

Public Questions

(Relating to Agenda Item No.5 - Article Four Direction – Houses of Multiple Occupation)

Question A – Paul O’Connell, of Gillingham, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness, Councillor Simon Curry, the following:

“As a concerned resident in Gillingham I commend the proposals before the Cabinet to address, with immediate effect, the issue of HMOs in Medway but it is frustrating to see the increased number of C4s often by developers who have no connection with the area.

In Copenhagen Road in particular there are several properties, sometimes adjacent, which are being converted without the need for planning permission, under current legislation, from C3s to C4s.

Could the Member please inform me what action can be taken to carefully and regularly monitor these residences when they are fully occupied?”

Public Questions

Question B – Neil Davies, of Chatham, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Harinder Mahil, the following:

“Following the article in the Daily Express on November the 15th about the challenges facing Chatham High Street and the subsequent support this received online. Would the Council reconsider visiting its plans to propose a BID (business improvement district) for Chatham High Street to work alongside the Future High Streets Fund?”

Question C – William Burvill, of Strood, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Education, Councillor Tracy Coombs, the following:

“Given the ongoing delays in EHCP assessments, rising SEND costs, and concerns about ensuring that support is both timely and appropriate, what specific measures is the Council taking to reduce waiting times, ensure assessments are evidence-based and accurately targeted, manage SEND spending efficiently, maintain transparency and accountability, and ensure that the system is not being misused?”

Question D – Milo O’Connor, of Rochester, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Alex Paterson, the following:

“There are currently loads of potholes on the Old Rochester High Street where the old Rochester Station used to be. It’s a key road commuters use to travel through Medway. Especially cyclists, including myself to the gym. Do you have any plans throughout the New year to make the necessary long-term reparations to this crucial

road? The chains on my bike have become incredibly fragile as a result of some of the roads in Medway.”

Question E – Kevin Cox, of Gillingham, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Zoe Van Dyke, the following:

“Why are Medway Council failing to respond under the Freedom of Information Act?”

Members’ Questions

Question F – Councillor Ron Sands, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure: Nina Gurung, Councillor Nina Gurung the following:

“We are rightly proud of our military history, in fact Medway has one of the deepest and longest military history in Britain - over 450 years. Medway contains a concentration of forts unmatched almost anywhere in the UK.

As a young boy back in late fifties I and lots of local children of Hoo played on Cockham Wood Fort we had no regard to its history so much so I was always Robin Hood with my home made bow, and couple weeks ago I took my grandson to the fort. My how times have changed, he was protecting the fort as Spider-Man, dressed in Arsenal football Kit and the fort itself, deep in a battle of its own with the erosion from River Medway, the River it was built to protect.

Cockham Wood Fort has Scheduled Monument status and is on the heritage at risk register given it is in immediate risk of further rapid deterioration. It was built in 1669 by Sir Bernard de Gomme, considered the most important figure in English Military Engineering, so highly respected, he was buried at the Tower of London.

Much work on our rich military history is being done in regard to the Hoo Stop Line, the rare WW1 Anti-Aircraft gun and searchlight positions, the Kingsnorth Airship Station, along to the experimental trench works and munitions storage at Lodge Hill. We are currently the custodians of our military history and we must preserve as much as possible for future generations.

Therefore, will the Council form a working party looking into:

- i. securing the long term preservation of Cockham Wood Fort and assist in the development of a workable conservation plan through awareness and engagement.
- ii. conducting a new detailed conservation survey as well as getting copies of Historic England survey report last carried out between 2002/16.
- iii. starting a professional vegetation management plan clearing overgrowth without damaging the architectural fabric and to help reduce root damage.
- iv. engaging Kent Archaeological Society and/or local museums to carry out interpretation of the site. ”

Question G – Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Turpin, will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Vince Maple the following:

“Further to the new plans for the Innovation Park Medway, please can you give a breakdown of money that has been spent to date, detailing the loan commitments

and how this historic spend would have been necessary, or not, for the future of the site?”

Question H – Councillor George Perfect, will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Vince Maple the following:

“Can the Leader give details of whether the Cabinet will set out in its budget proposals for 2026/27 that it has a deliverable plan to eliminate the need for Exceptional Financial Support within the next two years, prior to local government reorganisation?”

Question I – Councillor Mark Joy, will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Vince Maple the following:

“What is the projected interest burden, which the Cabinet has to factor in to its future budget proposals, from borrowing under EFS?”

Question J – Councillor Andrew Lawrence, will ask the Portfolio Holder of Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Alex Paterson the following:

“Can the Portfolio Holder please provide an update on the progress being made on Medway 2.0 against the agreed delivery schedule? In giving his answer, he should confirm:

1. The number of completed projects to be delivered this financial year.
2. The number delivered on so far.
3. The number that are currently behind schedule.
4. The budgeted savings expected and the value that has been realised.”

Question K – Councillor David Brake, will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Vince Maple the following:

“Explaining why they have not closed the budget gap, can you provide a breakdown of savings realised from procurement reforms?”