

Public Questions

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

“Would you be able to inform me if Medway Council has protocols in their contracts with private funeral directors that would enable Medway Council’s environmental health officers to:

- Routinely enter and inspect local funeral home backrooms and mortuaries.
- Issue local compliance orders on behalf of the national regulator.
- Shut down premises that fail to meet statutory hygiene or care standards.

This question is in light of the crimes of Robert Bush in Hull Yorkshire, who was sentenced to 20 years in prison, where around 20 bodies and 100 ashes left to rot in a Hull mortuary.

The Government itself is pushing for a review of the funeral industry led by the Department of health.

This is a pressing issue, Medway Council reviewing their contracts with private funeral directors would be a good first step to facilitate crucial regulatory changes needed in the funeral sector.”

Member’s Questions

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

“I was grateful to address the recent meeting of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority and highlight how the Grain on call firefighters got to an incident locally and were ‘getting water on’, before any help from full time stations arrived, even though they were at work and were not actually on call or on roster. This demonstrates not only how vital the on-call stations are to the rural community but how, with changes to operational procedures and other factors I have been proposing, availability for these stations can be improved. Since then, there have been field fires, including a major one in my ward the day after the fire authority meeting requiring ten fire engines and a water carrier and took over twelve hours to extinguish.

Given that prevention is better than cure, and to ensure our on call fire crews are available to support incidents elsewhere rather than having to attend any locally, will you arrange for the Council’s communications team, working with others as necessary, to raise awareness of fire risk not just generally but especially in the current spell of weather?”