

Members' Questions

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

Does the Leader of the Council believe the Member of Parliament for Rochester and Strood should respond to constituent emails and letters from residents in my ward?

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

Can the Leader of the Council please update the Council on conversations surrounding devolution?

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

Even though the previous Conservative administration left your Labour administration over £16M of reserves, of which you have already spent £6M to support the 23/24 financial year, and your administration is planning to use £14.7M of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) to attempt to balance the budget for this year, with a further £16.3M in 25/26, what is your plan to return to a balance in the black, with restoring reserves to their previous amount, and when will this happen?

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

Although the much-derided motoring restrictions in Rainham have been in place for several months, I have first-hand and a wealth of anecdotal evidence that the rules are continuously being flouted. For example, traffic illegally turning right from the A2 into Orchard Street; Cars and Lorries parking with all four wheels on the pavement; and cars parking in the loading bays whilst drivers use the ATM machines. There is a growing perception amongst residents that the regulations are not being enforced.

Can the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson, release the information appertaining to Rainham, how many PCNs have been issued, including the corresponding amount of revenue that has been accrued since the inception of the scheme?"

Question E – Councillor Spring will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness, Councillor Louwella Prenter, the following:

The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, the Deputy Prime Minister, stated on the 12 August 2024 that British people will not be given priority for social housing in favour of those who arrived in the UK illegally. This is not about being inhumane, it is about equality and fairness.

Can the Portfolio Holder please confirm to the Council that Medway Council will not give priority to those who arrived in the UK illegally ahead of those residents of Medway who are in need of social housing, such as pensioners or those who are unable to go into the private sector?"

Question F – Councillor Joy will ask the Portfolio Holder for Education, Councillor Coombs, the following:

Following the major issue with the Medway Test English paper, for which you stated:

“This is the first year the English exam has been included within the Medway Test, alongside the Mathematics and Reasoning elements. The questions for each of the tests, and the amount of time required to answer them, is set by our provider GL Assessment. The English test is 30 minutes this year.

However, we appreciate that the guidance around the timing of the English exam could be clearer. To ensure this is the case moving forward, when we write to parents and carers to confirm the arrangements for their child’s test, we will also include advice on how long each test will last.”

It was also stated that as all children had the same issues that this year’s test would not be reviewed, even though children from outside Medway were not sitting the test for a further three days.

The advice which was issued on timings stated that no test paper would last longer than one hour, (although not specifying a time). However, it was mentioned that GL Assessments were delivering the test, and their website was stating 50 minutes.

With Medway not being able to prioritise Medway children on this test, as found out by your predecessor, the then Councillor Martin Potter, and the fact that although Medway Council does not condone the use of tutors, although they are aware that this practice does take place, giving the children outside of Medway an unfair advantage over Medway children, can the Portfolio Holder please explain how they are going to ensure that Medway children do not suffer from this incident in the knowledge that the Council has not reviewed this immediately and knowing that some children will benefit from advance knowledge of the timing of the test?

Question G – Councillor Clarke will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

Could the Leader of the Council please advise if he expects Portfolio Holders to respond in a timely manner to emailed questions from opposition Members? I have not received any responses from Portfolio Holders to the enquiries I sent on 9 May (SC re moving traffic offences), 6 August (two - SC and VM re moving traffic offences), 22 August (VM re Rochester Airport) and 3 September (LP and AP re traveller encampments). Said enquiries related to resident matters in the Fort Horsted ward and were not political in their nature.

Question H – Councillor Gulvin will ask the Portfolio Holder for Education, Councillor Coombs, the following:

There is now a critical shortfall developing in the capacity of Medway’s schools to meet the needs of Medway’s children. A recent article in the Medway Messenger stated that there will be an estimated 207 too few year seven places in Medway’s non-selective schools and a further shortage of 260 in the year after.

Children living in Lordswood are already being sent to Holmesdale School in Snodland because of the lack of school places in Medway. This is resulting in an

unacceptably long school day for them which can be overwhelming for many students.

What is the Portfolio Holder doing to ensure that there are sufficient places in Medway's schools for Medway's students?

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

Do you agree with the Labour MPs that voted to cut the Winter Fuel Allowance, and that Labour MPs should have had the courage to vote against this cut to our most vulnerable in society given this will lead to deaths?

Question J – Councillor Campbell will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

What is the Council doing to encourage the sign up of Pension Credit among pensioners?