

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Medway Council**  
**Thursday, 23 April 2026**  
**7.00pm to 10.47pm**

**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) Councillors Anang,  
Bowen, Brake, Cook, Coombs, Crozer, Curry, Doe, Etheridge,  
Fearn, Field, Filmer, Finch, Gilbourne, Gulvin, Gurung,  
Hackwell BEM, Hamandishe, Hamilton, Howcroft-Scott,  
Hubbard, Hyne, Jackson, Jones, Joy, Kemp, Lammass,  
Lawrence, Mahil, Mandaracas, Maple, McDonald, Murray,  
Myton, Nestorov, Nestorova, Paterson, Peake, Pearce, Perfect,  
Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Price, Sands, Shokar, Spalding,  
Stamp, Tejan, Mrs Turpin, Van Dyke and Vye

**In Attendance:** Richard Hicks, Chief Executive  
Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director, Legal and Governance  
Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services  
Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer

**866 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Animashaun, Barrett, Browne, Campbell, Spalding, Wildey and Williams.

**867 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

**868 Record of meeting**

The record of the Full Council meeting held on 25 February 2026 was approved and signed by Worshipful the Mayor as correct.

**869 Mayor's announcements**

The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway announced that his final Mayoral event of the year would be a Thanksgiving Celebration evening at the Corn Exchange on Friday 1 May.

The Mayor said he had recently met a 10 year-old, Bobby, who had raised over £1000 for the Oliver Fisher NICU at Medway Hospital, following his younger brother having received life saving treatment there. The Mayor had met Bobby in the previous week and presented him with the Young Citizen Award.

The Mayor announced that agenda item no.11 (HRA Acquisition of Registered Providers Residential Stock Profile in Medway) would be moved to be considered as the last agenda item during the meeting. This was to facilitate discussion of the exempt information contained within the report. It was anticipated that the press and public would be excluded from the meeting during this discussion and that they would be readmitted in advance of decision making.

**870 Leader's announcements**

The Leader wished everyone a happy St George's Day.

**871 Petitions**

**Public:**

There were none.

**Member:**

There were none.

**872 Public questions**

**Question A – Alan Wells, of Chatham, asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor 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.

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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?"

In response, Councillor Maple said that unlike other councils across the country, Medway Council was part of a wider pension fund, in this case the Kent Pension Fund. These structures would be looked at as part of Local Government Reorganisation. Medway Councillor, Mark Jones, who had significant pensions expertise and knowledge, both from his civil service and trade union background, was ensuring that those conversations were happening.

The Pension Fund had recently started an investment sub-group, which had held its first meeting and would be meeting again the following month. Councillor Jones had attended both the main Committee and the sub-group. Various aspects of pension fund investments had been considered previously, such as environmental issues or tobacco and most recently the situation raised by the question. There was a statutory responsibility for the funds to be managed carefully for those who had given service to local government in Medway and Kent. This management needed to take into account issues such as war, defence investment and the environment. Councillor Maple was confident that the sub-group, which was looking at these ethical issues, would take that into account in due course.

Alan Wells asked the following supplementary question:

‘Several councils had passed symbolic motions asking their pension fund representatives to raise ethical investment concerns with the administering authority. The motions did not bind the pension fund, but expressed the council's position and asked its representative to advocate for the change. Would Council consider moving forward a similar symbolic motion?’

In response, Councillor Maple said he had answered a similar question, at a previous meeting, about bringing forward motions. Political Groups were responsible for bringing them forward and each political group had their own methodologies for deciding which issues or motions came forward. There had recently been alterations to how motions and numbers of motions would come forward. Each of the four Groups had heard the issues raised and would give them due consideration when bringing forward motions in due course.

### **873 Motions**

#### **Motion A – proposed by Councillor Perfect and supported by Councillor Joy:**

‘The Council notes that Medway Council's statutory role in health is on improving public health, reducing health inequalities, and integrating care services. Established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Council works through its Health and Wellbeing Board to assess local needs via the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and set strategy, while the Director of Public Health produces an independent annual report on population health.

The Council notes the significant change and pressure currently within the local healthcare system including within the Medway NHS Foundation Trust and the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB). The Council regrets another change in leadership at Medway NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) and is concerned about the emerging financial crisis at the Kent and Medway ICB. These changes directly impact the Council's ability to ensure its social care services can be delivered alongside a strongly performing healthcare system, as well as ensuring it can focus on improving public health and reducing health inequalities.

The Council notes that Adult Social Care has the most pressure of any division within the Council, with the most recent Round 3 Revenue Budget Monitoring showing a pressure of around £12m, and the fact that Adult Social Care shows growing demand every year, it being widely accepted that additional pressure on the system is created by other parts of the healthcare system failing.

The Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to raise concerns regarding the way in which challenges within the current healthcare system could impact on the Council's ability to provide public services and meet its statutory duties laid out above.’

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Councillor Mrs Turpin, supported by Councillor Pearce, proposed the following amendment:

'The Council notes that Medway Council's statutory role in health is on improving public health, reducing health inequalities, and integrating care services. Established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Council works through its Health and Wellbeing Board to assess local needs via the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and set strategy, while the Director of Public Health produces an independent annual report on population health.

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The Council resolves to

1. Write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to raise concerns regarding the way in which challenges within the current healthcare system could impact on the Council's ability to provide public services and meet its statutory duties laid out above **and therefore care for our adult population.**
2. **Request a formal written response from the Department of Health and Social Care within 8 weeks, specifically addressing: - a long term financial strategy for local authorities to ensure they are able to meet the needs of an aging population with increasing complex health needs. - The financial position of the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB); - Leadership stability at Medway NHS Foundation Trust; - The impact of NHS pressures on local authority Adult Social Care demand.**
3. **Establish a cross-party task group to review Adult Social Care pressures to enable focused engagement with partners to discuss, understand and work to resolve current areas that are overwhelmed or in danger of becoming overwhelmed and report back to Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee within 9 months with: Recommendations to meet**

**demand; Opportunities for improved integration with NHS services.'**

Amended motion reads:

'The Council notes that Medway Council's statutory role in health is on improving public health, reducing health inequalities, and integrating care services. Established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Council works through its Health and Wellbeing Board to assess local needs via the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and set strategy, while the Director of Public Health produces an independent annual report on population health.

The Council notes the significant change and pressure currently within the local healthcare system including within the Medway NHS Foundation Trust and the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB). The Council regrets another change in leadership at Medway NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) and is concerned about the emerging financial crisis at the Kent and Medway ICB. These changes directly impact the Council's ability to ensure its social care services can be delivered alongside a strongly performing healthcare system, as well as ensuring it can focus on improving public health and reducing health inequalities.

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1. Write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to raise concerns regarding the way in which challenges within the current healthcare system could impact on the Council's ability to provide public services and meet its statutory duties laid out above and therefore care for our adult population.
2. Request a formal written response from the Department of Health and Social Care within 8 weeks, specifically addressing: - a long term financial strategy for local authorities to ensure they are able to meet the needs of an aging population with increasing complex health needs. - The financial position of the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB); - Leadership stability at Medway NHS Foundation Trust; - The impact of NHS pressures on local authority Adult Social Care demand.
3. Establish a cross-party task group to review Adult Social Care pressures to enable focused engagement with partners to discuss, understand and work to resolve current areas that are overwhelmed or in danger of becoming overwhelmed and report back to Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee within 9 months with:

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Recommendations to meet demand; Opportunities for improved integration with NHS services.'

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

Councillor Murray, supported by Councillor McDonald, proposed the following amendment:

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The Council notes the significant change and pressure currently within the local healthcare system including within the Medway NHS Foundation Trust and the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB). ~~The Council regrets another change in leadership at Medway NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) and is concerned about the emerging financial crisis at the Kent and Medway ICB. These changes directly impact the Council's ability to ensure its social care services can be delivered alongside a strongly performing healthcare system, as well as ensuring it can focus on improving public health and reducing health inequalities.~~

**This includes the appointment of the fifth CEO at Medway Foundation Trust in the last 7 years and a major restructuring at Kent and Medway ICB who are mandated by the Government to reduce staffing costs by 50%. These changes have the potential to impact delivery of social care services whilst continuing to promote the prevention of poor health and reduce health inequalities.**

~~The Council notes that Adult Social Care has the most pressure of any division within the Council, with the most recent Round 3 Revenue Budget Monitoring showing a pressure of around £12m, and the fact that Adult Social Care shows growing demand every year, it being widely accepted that additional pressure on the system is created by other parts of the healthcare system failing.~~

**The Council continues to face challenges in financing Adult Social Care after a legacy of underfunding and rising demand despite recent local investment, increased staffing and a restructuring that has achieved innovative ways of working and embedded cost avoidance strategies. The Council welcomes the Casey Commission with a renewed mandate to come forward with a more sustainable national model for funding Adult Social Care and recognises the efforts and determination of staff to improve services and find more efficient ways of working whilst acknowledging that challenges elsewhere in the Health and Care system are creating new pressures on Adult Social care.**

The Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to raise concerns regarding the way in which challenges within the current

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healthcare system could impact on the Council's ability to provide public services and meet its statutory duties.'

Amended motion reads:

'The Council notes that Medway Council's statutory role in health is on improving public health, reducing health inequalities, and integrating care services. Established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Council works through its Health and Wellbeing Board to assess local needs via the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and set strategy, while the Director of Public Health produces an independent annual report on population health.

