

Medway Council
Meeting of Medway Council
Thursday, 16 July 2026
7.04pm to 10.54pm

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 Hamandishe)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Jackson) Councillors Anang,
Animashaun, Bowen, Brake, Browne, Campbell, Cook, Coombs,
Crozer, Curry, Doe, Fearn, Field, Finch, Gilbourne, Gulvin,
Gurung, Hackwell BEM, Hamilton, Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard,
Hyne, Jones, Joy, Kemp, Lammas, Mahil, Mandaracas, Maple,
McDonald, Murray, Myton, Nestorov, Nestorova, Paterson,
Peake, Pearce, Perfect, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Price,
Sands, Shokar, Spalding, Spring, Stamp, Tejan, Mrs Turpin,
Van Dyke, Vye, Wildey and Williams

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

136 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barrett, Clarke,
Etheridge and Lawrence.

137 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

The Mayor informed the Council that for agenda item No. 13 (Independent Remuneration Panel - Report on Members' Allowances Scheme), the Monitoring Officer had granted a dispensation to enable all Councillors to participate in discussion and voting on the matter. This was detailed in paragraph 4.8 of page 123 of the Agenda.

Councillor Cook declared an interest in Agenda Item No.11 (Amendments to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme) as she works for Leigh Academies Trust. Councillor Cook left the room and did not participate in discussion and voting on the item.

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Other significant interests (OSIs)

Councillors Kemp, Maple, Mark Prenter and Van Dyke declared an interest in Motion 8A as they are members of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority. The Medway Council Monitoring Officer had granted these Members a dispensation to enable them to participate in discussion and voting on the motion. However, the Members had subsequently received advice from the Monitoring Officer of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority who had indicated that should these Members participate in a debate on Motion 8A, they might be unable to participate in future debates on the matter at the Authority. Councillors Kemp, Maple, Mark Prenter and Van Dyke left the room and did not participate in discussion and voting on the matter.

Councillor Perfect declared an interest in Agenda Item No.11 (Amendments to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme) as he is a member of the Beyond Schools Trust. Councillor Perfect left the room and did not participate in discussion and voting on the item.

Other interests

Councillor McDonald declared an interest in agenda item No.9 (Leader's Report) as he is the Chair of the Board of Directors at the Howard Academy Trust.

138 Record of meetings

The records of the Full Council meetings held on 23 April and on 13 May 2026 were approved and signed by The Worshipful the Mayor as correct, subject to the minutes of 23 April being amended to make clear that Councillor Spalding was not present at the meeting held on 23 April and had given his apologies.

139 Mayor's announcements

The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway referred to the shocking recent passing of Ann Widdecombe, the former MP for Maidstone and the Weald. This was a sad reminder of the risks that current and previous MPs and Councillors faced. The Mayor offered the Council's condolences to the family and friends of Ms Widdecombe.

The Mayor announced that former Councillor, Diana Smith, had passed away. She had served on Gillingham Borough Council, including as Mayor from 1996 to 1997 and served on Medway Council from 1997 to 2000 and from 2007 to 2015. Councillor Maple paid tribute to her.

Former Councillor Margaret Stevens had also passed away. She had been a Councillor during the 1990s on Gillingham Borough Council and then Medway Council until 2000. Councillor Jones paid tribute to her.

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It was also announced that Noreen Chambers, a former Hoo Parish Councillor and Vice-Chair of the Medway Queen Preservation Society, had also passed away. Councillor Pearce paid tribute to her.

The Mayor offered condolences to the family and friends of the former Councillors.

A number of events attended by the Mayor had taken place since May, including the Councillor Dedication Service at Rochester Cathedral and the Admiral's Cruise. Plans were being worked on for charity events to take place throughout the Mayoral year.

The Mayor had also run the last 5km of Jack Ivory's 30 marathons in the 30 days of June. This had raised over £15,000 for the Bee Kind Community Wellness project.

The Mayor announced that, following the Government's announcement on Local Government Reorganisation, he would propose to suspend Council Rules to extend the time allocated to the Leader's Report by approximately 30 minutes, to allow the following Members to speak:

- Councillor Maple – his usual 10 minutes and then 5 minutes to sum up at the end.
- Other Group Leaders – 5 minutes each.

The following Members would then be able to speak for up to 3 minutes each, on the same basis as had been adopted for speaking on Motions:

- Labour and Co-operative Group – 4
- Conservative Group – 2
- Independent Group – 1
- Reform UK Group – 1
- Independent Members, i.e. Cllrs Lammas and Spalding – 2

The proposal was agreed.

Note: the meeting was adjourned during this agenda item between 7:23 pm and 8:09 pm due to technical difficulties.

140 Leader's announcements

The Leader thanked Council officers for the work undertaken as part of the Local Government Reorganisation process.

141 Petitions

Public:

A petition was submitted that called on the Council to work with the ASD and Nu Venture bus companies to deliver new weekend and evening bus services between Cuxton, Halling and Strood.

Member:

A petition was submitted by Councillor Pearce on behalf of St Mary Hoo Parish Council. The petition called on Medway Council to allow the Parish Council to make visual improvements to the A228 Fenn Corner roundabout with planting and artwork.

142 Public questions

Question A – Neil Davies, of Chatham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

“Can the Council confirm that they have reviewed all the current house building plans laid out in the Medway Local Plan and are satisfied that the water infrastructure is in place to accommodate that level of building works given the recent water shortages across Kent?”

