

Medway Council
Meeting of Medway Council
Thursday, 16 October 2025 (original meeting)
7.00pm to 9:36pm
Thursday, 13 November 2025 (reconvened meeting)
9:10pm to 11:05pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next Full Council meeting

Present: The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway (Councillor Clarke)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Spring, apologies for 13 November), Councillors Anang, Animashaun (apologies for 13 November), Barrett (apologies for 13 November), Bowen, Brake, Browne, Campbell, Cook, Coombs (apologies for 16 October), Crozer (apologies for 16 October), Curry, Doe (apologies for 16 October), Etheridge, Fearn (apologies for 13 November), Field, Filmer, Finch, Gilbourne (apologies for 13 November), Gulvin (apologies for 13 November), Gurung, Hackwell BEM, Hamandishe, Hamilton, Howcroft-Scott (apologies for 13 November), Hubbard, Hyne, Jackson, Jones, Joy, Kemp, Lammas, Lawrence (apologies for 13 November), Mahil, Mandaracas, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Myton, Nestorov, Nestorova, Paterson, Peake, Pearce, Perfect, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Price (apologies for 13 November), Sands, Shokar, Spalding, Stamp, Tejan, Mrs Turpin, Van Dyke, Vye, Wilday and Williams

In Attendance: Richard Hicks, Chief Executive
Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director, Legal and Governance (13 November 2025 only)
Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services
Vicky Nutley, Head of Legal Services (16 October 2025 only)
Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer

357 Apologies for absence

For the portion of the meeting held on 16 October 2025, apologies for absence were received from Councillors Coombs, Crozer and Doe.

For the portion of the meeting held on 13 November 2025, apologies for absence were received from Councillors Animashaun, Barrett, Fearn, Gilbourne, Gulvin, Howcroft-Scott, Lawrence, Price and Spring.

358 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

Councillor Cook declared an interest in Agenda Item No.13 (Annual Review of the School Place Planning Strategy 2022 – 2027) as she is a senior leader at the Leigh Academies Trust. Councillor Cook did not participate in discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor Perfect declared an interest in Agenda Item No.13 (Annual Review of the School Place Planning Strategy 2022 – 2027) as he is a member of the Beyond Schools Trust that operates Fort Pitt Grammar School. Councillor Perfect did not participate in discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor Mrs Turpin declared an interest in Motion 8B (Houses in Multiple Occupation) as she is a landlord of this type of property. Councillor Mrs Turpin did not participate in discussion and voting on the item.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

359 Record of meeting

The record of the Full Council meeting held on 17 July 2025 was approved and signed by the Worshipful the Mayor as correct.

360 Mayor's announcements

The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway presented cheques in recognition of the total of the £9,850 raised for the Mayoral Charities during Councillor Nestorov's Mayoral year. These charities were the Medway Culture Club and the Halpern Charitable Foundation/Nucleus Arts. Each charity would receive £4,925, recognising and supporting their invaluable work in the local community.

Baby Loss Awareness Week had recently taken place, to remember babies lost and the impact on parents and families. As arranged by Councillor McDonald, pink and blue ribbons had been placed on each Member's desk as a gesture of remembrance and solidarity with all those affected by baby loss.

The Mayor thanked everyone who had attended his charity curry night which had recently been held at Spice Fusion.

The next two events that would be taking place to help fundraise for this year's Mayoral charities, Caring Hands and Slide Away, would be Charles Dickens' A

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Christmas Carol at Eastgate House on 29 November and a pantomime at the Oasthouse Theatre in Rainham, which would be Robin Hood. Tickets for these events were available from the Mayor's office.

Decision:

The Council agreed to suspend Council rules to limit the number of speakers per motion to the proposer and seconder, plus up to 10% of each group (rounded up) as follows:

- Labour and Co-operative Group – 4
- Conservative Group – 2
- Independent Group – 1
- Reform UK Group – 1
- Independent Members – 1

The same number of speakers would be allowed for each amendment to a motion.

361 Leader's announcements

The Leader thanked Councillors from across the political spectrum who had reached out following an attack on the Labour Party office in Rochester and Strood. He also thanked Kent Police for their ongoing investigation.

It was announced that the Assistant Director of Culture and Community, Mark Breathwick, would shortly be leaving the Council. Mark was thanked for his service to the people of Medway and wished well for the future.