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The Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to raise concerns regarding the way in which challenges within the current healthcare system could impact on the Council's ability to provide public services and meet its statutory duties.'

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

### **Decision:**

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

The Council notes that Medway Council's statutory role in health is on improving public health, reducing health inequalities, and integrating care services. Established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Council works through its Health and Wellbeing Board to assess local needs via the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and set strategy, while the Director of Public Health produces an independent annual report on population health.

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The Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to raise concerns regarding the way in which challenges within the current healthcare system could impact on the Council's ability to provide public services and meet its statutory duties.

### **Motion B – proposed by Councillor Maple and supported by Councillor Perfect:**

#### **‘Civility in Public Life and the Legacy of Jo Cox**

##### **This Council notes:**

- The murders of Jo Cox MP on 16 June 2016 and Sir David Amess MP on 15 October 2021.
- That the 10th anniversary of Jo Cox's murder will take place on 16 June 2026.
- That abuse and intimidation remain ongoing issues for elected representatives, including local councillors, with research finding that 72% of councillors have experienced abuse or intimidation in the last 12 months.

##### **This Council believes:**

- That, as Jo Cox said in her maiden speech, *“the truth is that we have more in common than that which divides us.”*
- That abuse and intimidation should have no place in our politics, local or national.

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- That we should follow the example of Jo Cox, who embraced cross-party working and modelled high standards of respect and civility in public life.

### **This Council resolves:**

- To mark the 10th anniversary of Jo Cox's murder by encouraging Members to work with their local communities to organise and promote Great Get Together events.
- Continue to support efforts to increase civility and reduce abuse in politics, including through the LGA's Debate Not Hate campaign.'

### **Decision:**

Upon being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

## **874 Leader's report**

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

- The development of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposals and the public engagement held. Medway Council would not challenge the outcome of the process.
- Initial feedback received on Medway's Local Plan and preparation for the inspection process.
- Impact of the recent Meningitis outbreak and the antibiotic programme to combat it.
- Launch of the Adult Social Care Strategy and of the Crisis and Resilience Fund.
- The Medway Lottery which was helping local voluntary sector organisations.
- Allocation of more than £1million funding for Strood Community Village Hall.
- Hosting a visit to Medway of the Slovakian Ambassador.
- The Dialogue Society Iftar held at Rochester Cathedral.
- The Allotments Federation Annual General Meeting and the return of allotments to being directly managed by the Council.
- Hosting of the Medway Voluntary Action Awards and the Pride in Medway Awards to be held the day after the Council meeting.
- A Nepalese New Year Event and Chinese New Year Parade held in Medway.
- An Opportunities Fair held in the Pentagon Centre which provided hundreds of young people information on employment, training and education opportunities.
- The first anniversary of the Wigmore and Parkwood Armed Forces Breakfast Club.
- Launches of the Medway Together Fund, Women and Homelessness Project and Cozenton Park Tree Nursery.

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- Councillor Maple had Chaired the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Region of Kent MPs and Council Leader sessions at the Houses of Parliament. There had been consensus on issues such as public transport, international rail and the Grow in Kent service.
- Support of a bid submitted for Chatham to become the inaugural UK Town of Culture.
- Launch of the Medway Youth Horizons Rotary Project.
- Prevent conferences and briefings held in Medway and in Maidstone.
- Hosting of the Rochester Art Fair.
- The Return to Starboard ships that had recently visited Chatham.
- £60 million of funding that had been allocated to Medway as part of the Pride in Place Programme.
- Exceptional Financial Support.
- Concern about withdrawal of funding from Hoo Cares.
- The Hoo Peninsula's ability to cope with development and whether infrastructure plans were sufficient.

### 875 Members' questions

#### **Question A – Councillor Myton asked the Portfolio Holder for Business Management, Councillor Van Dyke, the following:**

“Can the Portfolio Holder provide the number of Medway Council Staff who reside in Medway and in doing so break this data down to ward level number(s)?”

In response, Councillor Van Dyke said that based on the workforce snapshot as of 10 April 2026, Medway Council employed 3,313 staff, of which 65.3% lived within Medway. This data excluded agency workers but did include casual and relief staff. The remaining 34.7% of staff lived outside the Medway area.

The ward-level data showed that staff living in Medway were distributed across all wards, with higher numbers in wards such as Watling, Rainham North, Rainham South East, and Strood North & Frindsbury, which reflected population patterns across the authority.