In giving your answer, you should advise what plans the Council has in place to deal with such a situation if it does arise.”

In response, Councillor Curry said that he recognised the concerns raised based on the experience that other authorities in Kent had in relation to water infrastructure and South East Water.

Medway was covered by Southern Water and the Council had involved and consulted them throughout the entire Local Plan process. They had been kept fully informed of the housing/development need and the specific sites allocated within the emerging Local Plan.

Comments from Southern Water had been reflected in the Plan; for instance in the case for a stepped trajectory in housing delivery to allow time for network reinforcement.

Strategic infrastructure like wastewater treatment works was funded through the water industry's five-yearly investment plans, while the needs set out in Southern Water's current investment period for 2020 to 2030 for wastewater, water supply and measures to reduce storm overflow were included within the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which informs the infrastructure needs/asks in relation to the Local Plan.

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There was nothing from Southern Water that would indicate or suggest a lack of network capacity that would negatively impact the scale and growth proposed in the Local Plan.

The Council's Planning Service would continue to engage with Southern Water as the Local Plan went through examination and on to adoption.

Neil Davies asked the following supplementary question:

"Great to hear that the Council is confident with water. Is there any infrastructure that the Council does have concerns around the housebuilding?"

Councillor Curry said that at this stage he was not aware of any concerns. The Local Plan process was extremely complex and the infrastructure required for the process included schools, roads and electricity supply, amongst other things. These factors were considered in detail by the Planning Team. There were water problems associated with farming on the Hoo Peninsula which needed to be addressed.

Question B – Iain Childs, of Chatham, asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, the following:

"Does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that although the Draft Local Plan, which is due for examination shortly, makes excellent strides on the issue of public transport, that there is more that could be done, particularly on routes 151 and 170 to improve the lives of people in Cuxton, Halling and Riverside wards?"

In response, Councillor Curry said that he agreed that high-quality public transport played a vital role in connecting communities and improving access to jobs, education, healthcare and other services. This was particularly important for residents in Cuxton, Halling and the Riverside ward.

He was pleased that the draft Local Plan placed a strong emphasis on sustainable transport and supported measures that would help improve public transport accessibility across Medway.

With regard to bus routes 151 and 170, those services were operated commercially by Arriva and decisions on routes, frequencies and timetables were ultimately matters for the operator. However, Councillor Curry recognised the importance of these services for local communities and welcomed any opportunities to improve public transport provision where this was supported by passenger demand and available funding.

Through the Enhanced Partnership with bus operators, the Council worked closely with the bus industry and neighbouring authorities to identify opportunities to maintain and enhance services across Medway. Councillor Curry regularly met with the bus operators to discuss issues around service delivery and investment in Medway. The Council looked forward to proposed

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changes in regulation of services to give more local control and the Council would continue to listen to residents and local Members as part of those discussions.

Iain Childs asked the following supplementary question:

“Would he not also agree that there is potential for Medway and future local authorities to take advantage of new powers that were coming in the Bus Services Act that would allow local authorities to franchise and define services, rather than relying on operators to take a profit risk or demand significant subsidies for running the services that we require?”

Councillor Curry said that the answer was yes and that the Council had written to the Secretary of State to express support for bus franchising. As and when it arrived in Medway, efforts would be made to take forward arrangements.

143 Motions

Motion A – proposed by Councillor Mrs Turpin and supported by Councillor Sands:

‘Protecting Cliffe, Hoo and Grain Fire Stations on the Hoo Peninsula

This Council notes:

1. That at its meeting on 25th June 2026, the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRA) deferred a decision on whether to proceed with a public consultation on the Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) Resourcing Review (2026).
2. That the draft Resourcing Review (2026) proposed the closure of the standalone on-call fire stations at Cliffe and Grain.
3. That KMFRA is responsible for the provision of fire and rescue services across Kent and Medway, and includes twenty-five elected councillors, of whom four are appointed by Medway Council and twenty-one by Kent County Council.
4. That Medway Council has functions in relation to civil protection and emergency planning, and that Medway Council and KFRS are both Category 1 responders within the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF).
5. That KFRS’s own draft assessment identifies geographic and resilience considerations on the Hoo Peninsula, including Grain’s isolated location and reliance on the A228 for access, major industrial and energy infrastructure, potential housing and infrastructure growth, and Cliffe’s geographic isolation, limited road connectivity and vulnerable residents.

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6. That the draft Resourcing Review (2026) states that Hoo Fire Station would remain and be prioritised as a strategic on-call resource, with targeted recruitment investment.
7. That Medway Council's Chief Executive has written to KFRS seeking the removal of Grain Fire Station from the proposed closure options.

This Council believes:

1. That decisions about emergency response provision on the Hoo Peninsula must fully reflect its rural geography, constrained road network, isolated communities, major industrial and energy infrastructure, potential future growth and wider community resilience, and must not be assessed by reference to historic incident demand or station utilisation in isolation.
2. That Cliffe, Hoo and Grain fire stations collectively provide important locally based emergency response capacity and contribute to the resilience of communities across the Hoo Peninsula, and the wider Medway Towns area.
3. That the closure of any of the three fire stations would represent an unacceptable loss of emergency response capacity for the Hoo Peninsula, and the wider Medway Towns area.
4. That Cliffe, Hoo and Grain fire stations should therefore be retained and protected from closure.

