MBC Members Report from Cllr Claudine Russell

Dated: June 2026

Council

There were various water issues across the network during the hot spell. MBC Emergency teams worked with KCC emergency and resilience teams to try to keep communications timely however it doesn't seem to have been any different from the last time that there were water outages despite various attempts to write letters/have meetings etc.

MBC have yet to finalise how many houses will be needed in the next plan period but work on the new Local Plan has begun. It is thought that a further 8-10,000 houses will need to be placed across the borough and work on that is beginning along with a proposal to open a call for sites. I asked that the call for sites be more directed by policy and not so reactive and that the water company was brought into discussions at the earliest opportunity given the inability to supply.

I fear that the long awaited Gypsy and Traveller DPD will end up being nothing more than a damp squib. As councillors in the opposition we have been kept out of knowing the sites and have not had any opportunity to comment on site selection before the sites are made public in this weeks Planning and Healthier Stronger Communities PAC. I have heard that even with all of the new allocations it isn't enough and so we will remain in exactly the same status as we are in now but I await the detail in committee.

Ward Work

I have been working with all interested parties to try to get a temporary outreach post office provided to Yalding in the time that the post office will be closed without the new one having opened, the current postmaster gave the Post Office a whole years notice!

Various speculative planning applications are beginning to be submitted or are in pre-application stage and I am keeping a close eye on these as they move through the process.

Planning Enforcement seems to be taking longer than ever but I am continually chasing a number of cases across the ward.

As always, if you need my help, please do not hesitate to email me at claudinerussell@maidstone.gov.uk