The following ward level breakdown of staff numbers was provided to all Members of the Council:

| Ward                           | Headcount | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| All Saints                     | 21        | 0.6%       |
| Chatham Central & Brompton     | 110       | 3.3%       |
| Cuxton, Halling & Riverside    | 45        | 1.4%       |
| Fort Horsted                   | 35        | 1.1%       |
| Fort Pitt                      | 111       | 3.4%       |
| Gillingham North               | 107       | 3.2%       |
| Gillingham South               | 117       | 3.5%       |
| Hempstead & Wigmore            | 66        | 2.0%       |
| Hoo St Werburgh & High Halstow | 100       | 3.0%       |

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|                              |             |               |
|------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Lordswood & Walderslade      | 108         | 3.3%          |
| Luton                        | 59          | 1.8%          |
| Princes Park                 | 89          | 2.7%          |
| Rainham North                | 130         | 3.9%          |
| Rainham South East           | 122         | 3.7%          |
| Rainham South West           | 89          | 2.7%          |
| Rochester East & Warren Wood | 109         | 3.3%          |
| Rochester West & Borstal     | 109         | 3.3%          |
| St Mary's Island             | 46          | 1.4%          |
| Strood North & Frindsbury    | 115         | 3.5%          |
| Strood Rural                 | 102         | 3.1%          |
| Strood West                  | 83          | 2.5%          |
| Twydall                      | 75          | 2.3%          |
| Watling                      | 146         | 4.4%          |
| Wayfield & Weeds Wood        | 69          | 2.1%          |
| Wayfield and Weeds Wood      | 1           | 0.0%          |
| Non Medway                   | 1149        | 34.7%         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>           | <b>3313</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

### **Question B – Councillor Mrs Turpin asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:**

"Further to the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement's comments that potholes "is something that elected Members should keep well out of", can the Leader of the Council advise Members of any other areas that elected Members, including his own backbenchers, should keep well out of?"

Councillor Paterson provided a point of personal explanation, in accordance with paragraph 11.1.4 of the Council Rules. He said that Councillor Mrs Turpin had chosen eleven words to quote in her question that failed to convey the entirety of the paragraph, which had been said on a Podcast.

Councillor Paterson quoted what he had said as follows "Road prioritisation does not happen on my whim, on my say so as an elected Member, I think this is something that elected Members should keep well out of the decision making process on and so the prioritisation is based on professional assessments, inspections, the data that we are gathering from the cameras on the front of bin lorries and actually making sure that we are doing it where it's needed, not where those who shout loudest live".

In response to the question, Councillor Maple said that his advice for all Councillors regarding things that they should keep well out of was selectively using parts of a quote.

**Question C – Councillor Spalding submitted the following to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple:**

"Local Government reorganisation for Kent and Medway continues and does so at a pace that should now be ringing alarm bells. The existing timetable suggests the chosen option for Kent and Medway is expected to be announced before the summer parliamentary recess on 16 July 2026 with new authorities planned to go live on 1 April 2028 and elections to same held on 6 May 2027.

For an election on 6 May 2027, notices of election are required to be published no later than Monday 29 March 2027. The time between announcement of the new authorities and their composition and the latest date for publishing notices of elections is some eight and a half months.

In that time not only must the Electoral Commission undertake ward/division boundary reorganisation including full consultation, but Kent and Medway need to have in place new ward/division electoral registers, and everything associated with same, such as polling districts and polling places.

When Medway changed from 55 councillors in 22 wards to 59 councillors in 24 wards, the review process took place commencing in December 2019 with the final recommendations being presented in March 2021.

The proposed changes were then approved by Parliament some six months later courtesy of The Medway (Electoral Changes) Order 2021 on 20 September 2021.

The changes therein were to take effect in May 2023.

There was a comprehensive and thorough review over time followed by a significant and adequate period of time for Medway to enact the changes at a sensible pace, which also no doubt had cost saving considerations therein.

The current proposed timetable appears rushed, clearly inadequate and unworkable.

Does the Leader of the Council agree the timetable should be amended and any changes for Kent and Medway delayed, to primarily ensure adequate and transparent consultation, as well as allow sufficient time to enact any changes at minimal cost to the taxpayers, permitting the electorate of Medway to give their verdict at the ballot box on this Labour administration?"

As Councillor Spalding was not present, the Mayor announced that he would receive a written response to his question, in accordance with Council rule 9.1.

**Question D – Councillor Sands asked the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, the following:**

“The Hoo Peninsula is expected to accommodate substantial housing growth, yet there remains a lack of clarity and certainty around healthcare provision to support that expansion.

Residents on the Peninsula already experience constrained access to GP services and routinely having to travel to Gillingham to meet basic healthcare needs. This reflects existing system pressure, not a future projection.

I believe the issue before this Council is therefore one of delivery and credibility. If housing growth proceeds without secured and timely healthcare provision, it risks undermining both resident wellbeing and their confidence. In that context, the following points require clear and accountable responses please.

