction in rough sleeping.

Medway Council calls upon the Government to:

Continue the funding provided by the Rough Sleeping Initiative, which sits at just under £1 million for Medway, either through existing policy, or any replacement strategy, for the financial year 2025-26, so that Medway Council can continue the vital work of providing the critical support services required.”

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

For: Councillors Animashaun, Bowen, Campbell, Cook, Coombs, Curry, Field, Gurung, Hamandishe, Hamilton, Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard, Jackson, Jones,

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Khan, Mahil, Mandaracas, Maple, Murray, Myton, Nestorov, Osborne, Paterson, Peake, Pearce, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Price, Sands, Spalding, Stamp, Van Dyke and Williams (33)

Abstain: Councillors Anang, Barrett, Brake, Clarke, Doe, Fearn, Filmer, Gilbourne, Gulvin, Hackwell, Hyne, Joy, Kemp, Lammas, Lawrence, Perfect, Spring, Tejan and Wildey (19)

Note: In addition to the Members named under apologies for absence, Councillors Crozer, Etheridge and Shokar were not present when the recorded vote was taken.

Decision:

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

The last Labour Government made huge strides in ending homelessness. In 1999 the Rough Sleepers Unit set an ambitious target to reduce the number of people sleeping rough by at least two-thirds by 2002. By 2002 this target was exceeded, with a 70% reduction in rough sleeping.

Under the Conservatives, that progress has been undone, with rough sleepers an all-too-common sight in our towns, and a sharp rise in hidden homelessness.

The introduction of the Rough Sleeping Initiative in 2018 had started to reverse this trend. However, the cost-of-living crisis has driven numbers in Medway back to the same level as when it was introduced.

Currently, the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) supports Medway Council in tackling rough sleeping through a multi-agency approach, funding outreach teams, and providing immediate off-the-street accommodation and long-term housing solutions. RSI-funded services include an in-house rough sleepers' team, an outreach team, the Medway Assessment Centre, Housing First, and enhanced hostels. At any one time, approximately 100 people currently or previously sleeping rough are being supported through this provision. However, RSI funding is set to end in March 2025, which could lead to increased rough sleeping due to the loss of critical support services.

Medway Council notes that:

- Labour Governments have a strong track record in tackling rough sleeping.
- Whilst the funding provided by previous the Conservative Government was vital in supporting rough sleeping, the structural issues to prevent rough sleeping weren't adequately addressed.
- Building on the lessons of the past, Labour will develop a new cross-government strategy, working with Mayors and Councils across the country, to put Britain back on track to ending homelessness.

Medway Council believes that:

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- Tackling the structural issues which drive the causes of rough sleeping will be a priority for the new Labour Government.
- The huge reversal which is needed is unlikely to have happened before March 2025 when the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding is due to end.

Medway Council resolves to:

Work closely with the Labour Government to achieve the same levels of reduction in rough sleeping that occurred when Labour was last in power.

Medway Council calls on the Government to:

Continue the funding provided by the Rough Sleeping Initiative which sits at just under £1 million for Medway, either through the existing policy, or any replacement strategy, for the financial year 2025-2026 so that Medway Council can continue the vital work of providing critical support services.

164 Leader's report

Discussion:

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

- The General Election and the hard work of Medway Council staff.
- Thanks were given to the three outgoing Cabinet Members, who were now local MPs as well as to the three outgoing MPs.
- The new Government's plans and the need to lobby for sufficient resources for Medway.
- The Cross Party LGA Councillor's Forum
- The forthcoming Youth Justice, Care Quality Commission and social housing inspections.
- The development of the new Local Plan and the public engagement taking place, the regeneration plans for Chatham and concern about some development proposals.
- The raising of the Pride flag and Windrush flag by the Council.
- The variety of recent events, such as the Rochester Sweeps Festival, Medway Mile and the Mini Youth Games, the 10th Annual Armed Forces Covenant Conference, Welcome to Medway event and Our Medway Live.
- Launching of the National Lottery Heritage 10 Year Plan.
- Work undertaken with the Medway Diversity Forum and the Federation of Small Businesses Kent.
- Signing of the Docking Station Memorandum of Understanding between Medway Council, Chatham Historic Dockyard and the University of Kent.
- Agreement of the One Medway Financial Improvement Plan and the One Medway Council Plan.
- Freedom of the Borough status awarded to Medway Foundation Trust.
- Opening of Cozenton Park Sports Centre.
- Final confirmation had been received that the new Healthy Living Centre in Chatham would open, to be named the James Williams Health Centre.

