

Motions

Motion A – Councillor Tejan has submitted the following:

This Council recognises the serious financial pressures facing local authorities nationwide, including Medway, and acknowledges the complex challenges involved in delivering vital services amid rising demand and constrained resources.

This Council notes with concern the continued reliance on permission for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) from central government to sustain Medway's day-to-day operations.

Since the Labour and Co-Operative Group took control of the Council in May 2023:

- The Council has had to rely on EFS to balance its day-to-day spending.
- In 2024/2025 it borrowed £20.239m via the EFS mechanism.
- In 2025/2026 it plans to borrow £18.48m via the EFS mechanism.
- The Medium-Term borrowing projection to 2030 stands at £191m.
- Despite the involvement of CIPFA there is no plan or target date for achieving a balanced budget.
- There remains significant overspending in key areas such as Children and Adult Social Services with limited evidence of cost containment.
- Interest is being charged on the amount borrowed reducing the amount available for services.
- With local government reorganisation, Medway's EFS debt will become the obligation of residents currently living in other Authorities.

This Council expresses concern that:

- Without a clear and achievable plan, Medway will be dependent on EFS for at least a further two to three years.
- The Administration has failed to deliver savings from transformation initiatives such as "Medway 2.0" and procurement reforms have not delivered the expected impact.
- Increased fees and charges for services such as leisure centres and parking disproportionately affect vulnerable residents, while the use of limited reserves to cover overspends signals a precarious financial position.
- Increases in debt for day-to-day spending reduces the amount available for investment in Medway as a Place.

This Council believes:

- That Medway's financial resilience, public service delivery, and staff wellbeing are at risk without decisive action.
- That all political groups have a shared responsibility to ensure long-term fiscal sustainability, protect frontline services, and maintain public trust, given the Budget is the responsibility of Full Council.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

1. Call upon the Cabinet to publish a detailed and deliverable plan to achieve financial sustainability without reliance on EFS.
2. Urge the Cabinet to prioritise value for money, cost containment, and transparent governance in all future budgetary decisions.
3. Commit to working cross-party to place Medway's finances on a stable and responsible footing, ensuring that future decisions are guided by prudence, compassion, and long-term vision.

Motion B – Councillor Finch has submitted the following:

This Council notes that:

- The number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) has increased significantly in parts of Medway, with many family homes being converted into multi-tenant properties, often without full planning scrutiny.
- This trend is contributing to increased pressure on local services, on-street parking congestion, noise complaints, and changes to the character of residential areas.
- Medway currently operates a mandatory HMO licensing scheme for larger HMOs (five or more occupants forming two or more households) and has limited Article 4 Directions in certain conservation areas. However, these measures do not apply borough-wide, nor do they cover smaller HMOs.
- The Draft Medway Local Plan (2025) (Policy T8) and associated evidence base recognise the risks of HMO clustering, the loss of family housing and reduced amenity - but without Article 4 and additional licensing, these safeguards cannot be applied to most small conversions.
- Investor and landlord advice sites highlight Medway's lack of Article 4 controls as making it easier to convert homes into HMOs compared with neighbouring areas, encouraging speculative development, leading to a rapid and uncoordinated increase in conversions.
- The uncontrolled spread of HMOs is also enabling the use of former family homes for temporary accommodation, including properties procured by the Home Office for asylum dispersals, further tightening the supply of family homes for Medway residents.
- Local authorities across England - including Lewisham, Chorley, Burnley, Redbridge, Manchester and over 75 others have introduced Article 4 Directions and Additional Licensing Schemes to better manage HMO growth and protect housing standards.

This Council believes:

- Medway needs stronger tools to manage the spread and impact of HMOs, especially in areas where family housing is being lost and community balance is at risk.
- Residents have a right to be consulted on the future of housing in their neighbourhoods, including how HMOs are planned and regulated.
- It is appropriate and necessary for Medway to bring itself in line with other councils that have taken proactive steps to ensure family home supply and community stability.

This Council therefore resolves to request the Cabinet to:

1. Begin the formal process of introducing an Article 4 Direction, in areas most affected by high concentration of HMOs, by removing permitted development rights for the change of use from C3 (dwelling house) to C4 (HMO), requiring planning permission for converting single-family homes into small HMOs (three or more people who are not from one household).
2. Launch a consultation on the introduction of an Additional Licensing Scheme, which would apply to smaller HMOs not currently covered by mandatory licensing. This consultation should also consider the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support Policy T8 and manage HMO concentration.
3. Undertake a full public consultation and bring forward a report to Cabinet and relevant committees, setting out the evidence base, lessons from other authorities, and implementation options for strengthened HMO controls at the earliest practical opportunity.
4. Note the forthcoming Cabinet report on Additional and Selective Licensing Schemes (21 October 2025) and request that the evidence gathered through this work informs the designation of Article 4 areas and any related Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Motion C – Councillor Sands has submitted the following:

At a meeting of Medway Council on Thursday 8th October 2020, Cllr. Sands proposed the following motion:

“That Medway Council recognises how we treat our lands, how we build on it, how we act towards the air we breathe and water we drink will in the long run tell what type of people we truly are.