What is the current baseline of GP provision serving the Hoo Peninsula? In giving her answer, the Portfolio Holder should include the projected capacity gap as development comes forward and whether the Council is working with the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board to align infrastructure planning with growth.”

In response, Councillor Murray said there were three practices on the Hoo Peninsula, St Werburgh Medical Practice, The Elms Medical Centre and Highparks Medical Practice, with a combined GP workforce. It should be noted that not all care needs needed to be provided by a GP and practices recruited a mix of trained health professionals to best meet the needs of their patients. These broader multidisciplinary teams included roles such as advanced practitioners, pharmacists and other clinicians so the practice could offer broader, more timely and often more effective care for their population as well as increasing capacity for GPs to see more complex cases.

In April 2026, the practices on Hoo Peninsula had 20 GPs, and one locum, equating to 11.82 full time equivalents on the Peninsula and 33 Allied Health Professionals, equating to 29.7 full time equivalents.

In terms of future capacity, the Council’s Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2025) detailed that a new primary and community health facility would be required to respond to growth in the Local Plan.

NHS Kent and Medway recognised the impact under doctoring was having on primary care and had commissioned the National Association of Primary Care to do an independent review into the particular issues in Kent and Medway. They would share details of their conclusions and the Integrated Care Board’s action plan as soon as possible.

The Planning team had regular Governance meetings, which Councillor Murray had attended, with the ICB regarding S106 requirements and spend to mitigate and address the pressures relating to specific development

proposals. Throughout the Local Plan process the Planning and Public Health teams had engaged with the NHS/ICB regarding the emerging spatial strategy and the health requirements relating to that. This was reflected in the relevant policies in the draft Local Plan, and the associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Developer Contributions Guide.

Councillor Murray hoped this provided reassurance that careful consideration was being given to the health needs of the population on the Peninsula. She welcomed ideas put forward as this provision was developed.

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

“The Inspectors’ Initial Queries letter dated 27th March, for the Local Plan Examination, asks the Council to clarify which submission documents were not available at the Regulation 19 consultation and how that issue will be addressed, and also notes that further consultation may be necessary where new evidence or other documents are submitted on which interested parties have not had the opportunity to comment.

In light of paragraphs 16 and 31 of the letter, will the Leader of the Council now commit that any new document, or any materially amended document, that was not part of the Regulation 19 consultation will be subject to public consultation before the Examination proceeds to hearings?”

In response, Councillor Maple said that the Council has received an initial response from the planning inspectors appointed by the Planning Inspectorate, in relation to its submission draft of the Local Plan. The current approved Local Plan was more than 20 years out of date so it was important to have made this submission. Receiving such feedback was completely common for Local Plans submitted.

The Council had until 27 April to provide an initial response to the inspectors and would be complying with that deadline. This would respond to the questions raised, provide clarification where necessary and would confirm the further steps to be taken. This would include proposals for further consultation and a time frame for that. The inspectors would be invited to comment on all steps proposed within the letter, including the consultation.

## **876 Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report**

### **Background:**

This report presented the Council’s first Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report following changes to the Council Rules, as set out in the Constitution.

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

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The following issues were discussed:

- The four Overview and Scrutiny Committees had looked closely at service performance, policy development, budget pressures, transformation programmes and the work of Council partners.
- The collaborative, cross-party nature of scrutiny with Members working constructively to improve services for residents.
- Scrutiny Members, the Democratic Services Team and senior officers were thanked for their support of the scrutiny function.
- The Parent and Carer Forum, co-opted Committee Members, Parent Governors and teachers were also thanked for their contribution to the Children and Young People (CYP) Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Each Committee had received regular performance monitoring and revenue and capital budget reports covering the Council services within their remit.
- Business Support and Digital undertook pre-decision scrutiny of the Council's Procurement Strategy and considered a call in of Local Government Reorganisation.
- Health and Adult Social Care had examined services that people relied upon. This had included pressures within Medway Maritime Hospital, discharge delays and complaints handling. Other topics considered included community mental health provision, service transformation across Kent and Medway and pharmacy access in Rainham.
- The Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S Committee had held to account the six Cabinet Portfolio Holders whose responsibilities fell within the Committee's remit, undertaken annual scrutiny of the Medway Community Safety Partnership, reviewed performance of the waste management and highways maintenance contracts and considered progress on the Climate Change Action Plan. It had also reviewed the Air Quality Action Plan and the updated Housing Allocations Policy, received updates on the Get Kent and Medway Working Plan, the Shared Prosperity Fund, the Local Transport Plan and School Streets.
- The CYP O&S Committee had undertaken a review of Elective Home Education and had made recommendations for improvements. It had worked closely with Children's Social Care following Ofsted's 'Good' rating to monitor continuous improvement and had championed the importance of Early Help and Prevention. Engagement with young people, including the Medway Youth Council, had also been important.
- A Joint Task Group between the Regeneration, Culture and Environment and Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committees had looked at Air Quality, Public Transport and Active Travel.