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- A Peerage for Life had been awarded to Craig Mackinlay, the former MP for South Thanet.
- Regeneration plans for the centre for Chatham.
- Work with partners to bring forward new jobs and focus on local labour in new developments.
- The special bus service running during the school summer holidays linking country parks and other attractions in Medway.

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

165 Members' questions

Question A – Councillor Hamilton asked 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.”

Councillor Paterson said that the Saturday traffic restriction on Rochester High Street had been in place for many years and continued to provide a safe environment for pedestrians using the high street.

Sundays on Rochester High Street had become increasingly vibrant, with visitors and residents enjoying the many shops and restaurants that chose to open and take advantage of the additional footfall.

Councillor Paterson agreed that a consistent approach to traffic restrictions all weekend would be better for pedestrians, traders and motorists. Officers were currently assessing a proposal to extend the Saturday restriction to Sundays and public holidays and a plan for seeking the views of residents, businesses and other key stakeholders was being prepared. Ward Councillors would be included in this discussion and should a decision be taken to proceed, an appropriate timeline would be established for taking the proposal through the required statutory process.

Question B – Councillor Perfect asked 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

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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?”

Councillor Maple said that the new Deputy Prime Minister, who now had statutory responsibility for local government had added local government back into the name of the government department and had also made it clear that, the ‘Hunger Games’ style of approach to funding would end.

Councillor Maple did not want to see an elected Mayor of Kent and Medway but he did want additional resources, both capital and revenue, for the community and he would work with whoever he needed to, to try to secure that. It had been made clear that unlocking this would not require there to be an elected Mayor.

Councillor Maple looked forward to the prospect of working with councillors across Kent to secure funding for the community here in Medway and said that he would not be abstaining in writing letters to fight for resources from the new Government.

Question C – Councillor Hackwell asked 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?”

Councillor Paterson said that Highways was a frontline service that had experienced many years of underfunding. That underfunding, and the rapid deterioration of the highway network had been a legacy of the previous Government.

The underspend referred to was in respect of the 2023/24 revenue budget. The Council’s financial position had been forecast to be significantly overspent, which had led to the introduction of management action including the cessation of all non-essential spend and reviewing spend on non-statutory services. The underspend of £1.9million had been a result of this process and was a combination of funding expenditure through earmarked reserves, charging eligible expenditure to the Capital programme, savings on electricity for street lighting and vacancy savings. This had been without any detriment to the Council’s statutory duties to maintain the highway and assets upon it.

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The total budget for Highways expenditure in 2023/24 was £19.3m, which was made up from the £13.6million Revenue budget and the Highways Capital budget for 2023/24 of £5.7million, which included £565,000 one-off pothole funding and £401,000 additional funding from the DfT, made possible through diverted HS2 funds.

In line with the Highway Asset Management Strategy to adopt a whole asset approach to maintenance, a proportion of this money had also been used to inspect and maintain bridges and structures, drainage, crash barriers and street lighting.

The cancellation of the HS2 project had enabled £8.3bn of funding to be allocated to local councils to maintain their road network over the next 10 years. For Medway, the total indicative funding allocation from 2023/24 to 2033/34 was £12,552,000. £401,000 had been received in 2023/24 and a further £401,000 in 2024/25. It was not yet known how the remaining indicative £11,750,000 would be paid.

Question D – Councillor Tejan asked 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?”

Councillor Curry said that delivery against the Climate Change Action Plan’s eleven priority areas had continued since May 2023. This had been further supported by the Portfolio Holder’s request for two new groups to be established, the Climate Change Working Party and Community Climate Working Group, to specifically drive forward community climate action. Efforts were being made to spread word of this amongst community.

Specific actions taken to monitor carbon emissions and energy usage included:

- Calculating and publishing the Council’s 2021/22 annual carbon emissions report.
- Collating Council energy use and vehicle fleet data to be used in the calculation of carbon emissions for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

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- Monitoring monthly and annual energy reduction and carbon emissions savings resulting from the LED Street Lighting Programme.

Question E – Councillor Spring asked 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?”

Councillor Paterson said that reports of the death of Rainham town centre had been greatly exaggerated. Officers had compared the number of transactions made at Council owned car parks in Rainham during March and April 2024 with those made in the same two months of 2023. The data indicated that the number of transactions over those two months had been higher in 2024.

This suggested that Medway car parks remained popular with those visiting Rainham for work, shopping and leisure activities. If there had been a drop in footfall, then it would appear it was not due to a lack of potential customers using Council owned car parks.