That the Council recognises that if future generations are to remember us with gratitude and respect rather than contempt, we must leave something more than urban sprawl, we must leave them with a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning and with that in mind we must ensure that the special character of the Hoo Peninsula, its biodiversity, rich history and heritage that go to make up this national and internationally protected area is preserved.

That the Council recognises that its future at present is in our hands but we must remember it doesn't belong to any one person, not to a political party or developer, but all the people and if we continue to abuse its ancient woodlands, its world renowned mudflats, its rugged beauty and its spectacular rawness there will be nothing left, and when I hear developers', and councils' statements like “better access to natural assets and wildlife” I shudder.

That the Council recognises that we must just stop to think of the impact of protected wildlife and ecological sites. We must understand you can't improve the natural environment by destroying it, we as councillors, as present custodians have a duty to recognise the vulnerability of this world class area.

That the Council resolves to start a campaign to have the Hoo Peninsula recognised as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.”

Those members who voted **FOR** the motion were: Councillors Bowler, Browne, Cooper, Curry, Howcroft-Scott, Maple, Murray, Osborne, Paterson, Pendergast, Prenter, Price, Sands (13)

Those members who voted **AGAINST** the motion were: Councillors Brake, Buckwell, Mrs Diane Chambers, Rodney Chambers OBE, Chitty, Doe, Etheridge, Fearn, Gulvin, Hackwell, Jarrett, Kemp, Potter, Purdy, Tejan, Tranter, Rupert Turpin, and Wildey (18)

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was lost.

At the time, the Conservative Group administration opposed the motion and the Labour and Co-operative Group opposition supported the motion. Now the Labour Group is in power at Medway Council, will they again support a similar motion?

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) have been renamed National Landscapes since 2023. The closest National Landscape to the Hoo Peninsula is the Kent Downs National Landscape. The Hoo Peninsula is made up of the following rural villages: Higham, Lower Higham, Cliffe, Cliffe Woods, Cooling, Spendiff, Chattenden, Hoo, High Halstow, St. Mary Hoo, Allhallows, Stoke (Upper, Middle and Lower) and Grain – the landscape is beautiful, fertile (being top-grade productive

farmland) and is home to internationally and nationally protected habitats, supporting a diverse range of migratory wildlife.

This motion calls for Medway Council to start a campaign to have the Hoo Peninsula become a National Landscape - by expanding the Kent Downs National Landscape to include the Hoo Peninsula, via Thong and Shorne.

Motion D – Councillor Maple has submitted the following:

This Council notes that:

1. Eurostar and other international high-speed rail services have not called at **Ashford International** or **Ebbsfleet International** since 2020, following suspensions during the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. The absence of these stops undermines regional connectivity, tourism, business growth, and the wider value of HS1 infrastructure in Kent and Medway.
3. Independent analysis suggests that restoring services could generate significant additional visitor numbers, economic spending, and wider regional benefits.
4. Local councils across Kent, including Medway, have already expressed support for the return of international rail services and are working together through the **Bring Back Euro Trains** campaign.
5. The UK Government has recently signalled support for reinstating services, recognising the need for fair access to depots and infrastructure to allow new operators onto HS1.

This Council further notes that:

- Improved international rail connectivity is central to the ambitions of **devolution in Kent and Medway**, ensuring that our region has the powers and infrastructure needed to compete fairly and grow.
- For **Medway specifically**, the return of international trains would support local businesses that trade with Europe, attract inward investment, and give residents fast access to continental destinations.
- Tourism would receive a major boost — especially around **Christmas and peak holiday periods**, when visitors could once again travel directly to Kent and Medway, supporting our shops, restaurants, visitor attractions, and festive events.

This Council resolves to:

1. **Support** the campaign to “**Bring Back Euro Trains**” stopping at Ashford and Ebbsfleet, and commit the Council to speaking publicly in favour of the reinstatement of these services.
2. **Write to** the Secretary of State for Transport, the Rail Minister, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), and local Members of Parliament, urging them to prioritise the reinstatement of international services at Ashford and Ebbsfleet as part of building a stronger and more connected South East.
3. **Work in partnership** with neighbouring councils, transport bodies, and campaigners to strengthen the regional case for restoring these services, while highlighting the economic, cultural, and tourism benefits to Medway.