This Council resolves to:

1. Adopt, in light of Medway Council's own civil protection and emergency planning responsibilities, as the formal position of Medway Council that Cliffe, Hoo and Grain fire stations should be retained, and that the Council opposes any proposal arising from the current Resourcing Review (2026), or any subsequent resourcing review, to close any of the three stations.
2. Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive write to the Chief Executive of Kent Fire and Rescue Service and the Chair of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, setting out the Council's formal position and urging the retention of Cliffe, Hoo and Grain fire stations.
3. Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive send a copy of this resolution to every member of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, with a request that the Council's position be taken into account in any further consideration of the Resourcing Review (2026), any subsequent public consultation and any future decision concerning the three stations.

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4. Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive circulate this resolution to the Members of Parliament for Rochester and Strood, Gillingham and Rainham, and Chatham and Aylesford; all Medway Councillors; and the following Parish Councils across the Hoo Peninsula: Allhallows Parish Council, Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council, Cooling Parish Council, Frindsbury Extra Parish Council, High Halstow Parish Council, Hoo St Werburgh & Chattenden Parish Council, Isle of Grain Parish Council, St Mary Hoo Parish Council and Stoke Parish Council.'

Councillor Spalding, supported by Councillor Finch, proposed the following amendment:

Motion Title: Protecting Cliffe, Hoo and Grain Fire Stations on the Hoo Peninsula Preservation of Fire and Rescue Provision in Medway

This Council notes:

1. Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) produced a Resourcing Review for consideration by the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRS) at the authority's meeting on 25 June 2026.
2. That KMFRS is responsible for the governing and provision of fire and rescue services across Kent and Medway.
3. Said Resourcing Review is the first significant review since 2012 and represents the biggest proposed change to emergency cover since then.
4. That the suggestions within the Resourcing Review (2026) recommends the closure of five standalone on call fire stations including those at Cliffe and Grain.
5. That at its meeting on 25th June 2026, the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRS) ~~deferred a decision~~ facing a binary choice from Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) on whether to proceed or not with a public consultation on and other matters arising from the Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) Resourcing Review (2026): resourcing review agreed a six week delay to any decision whether or not to:

~~That a) Approve the publication of the draft Resourcing Review (2026) proposed the closure of the standalone on-call fire stations at Cliffe and Grain. Strategic Case document at appendix 1 of the Resourcing Review (2026).~~

~~That KMFRS is responsible for b) Approve the provision public consultation document at appendix 2 of fire and rescue services across Kent and Medway, and includes twenty-five elected councillors, of whom four are appointed by Medway Council and twenty-one by Kent County Council. That Medway Council has functions in relation to civil protection and emergency planning, and that Medway Council and KFRS are both Category 1 responders within the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum~~

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~~(KMRF). That KFRS's own draft assessment identifies geographic and resilience considerations on the Hoo Peninsula, including Grain's isolated location and reliance on the A228 for access, major industrial and energy infrastructure, potential housing and infrastructure growth, and Cliffe's geographic isolation, limited road connectivity and vulnerable residents.~~

~~That the draft the Resourcing Review (2026) states that Hoo Fire Station would remain and be prioritised as a strategic on-call resource, with targeted recruitment investment.~~

~~That Medway Council's c) Approve the public consultation survey at appendix 3 of the Resourcing Review (2026).~~

- d) Approve that any minor amendments to the text of the review be delegated to the Chief Executive. ~~has written to KFRS seeking the removal of.~~
- e) Approve that agreement on the final date for changes to wholetime fire engine changes be delegated to the Chief Executive.

In order for the formation of a cross party working group to consider alternative options.

- 6. Since that meeting Grain Fire Station has been removed from the proposed closure options current resource proposals and will remain operational while the situation is reviewed over the next two years but all other proposals remain.

This Council believes:

~~That decisions about emergency response provision on the Hoo Peninsula must fully reflect its rural geography, constrained road network, isolated communities, major industrial and energy infrastructure, potential future growth and wider community resilience, and must not be assessed by reference to historic incident demand or station utilisation in isolation.~~

- 1. This review is not just about using resources efficiently nor simply about saving money. It is a combination of both, and because this is the first significant review since 2012, the importance of getting it right is paramount.
- 2. Medway is a vast and diverse area with significant rural areas as well as concentrated urban living. The current fire and rescue cover reflects that from whole time crewing at Chatham, Rochester and Strood, supplemented by on call stations at Rainham, Cliffe, Hoo and Grain fire stations which separately and collectively provide important locally based emergency response capacity and contribute to the resilience of communities across the Hoo Peninsula, and the wider Medway Towns area. additional emergency response capability.

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3. That the closure of any of the three fire stations locally, and in particular on the peninsula, would represent an unacceptable loss reduction of emergency response capacity capability for the Hoo Peninsula, and the wider Medway Towns area.

~~That Cliffe, Hoo and Grain fire stations should therefore be retained and protected from closure.~~

4. With planned expansion of Medway through the draft local plan, now is not the time to reduce fire and rescue coverage locally. Now is the time to reinforce and enhance it.