362 Petitions

Public:

There were none.

Member:

There were none.

363 Public questions

Question A – John Baker, of Gillingham, submitted the following to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry:

“While the draft Local Plan acknowledges the need to consider Article 4 Directions, it offers no firm commitment or timeline. With other local authorities actively adopting Article 4 protections, there is now a growing risk that developers will increasingly target areas like Medway where those safeguards

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are absent. This could result in the loss of family homes, disruption to community cohesion, and irreversible changes to residential neighbourhoods.

Will the Cabinet therefore urgently commit to accelerating the Article 4 Direction process as a standalone priority, rather than deferring it to the broader Local Plan timeline?"

In response, Councillor Curry said that Article 4 directions in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) had generally been brought forward in university towns and related to specific areas within those towns/cities within close proximity to the universities.

There had recently been an increase in the number of HMOs within Medway and urban areas. This was a specific reaction to the housing crisis that the country and the south east was facing due to the availability and cost of either buying or renting a property. HMOs had an important role to play in the housing market and many provided a good standard of affordable accommodation for key workers and young professionals, which was much needed in Medway and other areas. This needed to be balanced against the protection of family homes provision.

The existing and emerging Local Plans had policies to guide when HMOs would be acceptable. In addition, HMOs of five tenants which formed two or more households and used shared facilities required mandatory licensing under the Housing Act 2004. This function was undertaken by the Private Sector Housing Team. Following an initial tenure intelligence activity, a feasibility study had been completed earlier in 2025 to review the viability and capacity to introduce additional licensing. Additional licensing was a discretionary scheme that a local authority could introduce following due council process and formal public consultation. Additional licensing provided local authorities extra powers under the Housing Act 2004 to designate areas within their district as subject to additional licensing, which allowed for regulation of smaller HMOs. Additional Licensing required landlords within a designated area, where three or more persons from two or more households shared basic amenities to have a licence.

In relation to planning, it was accepted that properties over a certain age could be converted to HMOs for no more than six people, living independently but sharing facilities like bathrooms, kitchens and living areas, without requiring planning permission. Some authorities were now doing work to support bringing in an Article 4 direction in part of their areas. A general Article 4 direction covering the whole of a Local Authority area could not be justified and would not get through the Article 4 approval process.

The process for Article 4 directions was clearly set out in legislation and national planning guidance and must be based on evidence and justification and consultation with affected property owners and the public. It was recognised that such directions could be used to maintain control over developments that could impact the character and quality of neighbourhoods.

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Councillor Curry committed to producing the necessary evidence which would be needed to support and justify Article 4 directions in parts of Medway and for this activity to run alongside work on the Local Plan.

No supplementary question was asked as John Baker was not present and the question had been asked on his behalf.

Question B - William Burvill, of Strood, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“Can the Medway Labour leader clarify whether, like the Labour Party at conference, they believe the 88,997 residents here in Medway who voted Leave are racists, fascists, bigots, or people who hate their own country?”

In response, Councillor Maple said that the answer to the question was ‘no’ as the statement contained in the question was not correct. He gave examples of Reform UK Councillors whom he considered held such views; Mark Broadhurst, Daniel Taylor, Jaymey McCiver and Christopher Hesp.

William Burvill did not ask a supplementary question.

Question C – Alan Wells, of Chatham, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“In this 80th year since the formation of the United Nations, I am asking this question on behalf of Medway United Nations Association.

While the United Nations (UN) doesn't directly influence a Local Plan's content, local councils are encouraged to align their plans with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as local governments are considered best-placed to link global goals to local communities.

All of the SDGs have targets that are directly or indirectly related to the daily work of local and regional governments. Local governments are policy makers, catalysts of change and the level of government best-placed to link the global goals with local communities.

I would, therefore like to ask the following:-

What impact or influence has the UN's SDGs had on the decisions the Council has made in aligning its policies and priorities for localising the 17 global goals, particularly in areas like climate action and social deprivation?”

In response, Councillor Maple said he was proud that the United Nations flag would be flown at Gun Wharf on the Friday in the week following the Council meeting. SDGs were critically important and influenced policy in relation to the Local Plan and other matters.

Councillor Maple highlighted a few examples.