### **Decision:**

The Council noted the report.

**877 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**Decision:**

The Council agreed that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the exempt material relating to agenda item 11 because consideration of these matters in public would disclose information falling within one or more categories of exempt information contained in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as specified in agenda item 17 and, in all the circumstances of the case, the Committee considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

**878 HRA Acquisition of Registered Providers Residential Stock Profile in Medway**

**Background:**

The report set out that a Registered Provider (RP) of Social Housing was seeking to transfer their Medway housing stock [excluding two specific assets] to a new registered social provider, this being Medway Council, this was in line with the RP's long term asset disposal strategy. Medway Council's Landlord Services [Housing Revenue Account - HRA] had been advised of a potential RP transfer opportunity of social housing properties as part of this organisation's larger asset disposal and rationalisation strategy. It was noted that HRA funding was ringfenced from the Council's general finances.

The report sought approval to formally commence due diligence and recommend to full Council approval of the necessary capital budget to enable the transfer of the Medway portfolio of the Registered Provider stock to Medway Council's HRA. Enabling an alternative registered provider to take ownership of the existing RP's Medway properties and maintaining much needed social housing, it was important to note that the properties would be tenanted at the time of transfer to the Council.

Two Exempt Appendices to the report set out financial information, which was of a commercially sensitive nature and a breakdown of locations of the acquisition portfolio which was covered under a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

A diversity impact assessment had been undertaken in relation to the proposals and was attached as Exempt Appendix 3 to the report.

The report had previously been considered by the Cabinet on 7 April 2026, the decisions of which were set out at section 6 of the report.

The decisions made by the Cabinet had been called in by six Members of the Council, therefore, approval of the requested addition to the Capital Programme by the Council would be subject to the outcome of the call-in process.

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The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness, Councillor Louwella Prenter, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, proposed the recommendations as set out in the report, with the alteration that these were subject to the outcome of the call-in process.

Revised recommendations:

- 1.1. The Council is requested to note the decisions of the Cabinet, as set out at section 6 of the report.
- 1.2. The Council is asked to approve the necessary addition to the Capital Programme of £45.95million, including associated fees, **subject to the outcome of the current call-in process in relation to the Cabinet decisions made on 7 April 2026, as follows:**
  - **The Cabinet approved the transfer/acquisition of the Registered Providers Medway Portfolio of 791 properties [portfolio breakdown in section 4 of the report] to Medway Council's HRA, subject to financial and regulatory due diligence (decision no. 60/2026);**
  - **The Cabinet approved the procurement of an appropriate consultant to support the transfer of stock, including the necessary due diligence (decision no. 62/2026) and;**
  - **The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Place and Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness to authorise the transaction, subject to final due diligence (decision no. 63/2026).**

Revised recommendations read:

- 1.1. The Council is requested to note the decisions of the Cabinet, as set out at section 6 of the report.
- 1.2. The Council is asked to approve the necessary addition to the Capital Programme of £45.95million, including associated fees, subject to the outcome of the current call-in process in relation to the Cabinet decisions made on 7 April 2026, as follows:
  - The Cabinet approved the transfer/acquisition of the Registered Providers Medway Portfolio of 791 properties [portfolio breakdown in section 4 of the report] to Medway Council's HRA, subject to financial and regulatory due diligence (decision no. 60/2026);
  - The Cabinet approved the procurement of an appropriate consultant to support the transfer of stock, including the necessary due diligence (decision no. 62/2026) and;

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- The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Place and Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness to authorise the transaction, subject to final due diligence (decision no. 63/2026).

The Mayor proposed that the press and public be excluded during consideration of any information contained in the exempt appendix to this report, as set out on page 187 of the agenda, on the basis that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. This was agreed.

