

Member's Questions

Question A – Councillor Lawrence will ask the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Councillor Curry and the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness, Councillor Louwella Prenter the following:

“In July 2023, former Cabinet Members, Councillors Naushabah Khan and Tris Osborne - now MPs for Gillingham & Rainham and Chatham & Aylesford respectively - granted without consultation a 'temporary 3-month' licence to occupy the former Wigmore Park & Ride site, assuring the public and Ward Councillors that it was unsuitable for permanent occupation. Three years later, following a costly court defeat caused by a lack of clear Council strategy, Cabinet is now asking Medway taxpayers to borrow £2.684 million to turn this 'temporary' measure into a permanent, expanded 14-pitch site.

Paragraph 8.1 of Agenda Item 8 astonishingly claims that 'a public consultation is not required... as the site is not near a residential area', completely ignoring established residents in Hempstead, Wigmore, and Bredhurst, as well as the once-planned 88 homes (including 22 affordable homes) directly opposite at Blowers Wood. Given these circumstances, how can the Portfolio Holder justify the recommendations within the report?

In giving their response, the Portfolio Holders should address:

- bypassing public consultation with local residents and Ward Councillors on a £2.684 million capital scheme.
- the total failure to explore or secure viable alternative uses for this valuable Council-owned asset over the past three years.
- the loss of 88 desperately needed local homes (including 22 affordable units) at Blowers Wood caused by this reactive planning panic.
- expecting Medway taxpayers to pick up a multi-million-pound borrowing bill to fix what can only be described as a masterclass in administrative ineptitude.”

Question B – Councillor Perfect will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple the following:

“Whilst your government is now completely focused on the North, at the expense of everywhere else, Medway Council has a significant in year revenue gap. It was also shortchanged by £8m by the Government at the start of this year through the fairer funding review.

When is the Leader of the Council due to meet with the new Prime Minister and Secretary of State, to ask them both for a fairer funding settlement for Medway?”

Question C – Councillor Spalding will ask the Portfolio Holder of Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry the following:

“With the ongoing hot weather and at a time when use of buses is being encouraged, it is, in my opinion, equally important to consider bus drivers, especially those on long routes such as the ones serving my ward at the very edge of Medway.

It has come to my attention that driver welfare is apparently not as good as it could be.

Does the Portfolio Holder share my view that bus drivers should be afforded appropriate considerations by bus operators to ensure their comfort and their safety, and by definition, the safety of passengers. When responding will he confirm he will write to all Medway's bus operators asking them to review their current policies and make changes if required and make changes as appropriate?”

Question D – Councillor Habib Tejan will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Vince Maple the following:

“Will the Labour Group be repaying the £105,000 as well as any interest incurred for the failed Option 4D business case back to the Council?”

Question E – Councillor Joy will ask the Portfolio Holder for Education, Councillor Coombs the following:

“Could the Portfolio Holder please provide the persistent absence statistics for each of the last three completed academic years?

In giving her answer she should provide:

- the attendance statistics broken down by school type, namely Primary and Infant Schools, Secondary Schools, SEND Schools, and Post-16/18 establishments, the figures for Looked After Children highlighted within each category;
- the actions the Council is taking to improve attendance across Medway schools;
- how both, local authority-maintained schools and academy trusts, are being held to account.”