Members and Officers had met with businesses in Rainham in May to discuss and understand their views on parking and transport within the town. At this early stage of the financial year, there had been no discussion about parking charges for 2025/26. The potential impact of any future changes to parking charges would be given careful consideration and as much information as possible would be provided to Full Council when decisions on the Council's budget would be made.

Question F – Councillor Lawrence asked 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

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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?"

Councillor Murray said that this matter related to a detailed discussion that Councillor Lawrence had participated in at the last Health and Wellbeing being Board meeting. At this meeting, the Board had heard from Integrated Care Board professionals which had given Members an understanding of how the Hubs were developed.

Women's Health Hubs were intended to be places where core services were delivered in a women-centred way. There was no predefined model and areas were free to develop their own models of delivery; that could be hub and spoke, or virtual or a 'one stop shop'.

The project team for the ICB had received a bid from one practice in Medway to deliver a Women's Health Hub. The timeline for developing bids was very short and the proposal from Medway needed further development.

Dr Lall, who had submitted the proposal, was now working with the Public Health Programmes team, the Clinical Lead for Gynaecology at MFT, and other relevant partners to submit an amended proposal that would address multiple aspects of women's health.

The team was confident that it would be able to develop a strong proposal that would offer a broader range of joined up services than if the proposal had been accepted for the first phase. This additional time was an opportunity to design a system to deliver the services women wanted in a way that would be accessible to them. The team was working to develop strong pathways and collaborative working between General Practice, Public Health and secondary health.

The emphasis would be on prevention, screening and ease of access when services were needed. The decision on this resubmitted proposal would lay with the ICB as it held the funding for the Women's Health Hubs. Medway supported the proposal and pending ICB approval, it was anticipated that the Medway Women's Health Hubs would be operational by the end of 2024.

Question G – Councillor Joy, asked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Coombs, 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?"

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Councillor Coombs said that hard work was taking place to reduce the assessment waiting time against some considerable challenges that were national issues, this included there being a shortage of educational psychologists.

In a report by the Department for Education in June, it had been stated that 88% of principal educational psychologists in local authorities were experiencing difficulty in recruiting and that this was related to an overall shortage of educational psychologists being trained.

Councillor Coombs said that with Councillor Price, she would be writing to David Johnson MP, Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing, regarding the low number of educational psychology training places which the previous Government had funded. In the previous year this had amounted to just 204 for the whole of England.

The reduction of the backlog was a high priority for Medway. There was a dedicated assessment team, focused only on completing the assessment process. Sustained efforts had been made in the recruitment of educational psychologists with two Assistant Educational Psychologists and 1 Senior Educational Psychologist having already been secured. An ongoing advert was being run and a framework of private educational psychologists was also being used.

For the current year, Medway was accepting and reimbursing private educational psychology reports, commissioned by families where they had the required information and the Council was making sure that parents were aware of the information that was required for the Council to be able to accept these assessments. Schools were being allowed to use their traded educational psychologist time to carry out statutory assessments for which they were reimbursed.

Councillor Coombs said that these measures were starting to have an impact on the number of Educational Psychology assessments that were carried out each month. In May 2023, 27 assessments had been carried out, compared to 49 in May 2024.

Work would continue on reducing the backlog. In order to mitigate the considerable wait that there could be before support was provided, non-EHCP top-up funding had been reintroduced. This would enable schools to apply for financial support to meet a child's needs without an EHCP or whilst they were waiting for an EHCP assessment to be carried out.

Note: The question had originally been submitted to Councillor Price but the response was provided by Councillor Coombs due to recent changes to Cabinet Portfolios.

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Question H – Councillor Gilbourne submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson:

“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?”

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

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

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

“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?”

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

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

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

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

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

“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 submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson:

“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?”

166 Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic

Background:

This report set out why Medway Council should consider adopting care experienced as a protected characteristic.

The duties towards care leavers were defined within the Children Act 1989, the Leaving Care Act 2000, and the Children and Social Work Act 2017, but did not include the more recent terminology of care experienced. Care experienced was used to define people who had been looked after at some point in time by the local authority and was recommended as a protected characteristic in the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care published in May 2022. To date over 90 Local Authorities had agreed to add Care Experience as a protected characteristic.

The report had previously been considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and by the Cabinet, the comments of which were set out in sections 8, 9 and 10 of the report.

As part of the debate a video was shown highlighting the positive reasons for the proposed scheme.

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

Decisions:

- a) The Council noted the comments made by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the comments made by the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the decisions of the Cabinet, as set out in sections 8, 9 and 10 of the report.
- b) The Council agreed to adopt care experienced as a protected characteristic.

