

Council – 19 November 2023

Councillor Questions:

1. From Councillor Thomas to Councillor Tim Prater, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance

In 2016, Shepway District Council passed a resolution to recharge Parish Councils for the full cost of By-Elections in their respective Parishes. Would the Leader of the Council reconsider this approach to recharging Parish Councils, as these costs can have a significant financial impact on smaller Parishes.

Supplementary Question.

Can the Leader of the Council consider a one-off agreement to absorb the By-Election cost for the recent Dymchurch Parish Council contested election, due to the extraordinary circumstances in which this By-Election was called. As we are all aware, it was due to the conviction and sentencing of an unrepentant sexual offender who joined the Council in an uncontested election in May of this year. It seems extremely unfair that due to the selfish actions of this individual, Dymchurch residents will have to suffer the financial impact of this By-Election.

2. From Councillor Wimble to Councillor Jim Martin, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Otterpool Park and Planning Policy

Can Councillor Martin provide clarity on the decision to exclude half of the elected members from the Romney Marsh Partnership, especially considering every elected member has the right to an equal say and vote on matters affecting the Romney Marsh residents?

3. From Councillor Wimble to Councillor Rich Holgate, Cabinet Member for Place Plan, Heritage, Tourism and District Economy

I would like to know when actual work will be started on the Folkestone improvements to the town Centre, bus depot and station. This work is very time sensitive and as i understand it has to be physically started by November. I appreciate the officers have been working hard on the planning, but could the Cabinet Member please update us as to when we can see shovels in the ground?

4. From Councillor Keen to Councillor P Blakemore, Cabinet Member for Transport, Regulatory Services and Building Control

During the summer months the number of BBQ that are taking place on our beaches seems to be increasing. People are taking all kinds of BBQ equipment including gas bottles which in my view is a H&S risk as well as hot

coals being buried in the sand or pebbles or place in our street bins. Can I ask that all BBQ are banned on all FHDC beaches and that signage in the first instance is placed in plain view? I fully understand that this would put a strain on us already over stretched resources but before someone is seriously hurt or the coastal park is set on fire by a stay ember.

5. From Councillor Keen to Councillor P Blakemore, Cabinet Member for Transport, Regulatory Services and Building Control

Before next summer can we please have some assurance that adequate parking will be available for people visiting our towns and beaches but specifically in the Harbour Ward? The Harbour ward suffers greatly with visitors who were being diverted from other areas of the district down into the harbour. As we are all aware last summer was particularly bad and the roads in the Harbour area were gridlocked a majority of the time which made it difficult for the local residents to go about their business. Before the summer becomes a reality, we need an appropriate parking strategy that will not impact on our residents who live in the Harbour ward.

6. From Councillor Cooper to Councillor Prater, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance

In May 2023 the council resolved to put aside up to £100,000 for the costs of its transformation from a cabinet to a committee system. Could you please advise how much of that has been spent so far, how much is scheduled to be spent and what will the remaining balance of that £100,000 be come May 2024?

7. From Councillor Cooper to Councillor Shoob, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

Could you please thank the relevant staff for their swift decision on implementing the councils SWEP arrangements including the call for the hidden homeless to come forward prior to the recent storms. I am being asked if the district council can do this for homeless people from day one, why can't it be done all of the time?

8. From Councillor Chapman to Councillor Speakman, Cabinet Member for Assets and Operations

Several pavements in and around my ward have been getting more and more treacherous with leaves that have fallen being left and breaking down into a slippery substance making them difficult to navigate safely. How quickly should residents expect pavements to be cleared and made safe, and who is checking that Veolia are meeting their contractual obligations to residents?

9. From Councillor Lockwood to Councillor Polly Blakemore, Cabinet Member for Transport, Regulatory Services and Building Control

In 2022, SYSTRA carried out 'A major review of parking in Folkestone town centre'. Have the results of this review been published? Can members have a copy and could it also be published on the council website?

10. From Councillor Lockwood to Councillor Speakman, Cabinet Member for Assets and Operations

Will the council supply to members and publish minimum levels of cleanliness for each street area/zone, how often zones or areas will be cleaned and also the response times for where service standards are included within the contract, based on those within the Code of Practice under the Environment Act 1990?

11. From Councillor Godfrey to Councillor Shoob Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

Ross House was the first of the Councils apartment blocks to undergo significant energy efficiency improvement measures including insulation, Air Source Heat pumps and Solar Panels. Now that the apartments have been tenanted for some months and so that the Council can be informed for future projects could you advise what measures are being taken to monitor energy performance and tenant satisfaction both from efficiency and cost to tenants?

12. From Councillor A Martin to Councillor M Blakemore, Cabinet Member for Community and Collaboration

The Migrant Boat situation still provides significant concern for people living in Lydd on Sea, Dungeness and other surrounding areas. Much of the focus in media is around the political debate on stopping the boats and what should happen to those who arrive on our beaches.

I am concerned for my residents who are often forgotten, and are very much stuck in the middle of this difficult situation with genuine concerns for their safety.

I know that under the previous Administration, regular 'teams' meetings took place with the Home Office, Police, Health Agencies, KCC etc to discuss Napier Barracks and the use of the hotels in our District for asylum seekers. Can you confirm that these meetings are still taking place, that they include the arrival of small boats, and explain what support the council provides currently, and what can be done in addition to support these residents either directly or through engagement with the various agencies responsible?

13. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor J Martin, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Otterpool Park and Planning Policy

With the past adverse wet weather conditions of late Copperfields & the Derings in Lydd have suffered with flooding of sewage caused by poor and inadequate infrastructure owned and maintained by Southern Water. The

pumping station located in the Derings is not fit for purpose. Can you please write to the MD of Southern Water and ask for an immediate survey on all infrastructure in the said are?

14. From Councillor Goddard to Councillor Prater, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance

With all the financial uncertainty, can you reassure members and more importantly the community groups that apply for the funds, that the ward members grants of 3K each won't be cut or scrapped?

15. From Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee to Councillor Jim Martin, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Otterpool Park and Planning Policy

As the Council is seeking third-party investment (public and/or private sector) for the Otterpool New Garden Town on a joint venture basis, can the Leader confirm that negotiating criteria will ensure that the Council will retain a minimum 51% of the equity/land and will adhere to the original Charter and the Planning Heads of Terms?