

## **Motion for Time Limited Debate – Vaccinations**

**Proposer:** Mr Antony Hook

**Seconded:** Mr Colin Sefton

### **Background information provided by the Liberal Democrat Group:**

It is important for the Council to urge Kent residents, and in doing so support the KCC's Director of Public Health, to get the relevant vaccines when required. In 2019, The World Health Organization (WHO) listed vaccine hesitancy as one of the biggest threats to global health.<sup>1</sup> Vaccines undergo rigorous safety testing before being introduced and once implemented are constantly monitored in the UK by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for side effects. If enough people are vaccinated, it is more difficult for diseases to spread to those who cannot have vaccines, creating 'herd immunity' and protecting the whole community. Diseases such as smallpox, polio and tetanus have either been eradicated or are now rarely seen as a result of vaccines.

In England, the number of children receiving their MMR vaccine has fallen and as a consequence the diseases measles and mumps are appearing again throughout the country. These diseases can lead to life-threatening conditions like meningitis and can cause hearing loss. If 95% of children receive the MMR vaccine, this would stop measles spreading completely, however if fewer than 90% of children are vaccinated measles, mumps and rubella can spread quickly.<sup>2</sup> Since 2021, England has failed to reach the national coverage statistic of 95% for the MMR vaccine<sup>3</sup> and in addition, not a single childhood vaccine reached the desired target in England last year.<sup>4</sup>

In line with the national picture, the percentage of children receiving their MMR vaccine has decreased in recent years in Kent, falling well below the targets needed to eradicate measles. Since the introduction of the MMR vaccine, cases of measles have reduced each year to a very low number, however due to the declining number of people getting their vaccine, an urgent uptake in the injection is now required to prevent the outbreak of the highly contagious infection. KCC's Director of Public Health and NHS Kent & Medway's Chief Medical Officer recently urged parents and carers to check if their child has had both doses of the MMR vaccine and to ignore misinformation about this life-saving jab. In January 2026, the NHS will be rolling out the MMRV vaccine, which will gradually replace the MMR

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<sup>1</sup> The World Health Organisation (2019), *Ten threats to global health in 2019*. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/ten-threats-to-global-health-in-2019/>

<sup>2</sup> NHS, *Why vaccination is important and the safest way to protect yourself*. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/why-vaccination-is-important-and-the-safest-way-to-protect-yourself/>

<sup>3</sup> NHS (September 2023), *Childhood Vaccination Coverage Statistics, England, 2022-23*. *Childhood Vaccination Coverage Statistics, England, 2022-23*. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-immunisation-statistics/england-2022-23/6in-1-vaccine-mmrv-vaccine>

<sup>4</sup> ITV News (August 2025), *No childhood vaccine reached herd immunity target in England last year*. Available at: <https://www.itv.com/news/2025-08-28/no-childhood-vaccine-reached-herd-immunity-target-in-england-last-year>

vaccine. This will be universally offered and provide children protection from measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chickenpox).

To support the current and future health of Kent residents, the Council should encourage all residents to be up to date with their routine vaccinations to give them, their family, and their communities the best protection. In particular, the Council should encourage families to ensure that children are up to date with the current MMR vaccine and in future, the MMRV vaccine.

**Motion:**

The County Council resolves to:

- Encourage Kent residents to ensure that they are up to date with medically recommended vaccinations and in particular, support the Director of Public Health in encouraging an uptake in the MMR vaccination (and future MMRV vaccine) to prevent an outbreak of measles and mumps.
- Request the Leader of the Council to write to all Kent Primary School Leaders highlighting the measles and mumps public health concern in Kent.
- Request the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care to publicise and promote getting vaccinations during WHO World Immunization Week (24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026) via the KCC Press Office.