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In relation to Climate Change, Medway's Climate Change Action Plan (2025–2028), set out the ambition of net zero by 2050 and lay out a set of priority themes (Knowledge and empowerment; Clean, efficient and equitable energy; Sustainable travel and transport; Resource efficiency and Green and resilient Medway). This Strategy also explicitly linked to the regional Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy which addressed broader regional action on emissions, air quality and fuel poverty.

The Medway Local Plan included explicit references to “meeting the challenge of climate change,” promoting sustainable design and transport, and ensuring new development would be resilient to future climate pressures. The plan also included water efficiency and sustainable drainage strategies, acknowledging the pressures of climate change on water supply, and treated climate change as a key vulnerability, especially for flood risk, sea level rise, drought and shifting rainfall patterns.

Medway had declared its ambition to become a Marmot place in April 2025. This status recognised that health and health inequalities were mostly shaped by the social determinants of health and the place element took action to improve health and reduce health inequalities. The aim was to halve health inequalities in Medway over the next ten years, working on the eight Marmot principles, which were complementary of the 17 UN's SDG goals.

Alan Wells did not ask a supplementary question.

364 Motions

Motion A – Proposed by Councillor Tejan and supported by Councillor Hackwell:

“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.

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- 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."

Decision:

Upon being put to the vote the motion was lost.

Motion B – proposed by Councillor Finch and supported by Councillor Lammes:

“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.

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- 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)."

Councillor Louwella Prenter, supported by Councillor Curry, proposed the following amendment:

'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. with some family homes being converted into multi-tenant properties.

- This trend is contributing to increased pressure on local services, on-street parking congestion, noise complaints, and changes to the character of residential areas. has placed additional pressure on local services and affected the character of some 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. and an evidence-led review of housing licensing arrangements is currently underway.~~

- 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. ~~specifically address the risks of HMO clustering, loss of family housing and reduced amenity, supported by a detailed evidence base.~~
- ~~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 and 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. The Cabinet has already agreed to bring forward a report in October 2025 on the potential introduction of Additional and Selective Licensing Schemes, and will consider the case for further controls, including possible Article 4 Directions where justified.~~
- ~~Officers are engaging with other local authorities and government departments to ensure Medway's approach aligns with best practice and responds to local housing pressures.~~

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. ~~is already taking steps to manage the spread and impact of HMOs to protect residents and community balance.~~
- Residents have a right to be consulted on the future of housing in their neighbourhoods, including how HMOs are planned and regulated. ~~That the Conservative and Liberal Democrats Coalition Government's 2010 decision to extend permitted development rights — allowing homes to be converted into small HMOs without planning permission — has had unintended consequences, undermining local control and has contributed to the loss of family housing.~~

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- ~~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. Any new designations or controls must be based on robust evidence and be proportionate and deliverable.~~

This Council therefore resolves to request the Cabinet to: recognise and support ongoing work to strengthen HMO regulation in Medway, and 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). Welcome the ongoing work already commissioned by Cabinet to review housing licensing and HMO regulation in Medway.~~
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. Request that this work continues to consider the use of Article 4 Directions, Additional Licensing Schemes and Supplementary Planning Documents where evidence supports their introduction.~~
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. Note that a Cabinet report on Additional and Selective Licensing is scheduled for October 2025 and will inform any future decisions on HMO regulation.~~
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. Reaffirm the Council's commitment to evidence-based policymaking and ensuring high standards across all rented housing in Medway.'~~

Amended motion reads:

'This Council notes that:

- The number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) has increased in parts of Medway, with some family homes being converted into multi-tenant properties.
- This trend has placed additional pressure on local services and affected the character of some residential areas.

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- Medway currently operates a mandatory HMO licensing scheme for larger HMOs (five or more occupants forming two or more households) and an evidence-led review of housing licensing arrangements is currently underway.
- The Draft Medway Local Plan (2025) (Policy T8) and associated evidence base specifically address the risks of HMO clustering, loss of family housing and reduced amenity, supported by a detailed evidence base.
- The Cabinet has already agreed to bring forward a report in October 2025 on the potential introduction of Additional and Selective Licensing Schemes, and will consider the case for further controls, including possible Article 4 Directions where justified.
- Officers are engaging with other local authorities and government departments to ensure Medway's approach aligns with best practice and responds to local housing pressures.