This Council resolves to:

~~Adopt, 1. Oppose any reduction in light of Medway Council's own civil protection and emergency planning responsibilities, as the Fire and Rescue Service coverage in, or that affects, Medway and the surrounding areas be it by station closures or job cuts, and adopt the formal position of Medway Council that Cliffe, Hoo and Grain fire stations should remain operational and be retained, and that the Council opposes any proposal arising from the current Resourcing Review (2026), or any subsequent resourcing review, to close any of the three stations provided with resources to enable their capability to be expanded.~~

~~Request that Medway Council's 2. Require the Chief Executive write and council officers to continue to present the case opposing closure of Cliffe Fire Station.~~

3. Requests the Chief Executive of Kent Fire and Rescue Service and the Chair of to write to the three local members of parliament asking them to lobby the government for additional funding and other assistance for KFRS to enable it to meet its commitments and protect the people of Medway and Kent.
4. Request the elected members of Medway Council who serve on the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, setting out the Council's formal position and urging the retention of Cliffe, Hoo to continue to use their best endeavours to ensure Medway maintains and Grain receives the best possible fire stations. and rescue coverage.

~~Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive send a copy of this resolution to every member of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, with a request that the Council's position be taken into account in any further consideration of the Resourcing Review (2026), any subsequent public consultation and any future decision concerning the three stations.~~

~~Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive circulate this resolution to the Members of Parliament for Rochester and Strood, Gillingham and Rainham, and Chatham and Aylesford; all Medway Councillors; and the following Parish~~

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~~Councils across the Hoo Peninsula: Allhallows Parish Council, Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council, Cooling Parish Council, Frindsbury Extra Parish Council, High Halstow Parish Council, Hoo St Werburgh & Chattenden Parish Council, Isle of Grain Parish Council, St Mary Hoo Parish Council and Stoke Parish Council.~~

Amended motion reads:

‘Motion Title: Preservation of Fire and Rescue Provision in Medway

This Council notes:

1. Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) produced a Resourcing Review for consideration by the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRA) at the authority’s meeting on 25 June 2026.
2. That KMFRA is responsible for the governing and provision of fire and rescue services across Kent and Medway.
3. Said Resourcing Review is the first significant review since 2012 and represents the biggest proposed change to emergency cover since then.
4. That the suggestions within the Resourcing Review (2026) recommends the closure of five standalone on call fire stations including those at Cliffe and Grain.
5. That at its meeting on 25th June 2026, the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRA) facing a binary choice from Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) on whether to proceed or not with a public consultation and other matters arising from the Kent Fire and Rescue Service resourcing review agreed a six week delay to any decision whether or not to:
 - a) Approve the publication of the draft Resourcing Review (2026) Strategic Case document at appendix 1 of the Resourcing Review (2026).
 - b) Approve the public consultation document at appendix 2 of the Resourcing Review (2026).
 - c) Approve the public consultation survey at appendix 3 of the Resourcing Review (2026).
 - d) Approve that any minor amendments to the text of the review be delegated to the Chief Executive.
 - e) Approve that agreement on the final date for changes to wholetime fire engine changes be delegated to the Chief Executive.

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In order for the formation of a cross party working group to consider alternative options.

6. Since that meeting Grain Fire Station has been removed from the current resource proposals and will remain operational while the situation is reviewed over the next two years but all other proposals remain.

This Council believes:

1. This review is not just about using resources efficiently nor simply about saving money. It is a combination of both, and because this is the first significant review since 2012, the importance of getting it right is paramount.
2. Medway is a vast and diverse area with significant rural areas as well as concentrated urban living. The current fire and rescue cover reflects that from whole time crewing at Chatham, Rochester and Strood, supplemented by on call stations at Rainham, Cliffe, Hoo and Grain which separately and collectively provide important locally based additional emergency response capability.
3. That the closure of any fire stations locally, and in particular on the peninsula, would represent an unacceptable reduction of emergency response capability for Medway.
4. With planned expansion of Medway through the draft local plan, now is not the time to reduce fire and rescue coverage locally. Now is the time to reinforce and enhance it.

This Council resolves to:

1. Oppose any reduction in the Fire and Rescue Service coverage in, or that affects, Medway and the surrounding areas be it by station closures or job cuts, and adopt the formal position that Cliffe, Hoo and Grain fire stations should remain operational and be provided with resources to enable their capability to be expanded.
2. Require the Chief Executive and council officers to continue to present the case opposing closure of Cliffe Fire Station.
3. Requests the Chief Executive to write to the three local members of parliament asking them to lobby the government for additional funding and other assistance for KFRS to enable it to meet its commitments and protect the people of Medway and Kent.
4. Request the elected members of Medway Council who serve on the Kent and Medway Fire Authority to continue to use their best endeavours to ensure Medway maintains and receives the best possible fire and rescue coverage.'

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Upon being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

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

~~'Motion Title: Protecting Cliffe, Hoo and Grain Fire Stations on the Hoo Peninsula'~~
This Council notes welcomes:

1. That at its meeting on 25th June 2026, the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFR) voted to ~~deferred~~ defer a decision on whether to proceed with a public consultation on the Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) Resourcing Review (2026). The proposal to defer the decision to proceed with the consultation was proposed by Cllr Vince Maple and supported by the majority of members including Cllr Barry Kemp, Cllr Mark Prenter and Cllr Zoe Van Dyke.
2. That following the decision to defer to proceed with the consultation that Grain Fire Station has now been withdrawn from the draft Resourcing Review.
3. That the vote on the 25th June also set up a cross party working group which is currently going through a series of meetings.
2. ~~That the draft Resourcing Review (2026) proposed the closure of the standalone on-call fire stations at Cliffe and Grain.~~

This Council notes:

1. That KMFR is responsible for the provision of fire and rescue services across Kent and Medway, and includes twenty-five elected councillors, of whom four are appointed by Medway Council and twenty-one by Kent County Council. The members are appointed by political balance with current membership: Reform UK 13; Labour 4; Liberal Democrat 3; Conservative 2; Restore Britain 2; Green 1.
2. That Medway Council has functions in relation to civil protection and emergency planning, and that Medway Council and KFRS are both Category 1 responders within the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF).
3. That KFRS's own draft assessment identifies geographic and resilience considerations on the Hoo Peninsula, including Grain's isolated location and reliance on the A228 for access, major industrial and energy infrastructure, potential housing and infrastructure growth, and Cliffe's geographic isolation, limited road connectivity and vulnerable residents.
4. That the draft Resourcing Review (2026) states that Hoo Fire Station would remain and be prioritised as a strategic on-call resource, with targeted recruitment investment. Hoo has at no point in this process been at risk.

