

## Members' Questions

### **Question 10A – Councillor Spalding, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:**

On 8 July 2024, the new Labour Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, in her first speech promised 300 additional planning officers across the country.

Chatting about this to the new MP for Rochester and Strood, I was advised that in Medway's case this did not have to be a planner but could be a much needed Planning Enforcement Officer.

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm Medway has received the funds to recruit and pay for an additional officer and when the person is likely to be in post or was this simply another case of the Labour Party making a promise and not keeping it?

### **Question 10B – Councillor Pearce, will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:**

In October 2022, Councillor Maple said (to the Medway Messenger): "What makes the latest proposals more galling is that it's Medway Council's own development company now proposing to rip off residents." and "It cannot be right that developers proceed with building in Medway without making the right contributions to our infrastructure."

A planning application to build 195 flats on the former Strood Civic Centre site was approved last month by the Planning Committee, without any Section 106 contributions proposed by the applicant - the Council's own development company. According to the viability assessment, Medway Development Company is expected to make several million in profit from the development. Can the Leader of the Council explain why the Medway Development Company is still ripping off residents?

### **Question 10C – Councillor Mandaracas, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Education, Councillor Coombs, the following:**

Could you please tell me how many parents have contacted Medway Council requesting a school place for their child following the announcement, and introduction, of the removal of VAT exemption from private schools?

### **Question 10D – Councillor Tejan, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Van Dyke, the following:**

Can the Portfolio Holder tell the Council what proportion of the Council's revenue spend is spent on staff salaries for 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025? In giving her answer can she split this between gross pay, pension contributions, additional allowances, and sick pay?

**Question 10E – Councillor Lawrence, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Mahil, the following:**

The Labour Budget on the 31st of October 2024 delivered the largest tax increases since World War II and have had a dramatic impact on growth, employment and investment. When the Labour Government came to power it inherited the fastest growing economy in the G7. Post budget Britain is highly likely to be facing nil growth in the short/medium term.

Can the Portfolio Holder set out his own analysis of the Budget's likely impact on the Medway economy with particular reference to private sector employment and investment?

**Question 10F – Councillor Spring, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson, the following:**

Gillingham and Rainham is amongst the “top five most dangerous towns in Kent”. For the whole of England, Wales and Northern Ireland as a whole, this area is the “32nd most dangerous major town”. Of those, the most common crimes which are those actually recorded are violence and sexual offences.

The figures for 2023 had 5,114 offences or to put it another way just over 14 a day in Gillingham and Rainham alone. I turn to my ward where month on month we appear to be having more crimes reported. It is beyond acceptable. In the past three months alone (August, September and October), Rainham North has had 254 serious crimes reported or 2.8 per day in those 92 days; that is nearly three serious crimes reported every day. Your predecessor made bold claims that you were stamping down on this. I would not say stamping down more lightly dabbing a toe, if that. You and your party locally and nationally are letting my constituents and the public down. Crime is rising in Rainham North, and they are amongst the worst in the whole of Kent and the country. More needs to be done.

What are you going to do to stop or prevent these violent and sexual offences and other serious crimes from increasing in my ward?

**Question 10G – Councillor Wildey, will ask the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, the following:**

Can the Deputy Leader update the Council on the outcomes of the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) assessment of Medway Council's Adult Social Care Service and in doing so, what actions will be put in place to drive improvements within the service?

**Question 10H – Councillor Anang, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Mahil, the following:**

Gravesham Borough Council has recently secured UK Government funding and are currently offering grants of up to £1000, to new existing tourism and hospitality businesses in the Borough. The Medway Labour and Co-Operative Group being the “darling group” of the Prime Minister and being a champion of Small and Medium Business (SMB), I would like to find out from the Portfolio Holder if they have plans of securing such funding from Government to support the tourism and hospitality businesses in Medway?

**Question 10I – Councillor Hyne, will ask the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, the following:**

The Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) commenced operations on the 1st of July 2022. In the ICB’s latest report for 2023/2024, the organisation spent £2,196,726 on redundancy payments for just 28 staff. Three staff received £160K each and six staff received £132K each. In the same period, the Chair’s salary increased from £55K-£60K to £70K-£75K and the Chief Executive’s salary increased from £175K-£180K to £245K-£250K.

In light of the on-going financial pressures in the ICB and the Kent and Medway Integrated Care System is this good use of public funds?

**Question 10J – Councillor Field, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:**

Could the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration please update the Council on waste collection for the recent Christmas period?

**Question 10K – Councillor Jones, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services (including statutory responsibility), Councillor Price, the following:**

The Labour Government announced its plan for a new National Youth Strategy, in November 2024, designed to put young people at the centre of decision-making on policies affecting them.

What more does Medway Council need to do, in collaboration with our partners, to better tailor and target resources, to meet the objectives of the Strategy? Such as creating the means to achieve greater benefit to young people’s lives outside the school gates, as well as continued learning, volunteering, or earning opportunities (as appropriate) and to ensure our neighbourhoods are safer for all residents?

**Question 10L – Councillor Mark Prenter, will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:**

Does the Leader of the Council agree with recently promoted material being posted through Medway doors by the Conservative Party that Council staff should receive a real terms pay cut?

**Question 10M – Councillor Mrs Turpin, will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:**

Following the planning inquiry that took place regarding 250 homes in Cliffe in May 2023, the Leader of the Council agreed to a post inquiry meeting to learn from the process and discuss a lot of concerns Committee Members had had throughout. To date this meeting has not happened. Please can the Leader of the Council reach out to the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Residents Development Group and arrange a time to meet with them?