Councillor Lawrence, supported by Councillor Doe, proposed the following amendment to the recommendations set out in the report:

- 1.1. The Council is requested to note the decisions of the Cabinet, as set out at section 6 of the report.
- 1.2. The Council is asked to approve the necessary **defers consideration of the** addition to the Capital Programme of £45.95million, including associated fees, ~~subject to the outcome of the current call in process in relation to the Cabinet decisions made on 7 April 2026, as follows:~~

~~The Cabinet approved the transfer/acquisition of the Registered Providers Medway Portfolio of 791 properties [portfolio breakdown in section 4 of the report] to Medway Council's HRA, subject to financial and regulatory due diligence (decision no. 60/2026);~~

- ~~• The Cabinet approved the procurement of an appropriate consultant to support the transfer of stock, including the necessary due diligence (decision no. 62/2026) and;~~
- ~~• The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Place and Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness to authorise the transaction, subject to final due diligence (decision no. 63/2026)~~

**until it has received a further report detailing (appending any external reports where commissioned):**

- a) the full financial, legal and stock due diligence;**
- b) a formal statement from the Section 151 Officer confirming that they are satisfied the proposed borrowing remains prudent, affordable, and sustainable in light of the then-current interest rates and market conditions;**
- c) a validated Stock Condition Survey and its impact on the 30-year HRA Business;**

**d) confirmation that the final Interest Cover Ratio (ICR) remains above the 1.25 'Golden Rule' threshold across the 30-year plan.**

**Amended recommendations read:**

- 1.1. The Council is requested to note the decisions of the Cabinet, as set out at section 6 of the report.
- 1.2. The Council defers consideration of the addition to the Capital Programme of £45.95million, including associated fees, until it has received a further report detailing (appending any external reports where commissioned):
  - a) the full financial, legal and stock due diligence;
  - b) a formal statement from the Section 151 Officer confirming that they are satisfied the proposed borrowing remains prudent, affordable, and sustainable in light of the then-current interest rates and market conditions;
  - c) a validated Stock Condition Survey and its impact on the 30-year HRA Business;
  - d) confirmation that the final Interest Cover Ratio (ICR) remains above the 1.25 'Golden Rule' threshold across the 30-year plan.

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

The press and public were then readmitted to the meeting.

In response to a Member query, the Assistant Director, Legal and Governance confirmed that the Council was being asked to approve an addition to the capital programme and not other aspects of the proposals, which had been a Cabinet decision. Should Cabinet Members and officers be satisfied with the due diligence undertaken they would be able to proceed with the acquisition of the properties without needing to return to full Council.

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

**For:** Councillors Bowen, Cook, Coombs, Crozer, Curry, Field, Gurung, Hamandishe, Hamilton, Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard, Jackson, Jones, Mahil, Mandaracas, Maple, McDonald, Murray, Myton, Nestorov, Nestorova, Paterson, Peake, Pearce, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Price, Sands, Shokar, Stamp, Mrs Turpin and Van Dyke. (32)

**Against:** Councillors Anang, Brake, Clarke, Doe, Fearn, Filmer, Finch, Gilbourne, Hackwell, Joy, Kemp, Lammas, Lawrence, Perfect, Spring, Tejan and Vye. (17)

**Abstain:** None.

**Note:** In addition to the Councillors named under apologies for absence, Councillors Etheridge, Gulvin and Hyne were not present for the recorded vote.

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 approved the necessary addition to the Capital Programme of £45.95million, including associated fees, subject to the outcome of the current call-in process in relation to the Cabinet decisions made on 7 April 2026, as follows:
  - i) The Cabinet approved the transfer/acquisition of the Registered Providers Medway Portfolio of 791 properties [portfolio breakdown in section 4 of the report] to Medway Council's HRA, subject to financial and regulatory due diligence (decision no. 60/2026).
  - ii) The Cabinet approved the procurement of an appropriate consultant to support the transfer of stock, including the necessary due diligence (decision no. 62/2026).
  - iii) The Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Place and Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness to authorise the transaction, subject to final due diligence (decision no. 63/2026).

**879 Review of Polling District and Polling Places**

**Background:**

This report recommended changes to two polling stations in Watling, Rochester West and Borstal and Fort Pitt wards in preparation for the May 2027 Elections.

The report set out that under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council had a duty to divide Medway into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district for UK Parliamentary elections. It also had to keep these arrangements under review. It was good practice to undertake the same exercise for local government elections and in doing so, every effort had to be made to ensure that the polling district scheme mirrored as closely as possible that agreed for Parliamentary elections. A full polling district review had been carried out for the implementation of new Ward arrangements in 2024. It was now only necessary to review two polling districts where the polling places were unavailable or unsuitable.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment, Councillor Mahil, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

**Decisions:**

- a) The Council approved the scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, in respect of Parliamentary elections and designated the Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places as the Polling Districts and Polling Places for Local Government elections.
- b) The Council noted the designation of all polling stations recommended by the Returning Officer, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
- c) The Council noted the maps showing the recommended new polling districts for Watling Ward, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.
- d) The Council noted the maps showing the recommended polling places for Rochester West and Borstal and Fort Pitt Wards, as set out in Appendix 4 to the report.
- e) The Council authorised the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Informal Working Group on Polling Districts and Polling Places to designate a Polling Place where no suitable polling station was available within the original Polling Place.
- f) The Council noted that the Chief Executive would consult with the Informal Working Group on Polling Districts and Polling Places if it was necessary to change any polling stations prior to the elections in May 2027.

