

Public Question (relating to agenda Item 6 Cost of Living Crisis
Response Plan 2025-2026)

Question A – Mike Evans, of Medway Food Bank, Rochester, will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

Medway Foodbank, Trussell Trust and The Joseph Rowntree Foundation are campaigning for an Essentials Guarantee, to ensure the Standard Allowance of Universal Credit is always sufficient to cover life's essentials such as food, transport and utility bills.

We welcome the Government's proposed increase to the Standard Allowance, but believe there should be an independent process to annually recommend the Standard Allowance rate, based on the actual cost of essentials. This is the core component of our campaign and currently no independent process exists.

As cost-of-living pressures on Universal Credit claimants are the main driver of foodbank use in the Medway Towns, will Medway Council write to Liz Kendall MP with an indication of support for an Essentials Guarantee?

Public Questions

Question B – Richard Joyce, of Rochester, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson, the following:

There are three schools within a 5-minute walk of one another within the King's School Street area. All of them have infant and primary provision and two of them are fee-paying, meaning their pupils come from a wider geographical area. By necessity, many parents will have to drive their children to school. To what extent was this factor taken into consideration in the design of the King's School Street Scheme?

Question C – Angela Joyce, of Rochester, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson, the following:

Considering that there are three primary schools within the area covered by the King's Schools Street proposal, having made changes to include Roebuck Road prior to the statutory consultation, why did the Council not undertake an independent impact assessment or feasibility study, to ensure that displaced traffic arising from the changes would not endanger the health and safety of pupils at St. Andrew's and St. Margaret's, while protecting children at the King's school?

Members' Questions

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

Could the Portfolio Holder please provide an update on the Council's plans to implement the Children's Social Care Reforms, in light of HM Treasury's recent announcement of an additional £1.1 billion in funding for children's social care reform and care placements through to 2029, as outlined in the latest Spending Review?

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

Considering the proposed reclassification of employment land at Chatham Docks under the Regulation 19 Medway Local Plan, what are the top three potential negative long-term impacts on the economy, environment, communities, and the workers his Leader stood shoulder to shoulder with before May 2023, specifying which specific actionable mitigation strategies are you proposing for each?

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

Under the previous Conservative government, initiatives such as the Period Products Scheme were introduced, ensuring free sanitary products in schools and colleges from January 2020. Since May 2023, what specific new actions has the Deputy Leader taken to address period poverty and continue supporting the advocacy she historically championed?

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

The Policy and Resources Committee of the former Rochester-upon-Medway City Council met on 13th January 1998. The Committee was asked if Charter Trustees should be established in order to protect Rochester's City Status – this was during a period of Local Government Reorganisation and the creation of the Medway Towns Council. Conscious of the consequences of not doing so, the Committee decided not to establish Charter Trustees. Rochester's city status then lapsed.

Should the Committee have established Charter Trustees in order to protect Rochester's city status, yes or no?