This Council believes:

- Medway is already taking steps to manage the spread and impact of HMOs to protect residents and community balance.
- That the Conservative and Liberal Democrats Coalition Government's 2010 decision to extend permitted development rights — allowing homes to be converted into small HMOs without planning permission — has had unintended consequences, undermining local control and has contributed to the loss of family housing.
- Any new designations or controls must be based on robust evidence and be proportionate and deliverable.

This Council therefore resolves to recognise and support ongoing work to strengthen HMO regulation in Medway, and to:

1. Welcome the ongoing work already commissioned by Cabinet to review housing licensing and HMO regulation in Medway.
2. Request that this work continues to consider the use of Article 4 Directions, Additional Licensing Schemes and Supplementary Planning Documents where evidence supports their introduction.
3. Note that a Cabinet report on Additional and Selective Licensing is scheduled for October 2025 and will inform any future decisions on HMO regulation.
4. Reaffirm the Council's commitment to evidence-based policymaking and ensuring high standards across all rented housing in Medway.'

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was agreed.

Decision:

Upon being put to the vote, the substantive motion was carried.

This Council notes that:

- The number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) has increased in parts of Medway, with some family homes being converted into multi-tenant properties.
- This trend has placed additional pressure on local services and affected the character of some residential areas.
- Medway currently operates a mandatory HMO licensing scheme for larger HMOs (five or more occupants forming two or more households) and an evidence-led review of housing licensing arrangements is currently underway.
- The Draft Medway Local Plan (2025) (Policy T8) and associated evidence base specifically address the risks of HMO clustering, loss of family housing and reduced amenity, supported by a detailed evidence base.
- The Cabinet has already agreed to bring forward a report in October 2025 on the potential introduction of Additional and Selective Licensing Schemes, and will consider the case for further controls, including possible Article 4 Directions where justified.
- Officers are engaging with other local authorities and government departments to ensure Medway's approach aligns with best practice and responds to local housing pressures.

This Council believes:

- Medway is already taking steps to manage the spread and impact of HMOs to protect residents and community balance.
- That the Conservative and Liberal Democrats Coalition Government's 2010 decision to extend permitted development rights — allowing homes to be converted into small HMOs without planning permission — has had unintended consequences, undermining local control and has contributed to the loss of family housing.
- Any new designations or controls must be based on robust evidence and be proportionate and deliverable.

This Council therefore resolves to recognise and support ongoing work to strengthen HMO regulation in Medway, and to:

1. Welcome the ongoing work already commissioned by Cabinet to review housing licensing and HMO regulation in Medway.
2. Request that this work continues to consider the use of Article 4 Directions, Additional Licensing Schemes and Supplementary Planning Documents where evidence supports their introduction.
3. Note that a Cabinet report on Additional and Selective Licensing is scheduled for October 2025 and will inform any future decisions on HMO regulation.
4. Reaffirm the Council's commitment to evidence-based policymaking and ensuring high standards across all rented housing in Medway.

Motion C – The motion published in the agenda was withdrawn by Councillor Sands and was therefore not discussed.

Motion D – proposed by Councillor Maple and supported by Councillor Mark Prenter:

‘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.

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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.’

Councillor Lammas, supported by Councillor Finch, proposed the following amendment:

‘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

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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 cross-party 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, drawing their attention to the KCC-led event on 26th September and 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. **Continue to 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.’

Amended motion reads:

‘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

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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.
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This Council resolves to:

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2. **Write to** the Secretary of State for Transport, the Rail Minister, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), and local Members of Parliament, drawing their attention to the KCC-led event on 26th September and 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. **Continue to 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.’

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

Decision:

Upon being put to the vote, the substantive motion was carried.

This Council notes that:

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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,

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while highlighting the economic, cultural, and tourism benefits to Medway.

365 Leader's report

Discussion:

Members received the Leader's Report. The following issues were discussed:

- Baton of Hope – the Kent and Medway leg of this initiative to raise awareness of issues around suicide and suicide prevention.
- Local Government Reorganisation – Work on plans continued at pace with Medway proceeding with submission of its preferred option. A variety of engagement had taken place and formal public consultation would take place in 2026.
- Recent local events and activities – these included the Historic Places Panel, the Summer Reading Challenge, the Medway Peace Poem as part of Victory in Japan Day Celebrations, the 5th anniversary of Medway Development Company, the International Dance Festival held at Medway Park, the Child Friendly Medway Annual Report, the raising of a flag at Gun Wharf in support of the England Women's Rugby Team, who had won the World Cup, the Kent Charity Awards held at the Corn Exchange, the Sticks and Stones Festival, the Taste of the Caribbean event held at Great Lines Park, the hosting of a plane inside Rochester Cathedral, the Rainham Community Awards, the Thomas Aveling anniversary event and the Medway Mile.
- Gillingham and Chatham Town football clubs were wished luck for their forthcoming FA Cup First Round matches.
- The increase in nightingales at Lodge Farm Hill and the designation of a Chalk Stream by Natural England.
- Condemnation of the recent attack on a Medway Labour Party Office.
- The development of the Medway Local Plan.