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5. That Medway Council's Chief Executive has written to KFRS seeking the removal of Grain Fire Station from the proposed closure options.

This Council believes:

1. That decisions about emergency response provision on the Hoo Peninsula and the wider community of Medway to the west of the river must fully reflect its rural geography, constrained road network, isolated communities, major industrial and energy infrastructure, potential future growth and wider community resilience, and would expect any decision making from KMFRA to consider those matters. ~~must not be assessed by reference to historic incident demand or station utilisation in isolation.~~
2. That ~~Cliffe,~~ the decision to retain Hoo and Grain fire stations is welcomed, particularly with additional focus on recruitment and retention. ~~collectively provide important locally based emergency response capacity and contribute to the resilience of communities across the Hoo Peninsula, and the wider Medway Towns area.~~
3. That during the pause in the process, examination particularly of any proposals from the FBU Trade Union should take place before any public consultation.
3. ~~That the closure of any of the three fire stations would represent an unacceptable loss of emergency response capacity for the Hoo Peninsula, and the wider Medway Towns area.~~
4. That ~~Cliffe, Hoo and Grain fire stations should therefore be retained and protected from closure.~~ any proposals within the Resourcing Review should improve community safety for the Hoo Peninsula and the wider community of Medway to the west of the river.

This Council resolves to:

1. Clarify the formal position of Medway Council that, in light of its civil protection and emergency planning responsibilities, any proposals arising from the current or future resourcing reviews should enhance community safety within Medway, reflecting Medway's specific safety risks and vulnerabilities. ~~Adopt, in light of Medway Council's own civil protection and emergency planning responsibilities, as the formal position of Medway Council any proposals within the current proposed or any future resourcing reviews should improve community safety for Medway recognising the specific challenges and risks that Medway has. that Cliffe, Hoo and Grain fire stations should be retained, and that the Council opposes any proposal arising from the current Resourcing Review (2026), or any subsequent resourcing review, to close any of the three stations.~~
2. Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive write to the Chief Executive of Kent Fire and Rescue Service and the Chair of the Kent

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and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, setting out the Council's formal position ~~and urging~~ welcoming the retention of Cliffe, Hoo and Grain fire stations and that any proposals within the current proposed Resourcing Review should improve community safety for the Hoo Peninsula and the wider community of Medway to the west of the river.

3. Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive send a copy of this resolution to every member of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, with a request that the Council's position be taken into account in any further consideration of the Resourcing Review (2026), any subsequent public consultation and any future decision. ~~concerning the three stations.~~
4. Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive circulate this resolution to the Members of Parliament for Rochester and Strood, Gillingham and Rainham, and Chatham and Aylesford; all Medway Councillors; and all parish councillors within Medway. ~~the following Parish Councils across the Hoo Peninsula: Allhallows Parish Council, Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council, Cooling Parish Council, Frindsbury Extra Parish Council, High Halstow Parish Council, Hoo St Werburgh & Chattenden Parish Council, Isle of Grain Parish Council, St Mary Hoo Parish Council and Stoke Parish Council.'~~

Amended motion reads:

'This Council welcomes:

1. That at its meeting on 25th June 2026, the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRA) voted to defer a decision on whether to proceed with a public consultation on the Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) Resourcing Review (2026). The proposal to defer the decision to proceed with the consultation was proposed by Cllr Vince Maple and supported by the majority of members including Cllr Barry Kemp, Cllr Mark Prenter and Cllr Zoe Van Dyke.
2. That following the decision to defer to proceed with the consultation that Grain Fire Station has now been withdrawn from the draft Resourcing Review.
3. That the vote on the 25th June also set up a cross party working group which is currently going through a series of meetings.

This Council notes:

1. That KMFRA is responsible for the provision of fire and rescue services across Kent and Medway, and includes twenty-five elected councillors, of whom four are appointed by Medway Council and twenty-one by Kent County Council. The members are appointed by political balance with current membership: Reform UK 13; Labour 4; Liberal Democrat 3; Conservative 2; Restore Britain 2; Green 1.

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2. That Medway Council has functions in relation to civil protection and emergency planning, and that Medway Council and KFRS are both Category 1 responders within the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF).
3. That KFRS's own draft assessment identifies geographic and resilience considerations on the Hoo Peninsula, including Grain's isolated location and reliance on the A228 for access, major industrial and energy infrastructure, potential housing and infrastructure growth, and Cliffe's geographic isolation, limited road connectivity and vulnerable residents.
4. That the draft Resourcing Review (2026) states that Hoo Fire Station would remain and be prioritised as a strategic on-call resource, with targeted recruitment investment. Hoo has at no point in this process been at risk.
5. That Medway Council's Chief Executive has written to KFRS seeking the removal of Grain Fire Station from the proposed closure options.

