

(Relating to Agenda Item No.8 private Sector Licensing (Additional & Selective Licensing Schemes)

Question A – Harvey Sykes of Broadstairs, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness, Councillor Louwella Prenter, the following:

“The proposed selective licensing designation relies substantially on modelled predictions of poor housing conditions rather than representative physical inspections, yet the Council has not published the model’s accuracy or false-positive rate, evidence showing how many predictions were verified by inspection, or any comparison with other housing tenures.

On what evidential basis can Cabinet be satisfied that licensing every privately rented property in the proposed areas is necessary and proportionate?”

Members’ Questions

(Relating to Agenda Item No.7 Medium Term Financial Outlook 2026-2031)

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

“Could the Portfolio Holder please provide the latest external borrowing balance and borrowing maturity profile?

In giving his answer, can he include:

- the amounts falling due for repayment or refinancing during 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29, along with the current weighted average interest rate and forecast interest; and
- the minimum Revenue Provision costs for 2026/27 and 2027/28.”

(Relating to Agenda Item No.7 Medium Term Financial Outlook 2026-2031)

Question C - Councillor Vye will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“Can the Leader of the Council provide the latest schedule of the Council's General Fund and earmarked reserves? In giving his answer can the Leader please include:

- The current balance for each reserve;
- The sums already committed or planned for use;
- The amount that is genuinely uncommitted; and
- The forecast General Fund reserve balance at 31 March 2027.”

(Relating to Agenda Item No.7 Medium Term Financial Outlook 2026-2031)

Question D - Councillor Wildey will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“Can the Leader of the Council confirm the total amount borrowed by the Council since the current administration took office, the annual interest costs associated with said borrowing, and the estimated total interest payable over the lifetime of the loans?

In the answer, can the Portfolio Holder include what assessment has been made on the opportunity cost of these interest payments, and the equivalent investment that could otherwise have been made in front-line services such as social workers or provision of residential care places.”

Public Questions

Question E – Mark Robinson, of Chatham, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson, the following:

“Monitoring undertaken in Medway between May and August 2027 has identified 869 individual private hire vehicles licensed elsewhere, specifically by Transport for London, operating in Medway, with each observation supported by the vehicle registration number, a date and time record and in many cases photographic evidence. This compares with approximately 450 vehicles licensed by Medway itself. There is also evidence of other private hire drivers licensed by authorities elsewhere in the country actively seeking to work in Medway without obtaining a Medway licence, raising serious questions about local regulatory accountability and the practical ability of distant licensing authorities to oversee drivers and vehicles working many miles from where they are licensed.

These situations create an economic consequence. Based on the observed scale of out-of-area private hire activity and estimated passenger revenues, we estimate that economic leakage from the Medway economy could now exceed £2 million every month, as passenger spending and associated revenues leave the area via booking platforms rather than being retained and recirculated through local drivers, businesses and suppliers.

Given the scale of this activity, will Medway Council assess the number of private hire drivers and vehicles licensed elsewhere that are regularly working in Medway and the implications for effective local enforcement and the resulting economic leakage? In giving his response could the Portfolio Holder advise whether the Council will:

- Make representations to Government supporting reforms which ensure that drivers and vehicles are effectively regulated in the areas in which they predominantly work; and

- consider the economic leakage from Medway when determining whether operating licenses should be granted to companies based outside of Medway.”

Question F – Ross Charles, of Rochester, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, Councillor Paterson, the following:

“As we know, the bridge at Peters Village has blighted ALL surrounding villages and turned them into dangerous traffic hotspots. I would like to know what Medway Council intends to do about the excessive and dangerous speeds of vehicles, motorbikes and quadbikes tearing through Borstal Village from Borstal Street, through Wouldham Road and beyond. Considering there is a local school nearby, countless homes for those with learning disabilities and a high population of elderly residents, it is time for the Council to act to slow down the traffic, treating this area as if it is a major A road.

There should be plans for traffic calming measures, average speed check camera, speed humps and/or the introduction of 20mph speed limits (although these are largely ignored), or do we have to wait for people to be killed first before you act?”

Question G – Laurel Robinson, of Gillingham, will ask the Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure, Councillor Gurung, the following:

“Following the landmark UK Supreme Court judgment in *For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers* and the subsequent Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Code of Practice, it is established that single-sex communal spaces open to the public must be organised on the basis of biological sex to safeguard the privacy, dignity, and safety of users.

At Cozenton Park Sports Centre, separate single-sex communal changing spaces are strictly restricted to customers paying for top-tier Premium Memberships. General public users and families who cannot afford this premium price tier are forced into a standard mixed-sex layout. While individual cubicles and showers are provided in this mixed-sex zone, they are not fully enclosed from floor to ceiling, creating a compromised environment that directly undermines the privacy, dignity, and physical safety of women, girls, and vulnerable users.

Given that the law and EHRC statutory guidelines require equal access to biological single-sex spaces without imposing financial barriers, and that individual cubicles are required to be fully enclosed, what immediate steps is the Portfolio Holder taking to audit the infrastructure at Cozenton Park to eliminate this discriminatory two-tier access system, and guarantee fully enclosed, legally compliant single-sex changing rooms and showers for all Medway residents?”

Members' Questions

Question H – Councillor Howcroft-Scott will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“Whilst on the surface it might seem like a great idea for local authorities to be made responsible for delivering 20 hours a week of supervised community activity for those on Universal Credit seeking work for longer than 12 months, this could mean Medway Council having to support 1,925 potentially eligible people a week - a figure which nearly matches the Council’s current full-time posts.

At a central government contribution of £3,200 per jobseeker, wouldn’t this £6.16 million a year be better spent in Medway on creating secure, permanent employment in frontline services?”

Question I – Councillor Tejan will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

“In light of the pause and review of LGR, will the Cabinet publish a fully itemised statement of all costs incurred to date, including officer time, converted into monetary value, consultancy and legal fees, communications expenditure, travel and meeting costs, and any other direct or indirect expenditure, so that residents can understand the true financial impact of this work?”

Question J – Councillor Spring will ask the Portfolio Holder of Business Management, Councillor Van Dyke, the following:

“Given the uncertainty and potential anxiety that the recent halt of Local Government Reorganisation may create for employees, what assurances can the Portfolio Holder provide that staff mental health and wellbeing will be prioritised throughout the process, including what specific support mechanisms, monitoring arrangements and resources will be available to Medway staff affected?”