366 Members' questions

Question A – Councillor Tejan, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“The Budget is the responsibility of Full Council. Can the Leader of the Council please confirm whether the administration has a deliverable plan to eliminate the need for Exceptional Financial Support within the next three years, and if so how?”

In response, Councillor Maple said that a Financial Improvement Plan (FIP) Plan was in place which aimed to address this. Cabinet Members were speaking to senior officers every week having collective conversations as a team of 25. Work was also taking place with CIPFA. The ambition was to not require any Exceptional Financial Support by February 2026, which would be challenging. The Local Government Financial Settlement was not now due to be announced until the end of December and would be a multi-year settlement,

which was a change from the multi-year settlements of recent years. Councillor Maple thanked Katey Durkin, the Council's former Chief Finance Officer for her hard work in helping to address the financial challenges the Council faced.

Question B – Councillor Pearce, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“Does the Leader of the Council believe it's acceptable for Senior Officers to describe Medway Councillors as xenophobic publicly online?”

In response, Councillor Maple said that the question had made reference to a senior officer. He would not regard the individual in question as being a senior officer as although they had senior in their job title, a senior role would generally be regarded as a member of the Corporate Management Team. Councillor Maple was satisfied with how the issue had been addressed through HR policies.

Question C – Councillor Finch, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“In your recent video about ‘Operation Raise the Colours’, you said: "We will be looking to remove these [flags] as soon as is practically possible."

Given that these flags were not raised by the Council but by local residents celebrating Medway's maritime heritage and national pride - values shared by people of every background in Medway, could the Leader explain why this administration believes removing these expressions of community spirit will "knit our community together" as he claimed, rather than risk dividing residents further?”

In response, Councillor Maple said that St Margaret's Church had organised an excellent meeting in relation to the matter. It had been made clear that if a flag was put on a Council owned lamppost the law was being broken, which was not acceptable. He said that If Reform UK thought that breaking the law was acceptable that was a matter for them. Councillor Maple was pleased that the Leader of the Conservative opposition had offered support on this matter. He encouraged Members to read an article by Kevin Hollinrake MP on the issue of flags, which dealt with the issue in a sensible way.

367 Medway Youth Justice Plan 2025-2026

Background:

The report set out that Crime and Disorder Act 1998, required Local Authorities to have a Youth Justice Plan, which was updated annually to set out how youth justice would be delivered locally within available resources.

The Plan was a completely new plan in line with guidance distributed to local authorities in March 2024. The format of the Plan followed guidance and headings provided by the National Youth Justice Board for England and Wales

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in the guidance mentioned, detailing best practice in completion of the Youth Justice Plans.

The report had previously been considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 August 2025 and by the Cabinet on 23 September 2025, the draft minutes and decisions of which were set out at sections 5 and 6 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Price, supported by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

- a) The Council noted the comments of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the decisions of the Cabinet, as set out at sections 5 and 6 of the report.
- b) The Council approved the Medway Youth Justice Plan 2025 – 2026.

368 Annual Review of the School Place Planning Strategy 2022 - 2027

Background:

This annual review showed areas of demand and made recommendations to ensure that sufficient school places would be available.

The report set out that Medway Council had a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places. The School Place Planning Strategy described the principles, methods, and challenges of this duty.

The proposals in the annual review followed the School Place Planning Strategy Principles. They also supported the Council Plan sub-priority to “Ensure all children and young people access a high-quality, inclusive education.”

The report was previously considered by the Cabinet on 26 August 2025, the decisions of which were set out at section 11 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Price, supported by Councillor Mandaracas, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Due to the decision to adjourn consideration of remainder of the agenda until the Special Council meeting on 13 November 2025, the report was moved, seconded and agreed without discussion.