This Council believes:

1. That decisions about emergency response provision on the Hoo Peninsula and the wider community of Medway to the west of the river must fully reflect its rural geography, constrained road network, isolated communities, major industrial and energy infrastructure, potential future growth and wider community resilience, and would expect any decision making from KMFRS to consider those matters.
2. That the decision to retain Hoo and Grain fire stations is welcomed, particularly with additional focus on recruitment and retention.
3. That during the pause in the process, examination particularly of any proposals from the FBU Trade Union should take place before any public consultation.
4. That any proposals within the Resourcing Review should improve community safety for the Hoo Peninsula and the wider community of Medway to the west of the river.

This Council resolves to:

1. Clarify the formal position of Medway Council that, in light of its civil protection and emergency planning responsibilities, any proposals arising from the current or future resourcing reviews should enhance community safety within Medway, reflecting Medway's specific safety risks and vulnerabilities.
2. Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive write to the Chief Executive of Kent Fire and Rescue Service and the Chair of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, setting out the Council's formal

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position welcoming the retention of Hoo and Grain fire stations and that any proposals within the current proposed Resourcing Review should improve community safety for the Hoo Peninsula and the wider community of Medway to the west of the river.

3. Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive send a copy of this resolution to every member of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, with a request that the Council's position be taken into account in any further consideration of the Resourcing Review (2026), any subsequent public consultation and any future decision.
4. Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive circulate this resolution to the Members of Parliament for Rochester and Strood, Gillingham and Rainham, and Chatham and Aylesford; all Medway Councillors; and all parish councillors within Medway.'

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

Councillor Pearce requested that his vote against the amendment be recorded in the minutes of the meeting, in accordance with Council Rule 12.6.

Decision:

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

This Council welcomes:

1. That at its meeting on 25th June 2026, the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRA) voted to defer a decision on whether to proceed with a public consultation on the Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) Resourcing Review (2026). The proposal to defer the decision to proceed with the consultation was proposed by Cllr Vince Maple and supported by the majority of members including Cllr Barry Kemp, Cllr Mark Prenter and Cllr Zoe Van Dyke.
2. That following the decision to defer to proceed with the consultation that Grain Fire Station has now been withdrawn from the draft Resourcing Review.
3. That the vote on the 25th June also set up a cross party working group which is currently going through a series of meetings.

This Council notes:

1. That KMFRA is responsible for the provision of fire and rescue services across Kent and Medway, and includes twenty-five elected councillors, of whom four are appointed by Medway Council and twenty-one by Kent County Council. The members are appointed by political balance with current membership: Reform UK 13; Labour 4; Liberal Democrat 3; Conservative 2; Restore Britain 2; Green 1.

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2. That Medway Council has functions in relation to civil protection and emergency planning, and that Medway Council and KFRS are both Category 1 responders within the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF).
3. That KFRS's own draft assessment identifies geographic and resilience considerations on the Hoo Peninsula, including Grain's isolated location and reliance on the A228 for access, major industrial and energy infrastructure, potential housing and infrastructure growth, and Cliffe's geographic isolation, limited road connectivity and vulnerable residents.
4. That the draft Resourcing Review (2026) states that Hoo Fire Station would remain and be prioritised as a strategic on-call resource, with targeted recruitment investment. Hoo has at no point in this process been at risk.
5. That Medway Council's Chief Executive has written to KFRS seeking the removal of Grain Fire Station from the proposed closure options.

This Council believes:

1. That decisions about emergency response provision on the Hoo Peninsula and the wider community of Medway to the west of the river must fully reflect its rural geography, constrained road network, isolated communities, major industrial and energy infrastructure, potential future growth and wider community resilience, and would expect any decision making from KMFRS to consider those matters.
2. That the decision to retain Hoo and Grain fire stations is welcomed, particularly with additional focus on recruitment and retention.
3. That during the pause in the process, examination particularly of any proposals from the FBU Trade Union should take place before any public consultation.
4. That any proposals within the Resourcing Review should improve community safety for the Hoo Peninsula and the wider community of Medway to the west of the river.

This Council resolves to:

1. Clarify the formal position of Medway Council that, in light of its civil protection and emergency planning responsibilities, any proposals arising from the current or future resourcing reviews should enhance community safety within Medway, reflecting Medway's specific safety risks and vulnerabilities.
2. Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive write to the Chief Executive of Kent Fire and Rescue Service and the Chair of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, setting out the Council's formal

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position welcoming the retention of Hoo and Grain fire stations and that any proposals within the current proposed Resourcing Review should improve community safety for the Hoo Peninsula and the wider community of Medway to the west of the river.

3. Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive send a copy of this resolution to every member of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, with a request that the Council's position be taken into account in any further consideration of the Resourcing Review (2026), any subsequent public consultation and any future decision.
4. Request that Medway Council's Chief Executive circulate this resolution to the Members of Parliament for Rochester and Strood, Gillingham and Rainham, and Chatham and Aylesford; all Medway Councillors; and all parish councillors within Medway.'

Motion B – proposed by Councillor Mark Prenter and supported by Councillor McDonald:

'This Council notes that the current points-based arrangements for the nomination of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor were designed to operate over the long term, enabling political groups to progress through the scheme over successive years. In light of the extension of Medway Council's term ahead of local government reorganisation, there will now be one final additional year before the Council is abolished. It is therefore appropriate that, for this final year, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected by the Council following nomination by the largest political group.