167 Community Safety Partnership Plan 2024 - 2027

Background:

This report set out the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2024 – 2027. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were under a duty to produce a Community Safety Plan to formulate and implement a strategy to reduce crime and disorder, combat substance misuse, and reduce re-offending. This report provided information on the proposed plan, which formed part of the Council's Policy Framework, to cover the period from 2024 to 2027. The Community Safety Plan discharged the Council's statutory requirement to produce a plan for community safety.

The report had previously been considered by the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 June 2024, the comments of which were set out at section 6 to the report. The report had also been considered by the Cabinet on 9 July 2024, the decisions of which were set out at section 7 to the report.

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

Decisions:

- a) The Council noted the comments of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out at section 6 to the report and the decisions of the Cabinet, as set out at section 7 to the report.
- b) The Council approved the proposed Community Safety Plan 2024 – 2027, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, and draft Community Safety Action Plan 2024 – 2025, as set out in Appendix 2.

168 Additions to the Capital Programme

Background:

This report requested Council approval for additions to the Capital Programme as recommended by Cabinet on 11 June 2024.

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

Decisions:

The Council agreed the following additions to the capital programme, as set out in sections 4 and 5 of the report:

- i) £430,000 to the capital programme to fund the overspend reported on the Operational Depot scheme, to be funded by Prudential Borrowing, and
- ii) £4,655 to the capital programme to fund the overspend on the Mountbatten House Purchase scheme, to be funded from borrowing in advance of the capital receipts expected from the sale of the building to Medway Development Company.

169 Integrated Care Partnership Terms of Reference

Background:

This report sought approval of revised terms of reference for the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP).

The report set out that the ICP was a joint committee between Medway Council, Kent County Council and NHS Kent and Medway (Integrated Care Board) and each partner organisation must approve any proposed changes to the ICP's terms of reference, for Medway Council, this was a matter for decision by Full Council.

The Terms of Reference for the ICP had been developed nearly two years previously when the ICP was being established and had not yet been reviewed. Over the past two years, various pieces of national guidance around Integrated Care Systems had been released and the Kent and Medway system had developed. As arrangements had developed, members of the ICP had been able to articulate how they would prefer the ICP to operate and the purpose of the partnership was becoming clearer.

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, supported by Councillor Campbell, proposed the recommendations set out in the report, subject to the inclusion of the following additional recommendation:

'The Council recommends the ICP system leaders to give consideration as to

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how they strengthen the duty to consult and engage on service transformation and changes, including how to work with overview and scrutiny.'

Decisions:

- a) The Council approved the revised terms of reference for the Integrated Care Partnership, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- b) The Council agreed to recommend the ICP system leaders to give consideration as to how they strengthen the duty to consult and engage on service transformation and changes, including how to work with overview and scrutiny.

170 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 18 April 2024.

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

Members raised the following issues during debate:

- Thanks were given for the work of Council's four scrutiny committees.
- Annual Public Health Report 'The Power of the Crowd' and the partnership working achievements.
- The development of the new Medway Local Plan, its consideration by the Council's scrutiny committees and the resources available for the planning function.
- GP access and the need for there to be more GPs in Medway.
- The equalities debate held by Medway Youth Council.
- The improvements made to Medway's SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) services, as recognised by Ofsted.
- The national shortage educational psychologists.
- The need to ensure that the move towards digital services did not exclude any vulnerable groups.

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

171 Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report

Background:

The Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report summarised the work of the Board over the last year, outlined progress against the Strategy and set out the priorities for the coming year 2024-25.

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The Annual Report was a way of demonstrating engagement and commitment to the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities, as set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This defined for the first time in law the responsibility of corporate parents to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for children in the Council's care and for care leavers.

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

Decision:

The Council noted the progress made against the Corporate Parenting Strategy, as set out in the attached Annual Report.

172 'Fair Tax' Motion - Update

Background:

This report provided an update in respect of the ten resolutions made by Full Council on 20 July 2023, when it had passed a motion approving the 'Councils for Fair Tax' declaration. The motion had included ten resolutions, which besides approval of the declaration had also included a request for an update on progress to be submitted to Cabinet and Full Council. The Cabinet had considered the report on 11 June 2024 and had noted the update provided.

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.

Decision:

The Council noted the update provided in respect of each of the ten resolutions made by Full Council.

173 Use of Urgency Provisions

Background:

This report provided details of recent usage of urgency provisions contained within the Constitution.

An Exempt Appendix to the report set out details in relation to a Human Resource matter.

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

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Decision:

The Council noted the use of urgency provisions as set out in sections 3 and 4 of the report.

Mayor

Date:

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