

Public Questions

Question A – Alan Wells, of Chatham, will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Vince Maple, the following:

"I am asking this question on behalf of myself as part of Medway United Nations Association. I am sure the Council would agree with me that the appalling scenes we have witnessed in the Middle East have been shocking to witness.

The UK is one of the world's top arms exporters, with 2025 seeing a record-breaking £20 billion+ in defence export deals.

The Kent Pension Fund (KPF) operates under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) funds. Funds are invested in a number of companies supplying weapons or military technology.

The Kent Pension Fund manages pensions for Medway Council employees. These investments total hundreds of millions of pounds across the LGPS.

The Kent County Council (KCC) pension fund has faced scrutiny for investments in companies implicated in international arms trades, including those linked to conflicts in Yemen and Gaza. The LGPS funds, including Kent's, by investing in companies, have enabled violations of international law.

Waltham Forest Council's Pension Committee formally confirmed on 25 March 2026 that it can divest from companies linked to the international arms trade without any material detrimental impact on its financial position.

When explosive weapons are used in populated areas, civilians account for roughly 90% of all casualties.

My question is this: There have been calls to move towards more ethical investments, including divesting from potential military ties, with campaigns highlighting the ethical implications of using public sector pensions for these investments. Would the Council consider using Waltham Forest Council's example and commit to a gradual and proactive divestment, from some of those companies recklessly supplying weapons, as part of the international arms trade, resulting in widespread civilian casualties."