This Council resolves to amend Council Rule 20 – Nomination of Mayor and Deputy by **removing** the following:

- 20.1 Each political group as constituted in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 shall be credited on the 1 January every year with a number of points equivalent to the number of members of the Council within that group.
- 20.2 A report setting out the outcome of the calculations in accordance with the scheme shall be submitted to the first meeting of the Council after 1 January each year.
- 20.3 The political group with the highest number of points after the process described in paragraph 20.1 shall be invited to nominate a candidate for the Mayoralty in the ensuing year and shall, at the first ordinary Council meeting following such qualification, accept or decline the nomination.
- 20.4 In the event that two or more political groups have the same number of points and no agreement is reached between them as to which group shall have the right to nominate a candidate for the Mayoralty, the matter will be referred to Council for decision.

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- 20.5 The formal procedure of election of that candidate as Mayor will take place at the annual meeting.
- 20.6 The political group nominating a candidate for the Mayor shall also have the right to nominate a candidate for Deputy Mayor.
- 20.7 In the event of any political group having the right to nominate the Mayor for the ensuing year declining to do so, that political group shall nevertheless be deemed to have exercised its right and its points shall be adjusted accordingly.
- 20.8 Any political group not having been represented on the Council for a continuous period of 15 months or more shall be eliminated from the points system.
- 20.9 The political group that was entitled to nominate the Mayoralty in the immediately preceding January shall on the next 1 January be debited with a number of points equivalent to the whole number of members of the Council.

And **replacing** with:

- 20.1 The Mayor shall be elected by the Council from among the Councillors at the annual meeting and, unless a casual vacancy occurs, the Mayor shall continue in office until a successor is elected.
- 20.2 The Deputy Mayor shall also be elected by the Council from among the Councillors at the annual meeting.
- 20.3 Except in the year of Medway Council elections, the Council at its ordinary meeting before the annual meeting shall nominate candidates to be recommended for election as Mayor and Deputy Mayor at the annual meeting.'

In accordance with Paragraph 16.2 of the Council Rules, which stated that "Any motion to add to, change or withdraw these Council rules will, when proposed and seconded, be taken forward without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council", the motion was taken forward without discussion for debate at the next ordinary meeting of the Council in October.

144 Leader's report

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

- Local Government Reorganisation:
 - The Leader was satisfied that the Government had selected a four Council unitary model for Kent and Medway but there was

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disappointment that the opportunity to address structural and boundary anomalies had not been addressed.

- Members and officers who had been involved in the development and submission of Medway's proposal were thanked for their hard work.
 - It was confirmed that Medway Council would not be challenging the Government's decision.
 - The Leader would be reaching out to the Leaders of Dartford and Gravesham Councils to start considering how to take the development of the new unitary authority forward. Delivery of services for the people of Medway would continue alongside the development of the new Authority.
 - Some opposition Members were pleased that Medway's proposed option had not been selected and considered that resources should not have been used to develop this option. There was also concern regarding the length of time it would take for cost savings to be made.
- The hosting of Armed Forces Day, with over 17,000 tickets having been issued for the event, the second meeting of the Medway Armed Forces Partnership and the Armed Forces and Summer Fun Day held in Cliffe.
 - The retention of eight Green Flags for parks and green spaces in Medway.
 - The launch of the vision for 2035 advancing Medway higher education.
 - The topping out of the Docking Station at Chatham Historic Dockyard.
 - Holding the Food Partnership Annual event.
 - Our Medway Live sessions hosted by the Leader and Chief Executive which were attended by over 800 Council staff.
 - The 11th Child Friendly Medway Conference had taken place and the creation of a Medway Young Mayor and Deputy Young Mayors.
 - 'Poet in every Port' session held at Chatham Library.
 - The Howard School had become the first secondary school in Kent to receive an exceptional rating from Ofsted.
 - Luton Primary school Year 2 work had been displayed at the National Gallery as part of the 'Take One Picture' programme.
 - The Pride in Medway Awards and the Kent Apprenticeship Awards.
 - The 60th anniversary of the Medway Samaritans.
 - Holding the Medway Business and Skills Showcase.
 - Medway Watersports Trust had received the Kings Award for voluntary service.
 - Hosting of the UK Salt Marsh Conference that included experts from the UK and around the world.
 - Opening of a new play zone at the Strand and forthcoming opening of play zones in Chatham Central and Brompton and on the Peninsula.
 - Opening of the James Williams Healthy Living Centre Society which demonstrated strong partnership working.
 - Welcome news that Grain Fire Station had been removed from a possible closure list but concern that Cliffe was still under threat.
 - Dismissal of a planning appeal by the Planning Inspectorate that had sought to build 800 homes in Wainscott.

- Progression of the new Medway Local Plan to examination stage.
- Tribute to politician Anne Widdecombe, who had recently passed away in tragic circumstances.
- Development and implementation of the Medway River Strategy.
- The Sunlight Centre, Gillingham and its role in helping to reduce health inequalities and promoting better health. Projects run through the Centre included Men in Sheds and Women in Sheds and Medway Safe Haven.
- The reopening of the Capstone Dementia Centre.
- Medway having been selected as Kinship Carer pilot area.

145 Members' Questions

Question A – Councillor Spalding asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, the following:

"At the recent Cabinet meeting you advised that today would be the last day by which, and indeed the expected day, the Minister for Housing Communities and Local Government would provide details of the decision on Local Government Reorganisation for Kent and Medway.