Decisions:

- a) The Council noted the decisions of the Cabinet as set out at section 11 of the report.
- b) The Council agreed the addition of the school projects marked as “new”, listed in paragraph 8.2 of the report, to the education capital programme.
- c) The Council agreed the additional funding for the school projects marked as “additional funding”, listed in paragraph 8.2 of the report.

369 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned due to a medical incident at 9:36 pm. Due to the length of this adjournment, it was agreed that consideration and determination of agenda item No 12 and Agenda Item Nos 14 to 21 would be adjourned until after the Special Meeting of the Council, due to be held on 13 November 2025.

Note: please refer to page 1 of these minutes for information relating to Members' and officers' attendance at the reconvened meeting held on 13 November 2025.

370 Care for Medway: Feasibility Study Outcomes Build and Operate a Care Home

Background:

This report set out that in February 2025, Cabinet had been asked to review the initial proposal and draft specification for a Medway Council owned and operated care home. The care home was to comprise a 40-bed residential/nursing unit for older people living with dementia, and a 40-bed enablement/respite unit to support people to move home from hospital and to provide respite for Carers.

The Cabinet had approved the proposal to commission an in-depth analysis of costs associated with building and operating a care facility on existing Council owned land.

This report presented the outcomes of the study and asked the Council to agree additions to the Capital Programme, following the Cabinet having agreed next steps on 29 July 2025.

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, supported by Councillor McDonald, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

In accordance with Rule 12.4 of the Council Rules, a recorded vote on the proposal was taken:

For: Councillors Bowen, Browne, Campbell, Cook, Coombs, Crozer, Curry, Field, Gurung, Hamandishe, Hamilton, Hubbard, Jackson, Jones, Mahil,

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Mandaracas, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Myton, Nestorov, Nestorova, Paterson, Peake, Pearce, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Sands, Shokar, Spalding, Stamp, Mrs Turpin, Van Dyke and Williams. (34)

Against: Councillors Anang, Brake, Clarke, Doe, Etheridge, Filmer, Finch, Hackwell, Hyne, Joy, Kemp, Lammas, Perfect, Tejan, Vye and Wildey. (16)

Abstain: None.

The proposal was agreed.

Decisions:

- a) The Council noted the decisions of the Cabinet, as set out at section 6 of the report.
- b) The Council agreed the addition of up to £37 million to the Capital programme, inclusive of external project costs through to RIBA 7, internal capitalised project staff salaries, and initial work to deliver the whole of the IPM Southern site masterplan.
- c) The Council agreed the addition of £7 million to the Capital programme to deliver the rest of the masterplan.

371 Adoption of Updated Byelaws to Regulate Acupuncture, Tattooing, Electrolysis, Semi Permanent Skin Colouring, Cosmetic and Ear Piercing

Background:

This report sought approval for the adoption of consolidated model Byelaws to regulate premises carrying out acupuncture, tattooing, electrolysis, semi-permanent skin colouring, cosmetic and ear piercing within Medway.

This would also require revocation of the existing two sets of The City of Rochester Upon Medway Byelaws that regulated both tattooing, and ear piercing and electrolysis, in accordance with sections 14 and 15 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 as amended by section 120 of the Local Government Act 2003.

These byelaws had been adopted by Medway Council at its formation in 1998 and had remained in force since then.

The report had previously been considered by the Licensing and Safety Committee on 5 August 2025, the comments of which were set out at section 6 of the report.

Councillor McDonald, supported by Councillor Browne, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

- a) The Council noted the minutes of the Licensing and Safety Committee, as set out at section 6 of the report.
- b) The Council approved the adoption of the Acupuncture, tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing and electrolysis Byelaws, as set out in sections 1 to 5 of Appendix 1 to the report.
- c) The Council agreed to revoke the Byelaws currently in force, namely: 'Byelaws relating to ear piercing and electrolysis' and 'Byelaws relating to tattooing', made by the City of Rochester Upon Medway, under section 15 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.

372 Councillor Conduct

Background:

The report set out that the Councillor Conduct Committee had considered a report setting out the findings of an investigation into an alleged breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct. The Committee determined that Councillor Spalding had breached the Code and had recommended that the Council censure him.

Councillor McDonald, supported by Councillor Kemp, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council censured Councillor Spalding for the reasons set out in paragraph 4.6 of the report.