**880 Appointment of Independent Person**

**Background:**

This report set out that the Localism Act 2011 required the appointment of an Independent Person, who must be consulted on allegations that a Member was in breach of the Code of Conduct, and that the appointment of an Independent Person must be approved by the majority of the Members of the authority.

In addition, the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/881) provided that a local authority must include at least two independent persons to a panel hearing the dismissal of a senior officer (Chief Executive, S151 Officer or Monitoring Officer).

The report recommended the appointment of a second Independent Person.

Councillor McDonald, supported by Councillor Howcroft-Scott, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

**Decisions:**

- a) The Council agreed the appointment of Mrs Rebecca Bayoji as an Independent Person under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011, with

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effect from 24 April 2026, for a period of 4 years, or until Medway Council ceased to exist if that occurred before the end of the 4 year term, to carry out the functions required by section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 and where necessary, the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/881).

- b) The Council agreed that the fee for an Independent Person be set at £350 (£175 per half day).
- c) That Council agreed to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to agree the fee with the Independent Person on a case by case basis.

### **881 Establishment of Committees, Appointments and Schedule of Meetings 2026/2027**

#### **Background:**

This report asked the Council to make a number of recommendations to the Annual meeting of the Council on 13 May 2026 regarding the committees and other bodies to be appointed for 2026/2027 and also a programme of meetings.

The report set out that the establishment of committees and the appointment of Members to serve on committees and outside bodies was a matter for decision by the Annual Meeting of the Council together with approval of the annual schedule of meetings.

The appointment of Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of some committees, the establishment of sub-committees, and the appointment of Members to serve on them was a matter for decision at a Joint meeting of Committees, which would take place immediately after the Annual Council meeting.

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

#### **Decisions:**

The Council recommended the following to Annual Council on 13 May 2026:

- a) To agree the establishment of committees, sub committees and task groups, their size and the allocation of seats to political groups, as set out in Appendices A and B to the report, together with terms of reference as set out in the Council's constitution (with nominees to be reported at the Annual Council meeting).
- b) To agree to decommission the School Transport and Curriculum Appeals Committee.
- c) To agree appointments to Joint Committees, outside bodies and other bodies, as set out in Appendix C to the report (with nominees to be reported at the Annual Council meeting).

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- d) To agree the timetable of meetings for the 2026/2027 municipal year, as set out in Appendix D to the report.
- e) To agree to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with Group Whips, to vary the schedule of meetings during the 2026/2027 municipal year as required, on the basis set out in paragraph 5.3 of the report.

### **882 Review of the Council's Petitions Scheme**

#### **Background:**

This report set out details of a review of the Council's Petitions Scheme and sought approval of a revised Scheme from full Council.

The report set out that in June 2025, the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered an annual report in relation to the Council's Petitions Scheme and in doing so had asked officers to review the scheme and bring proposals to a future Committee meeting, including reference to accepting external online petitions, whether Artificial Intelligence (AI) was a risk to the integrity of petitions, and issues around awareness of the Scheme.

The Scheme had been reviewed accordingly taking into account the experience and practice of administering the Scheme for over 15 years.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken in relation to the proposed changes to the Scheme. This was attached as Appendix C to the report.

The report had been considered by the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 March 2026 and by the Cabinet on 7 April 2026.

It was confirmed that, following a request made by the Committee that consideration be given to enhancing security for e-petitions on the Council system, the CAPTCHA system was now used on the Council's website for new users of the e-petitions platform.

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

This proposal was taken forward without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council, in accordance with Council Rule 16.2, as it involved making changes to the Council Rules in the Council's Constitution.

### **883 Reports for Information**

The following reports were presented to Full Council for information purposes, without debate, in accordance with the Council rules.

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The reports included:

- a) Use of urgency provisions (Appendix 1) - This report provided details of recent usage of urgency provisions contained within the Constitution.
- b) Contract letting – exceptional circumstances (Appendix 2) - This report detailed contracts awarded in accordance with the provisions of section 12 of the Contract Procedures Rules. Exemptions to Contract Procedure Rules dealt with the letting of contracts in exceptional circumstances where it was considered to be in the best interests of the Council to do so.
- c) The disposal of the Bobby's Food's Unit at Vantage Point, Holborough Road, Snodland, Kent (Appendix 3) – This report advised the Council of the sale of the Council owned freehold of the Bobby's Food's Unit at Vantage Point, Holborough Road, Snodland, Kent. This sale followed inclusion of the property on a list of non-operational properties which were declared surplus by the Cabinet on 29 October 2024.

**Mayor**

**Date:**

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