Given Local Government Reorganisation for Kent and Medway, not just locally but in other areas as well, will no doubt impact on Medway residents through travel, business and study opportunities, can you kindly enlighten this full Council and the residents of Medway on what we can expect in the coming months?"

In response, Councillor Maple said that Councillor Spalding would not have known when he submitted his question that discussion on the Leader's Report would be extended to enable discussion of the Government's decision in relation to Local Government Reorganisation.

Councillor Maple hoped that the answers given during discussion answered Councillor Spalding's questions and said that if he had any other specific questions, there would be a session for Councillors on 11 August and that Councillor Maple would keep colleagues updated on progress. The public would be kept updated through various processes such as Medway Matters Live, the Medway Matters magazine, One Minute Medway and sector led team sessions.

Anyone who had a question about Local Government Reorganisation could e-mail their question to lgr@medway.gov.uk.

146 Amendments to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme

Background:

This report set out a number of proposed amendments to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

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The report was a composite of three reports previously considered by the Cabinet. These were:

- i) the Capital and Revenue Outturn and Annual Debt Write Off Report 2025/26, considered on 2 June 2026. This requested an addition to the Council's revenue budget to fund a budget overspend and also requested some removals from the Capital Programme due to underspends or alternative funding being utilised.
- ii) Resources to Support Local Government Reorganisation, considered by the Cabinet on 2 June 2026. This requested the addition of anticipated capital receipts to the revenue budget to fund costs associated with Local Government Reorganisation.
- iii) Medway Development Company (MDC) Phase 2 Sites, considered by the Cabinet on 30 June 2026. This requested an addition to the Council's revenue budget to progress planning applications in respect of MDC's phase 2 development sites.

The reports as originally considered by the Cabinet were attached as appendices 1 to 3 of the Council report.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness, Councillor Louwella Prenter, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

- a) The Council agreed the addition of £3.743million to the revenue budget from general reserves to fund the final overspend, as set out in Section 6 of the report. This included the £2.825million agreed by the Council in February 2026 and preserved the Council's general reserve balance at £10.012million, just above the minimum level set by the Section 151 Officer.
- b) The Council agreed the addition of £7million of anticipated capital receipts to the revenue budget, as set out in section 7 of the report, to be allocated across the 2026/27 and 2027/28 financial years, in order to fund the Council's contribution towards the county-wide Programme Management Office and the Council's own LGR project team and associated workstreams.
- c) The Council agreed the addition of £1.8m to the Council's revenue budget, as set out in section 8 of the report, to progress planning applications in respect of MDC's phase 2 development sites, whilst also noting the flexibility to apply the funding to alternative sites that may be added to the programme, as set out in Exempt Appendix 1 to the original Cabinet report. This budget was to be funded from capital receipts under flexibilities granted by the Government.

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d) The Council agreed to the following removals from the Capital Programme for schemes that had underspent, as set out in Section 5 of the report:

- £160,000 for Greenacre Academy;
- £133,000 for Hundred of Hoo 6th Form;
- £63,000 for Leigh Academy Canopy;
- £20,000 for Strood Academy;
- £226,000 for Victory Academy;
- £65,000 for Dane Court;
- £2,000 for Luton Primary (Nursery);
- £3,000 for ICT Infrastructure;
- £168,000 for Waste Fleet Replacement.

e) The Council agreed the following removals from the Capital Programme for schemes that could be funded by revenue Section 106 developer contributions, as set out in section 5 of the report:

- £400 for Rainham Play;
- £400 for Jackson Fields & Victoria Gardens;
- £10,000 Luton Millennium Green.

147 Review of the Council's Petitions Scheme

Background:

The report explained that in June 2025, the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered its regular annual report in relation to the Petitions Scheme. In doing so it 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. The 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 had previously been considered by the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 March 2026 and by the Cabinet on 7 April 2026.

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

Decisions:

a) The Council noted the comments of the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in section 6 of the report and the decisions of the Cabinet, as set out in section 8 of the report.

- b) The Council approved the revised Petitions Scheme, with effect from 1 August 2026, as set out in Appendix B to the report, for inclusion in Chapter 5 (Codes and Protocols) of the Council's Constitution.

148 Independent Remuneration Panel - Report on Members' Allowances Scheme

Background:

The report set out the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) on Members' Allowances and requested Members to have regard to the Panel's recommendations in setting a scheme of allowances for 2026/27 and a potential further four years (as permitted by the relevant regulations).

The Council had approved its current scheme of Members' Allowances in January 2024, effective from the 1 April 2024.

Since adoption of the scheme matters had arisen that had necessitated revisiting the scheme. This included the introduction of legislation enabling Members to opt in and join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and also Local Government Reorganisation, which meant that current Councillors terms of office would be extended by circa one year.

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

Decisions:

- a) The Council thanked the members of the Panel for undertaking the review of Members Allowances and producing their report, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.
- b) The Council had regard to the Panel's recommendations in setting a scheme of allowances for members.
- c) The Council resolved to adopt the draft scheme attached at Appendix 2 to the report, backdated to 1 April 2026.
- d) The Council agreed to delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Legal and Governance, to make any grammatical corrections/amendments and determine issues of interpretation, as set out in paragraph 8.6 of the report.
- e) The Council agreed that the terms of office for the Political Assistants be extended to 31 March 2028.

149 Report for Information

This report was presented to Full Council for information purposes, without debate, in accordance with the Council rules. The report included:

Use of Urgency Provisions – Appendix 1.

Mayor

Date:

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