373 Review of the Constitution

Background:

The report set out that a number of measures to reduce the length of full Council meetings had been trialled since the Council elections held in May 2023. These had included motions being debated earlier on the agenda, a limited number of speakers on motions and questions by the public and Members on executive functions to be considered at Cabinet meetings.

This report recommended that those measures that had been trialled be made permanent by changes to the Council procedure rules and that further options, considered at the cross-party governance meetings be adopted too, with particular reference to the rules on Council motions, for which there were a variety of views and for which there was support from the two largest political groups whilst the two smallest political groups were opposed to the proposed changes to the rules on Council motions. During debate, it was noted that the discussion of these matters at the cross-party governance meetings did not

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signify that all Members supported such changes. In addition, external legal advice obtained by the Deputy Leader of the Reform UK Group on the proposed changes to the rules on Council motions had been shared with all Members in advance of this meeting.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, supported by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

In accordance with Rule 12.4 of the Council Rules, a recorded vote on the proposal was taken:

For: Councillors Anang, Bowen, Brake, Browne, Campbell, Clarke, Cook, Coombs, Curry, Doe, Etheridge, Field, Filmer, Gurung, Hackwell, Hamandishe, Hamilton, Hubbard, Hyne, Jackson, Jones, Joy, Kemp, Mahil, Mandaracas, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Myton, Nestorov, Nestorova, Paterson, Peake, Perfect, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Stamp, Tejan, Van Dyke and Wildey. (40)

Against: Councillors Crozer, Finch, Lammas, Pearce, Sands, Spalding, Mrs Turpin, Vye and Williams. (9)

Abstain: Councillor Shokar. (1)

The proposal was agreed.

Decision:

The Council approved the changes to the Council Rules and Article 6 (Overview and Scrutiny Rules) of the Constitution, as set out in Appendices A and B to the report in respect of changes to the arrangements for conducting full Council meetings.

374 Audit Committee - Review of Terms of Reference

Background:

This report requested that the Council agree to adopt changes to the Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee.

The report explained that establishment and terms of reference of Council committees were outside the Council's policy and budget framework; any revisions to the terms of reference must be approved by Council.

The current Audit Committee Terms of Reference had last been reviewed in June 2024 and were documented in the Constitution of the Council.

The report had previously considered by the Audit Committee on 31 July 2025, the minutes of which were set out at section 5 of the report.

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Councillor Browne, supported by Councillor Nestorov, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

- a) The Council noted the minutes of the Audit Committee, as set out at section 5 of the report.
- b) The Council agreed to adopt the suggested changes to the Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee as set out in appendix 2 to the report.

375 Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report

Background:

The Corporate Parenting Board Annual report summarised the work on the Board over the last year, outlined progress against the strategy and set out the priorities for the coming year 2025-26.

The Annual Report was a way of demonstrating engagement and commitment to the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities, as set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 which defined for the first time in law the responsibility of corporate parents to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for children in the Council's care and for care leavers.

In 2025, the Government had expanded corporate parenting responsibilities through amendments to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. These changes placed a new legal duty on all government departments and public bodies including NHS bodies, Ofsted, schools, and the Youth Justice Board, to actively promote the wellbeing and life opportunities of children in care and care leavers up to age 25.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Coombs, supported by Councillor Joy, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council noted the progress made against the Corporate Parenting Strategy as set out in the attached Annual Report.

376 Report on Overview and Scrutiny Activity

Background:

This report provided a summary of the work of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees since the last report to Council on 17 July 2025.

Some of the topics discussed included:

- The recent conclusion of a Member Overview and Scrutiny Task Group.

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- The importance of joint working between the Council and partner organisations and the positive cross-party scrutiny undertaken.
- The replacement of the quarterly Scrutiny Activity to full Council by an annual report.
- Health scrutiny and the range of challenging topics being scrutinised, such as the merging of ambulance trusts and the difficulty in establishing meetings of the Kent and Medway Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Thanks were given to the Committee Members and to the Democratic Services Team for their support of the committees. Particular thanks were also given to the Councillors and officers involved in the two Committees held on the same night in October.

Councillor Tejan, supported by Councillor Field, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council noted the report.

377 Use of Urgency Provisions

Background:

This report provided details of recent usage of urgency provisions contained within the Constitution.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, supported by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decision:

The Council noted the use of urgency provisions as set out in section 4 of the report.

Mayor

Date:

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