

Council – 27 July 2022
Councillors' Questions:

1. From Councillor Treloar to Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities

Following the High Court's judgement that the Home Office breached the Equalities Act in keeping Napier Barracks running under emergency planning powers, if further to this the planning order is quashed by the court, what steps will the council as local planning authority take to enforce the decision?

2. From Councillor Treloar to Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities

Can you assure our residents that the council will be transparent about its communication with the Home Office over this matter and show that it places the interests of our local community and the welfare of residents of Napier Barracks as a primary concern over any pressure from the Home Office to keep the camp in operation?

3. From Councillor Treloar to Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities

The council paid for a QC to attend the Napier Barracks judicial review in the High Court. Why did the council see that as necessary and how much did this cost?

4. From Councillor Whybrow to Councillor Collier, Cabinet Member for Property Management and Grounds Maintenance

Can I please have an update on the future of the memorial benches on Princes Parade?

5. From Councillor Wing to Councillor Field, Cabinet Member for Transport and Digital Transformation

It has come to my attention that there are certain council services which can only be accessed online and the resident has to have registered a "my account" and then have to fill in the information live without the opportunity to download the form and then check they have all the information they may need before they start completing the form. Can you please tell me what steps will you put in place to make sure that our residents who are unable or unwilling to sign up to My Account will still be able to access these services in full?

6. From Councillor Gane to Councillor Collier, Cabinet Member for Property Management and Grounds Maintenance

I am concerned the price rise has put grassroots football under threat and I am sure this was not the intention do so. Could you reconsider and apply a discount to the league for use of the stadium in Church Road?

7. From Councillor Whybrow to Councillor Monk, Leader of the Council

Local residents are understandably concerned about the dust being generated by the work on Princes Parade and the potential risk to their and their children's health. Will you please publish the results of the air sampling readings that it is claimed are being taken?

8. From Councillor Whybrow to Councillor Monk, Leader of the Council

Can you please update me on the progress of the conveyance of the housing land at Princes Parade and the site of the existing Hythe pool to Sunningdale house Developments?

9. From Councillor Treloar to Councillor Prater, Cabinet Member for Revenues and Benefits, Anti-Fraud and Corruption

The government's Levelling Up Bill proposes that councils will be able to charge up to double council tax on second homes that remain empty. Given the proliferation of luxury new-builds in our district, the increasing popularity of our seaside location – and in the context of a cost of living crisis with spiralling inequality and an impossible promise of affordable home ownership for many – will the council implement this council tax increase for second homes at the first opportunity once the Bill passes into legislation?

10. From Councillor Treloar to Councillor Peall, Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Regulatory Services, Waste & Building control

I previously asked a question at full council about implementing restrictions on the use of jet skis in the district, pointing to the consultation that Canterbury City Council were conducting. Has any further work been done by FHDC to look at conducting our own consultation or to find a possible solution for curbing this environmental and antisocial menace?

11. From Councillor J Martin to Councillor Monk, Leader of the Council

According to KCC, yet again, FHDC have the highest Council Tax in Kent, with inflation moving into double figures, I have to return to the recently published Risk Strategy published by the Council and the lack of any strategy to deal with inflation. At the last meeting Councillor Monk, you told me that all Council contracts are fixed except where the supplier is unwilling or unable to fix their costs, can you therefore tell us, which Council contracts are thus open ended?

12. From Councillor Shoob to Councillor Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Housing and Special Projects

With 40-degree summer temperatures now a reality for the UK, what measures will the Council take to ensure that any homes it builds from now on are designed to mitigate the impact of extreme heat on the safety and wellbeing of the people living in them?

13. From Councillor Meade to Councillor Monk, Leader of the Council

For quite some period of time, local social media has reported some very serious anomalies regarding Council reporting and processes on the following, but not limited too - the failure to report publicly on the council website, environmental figures including air pollution which are a statutory regulation and the accounts and payments since 2016 of the Council credit card, giving our residents visibility of what has been spent on it, by whom and why, None of these have been reported to sitting elected councillors, although we are entrusted by our residents to look after our services. I am sure the leader of the council, Cllr Monk, understands how serious these various reports are and I ask him to explain how he will keep all elected representatives informed and what measures are being put into place to ensure that these issues cannot be repeated and are rectified.

14. From Councillor Meade to Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities

Given that Kent County Council is now longer prepared to fund the various agencies helping our homeless in the area and deferring it back to the District level - can the cabinet member, please assure me, that funding will be found to work with such agencies as Porchlight and the Rainbow Centre, in order to ensure smooth transition of these services and thereby ensuring that no resident in our area need be concerned about having a safe roof over their head once this funding has ceased, which I believe is being withdrawn towards the end of the year, when we experience the worst weather?

15. From Councillor Keen to Councillor Prater, Cabinet Member for Revenues, Benefits, Anti-Fraud and Corruption

Rental prices in the district have gone up by approx. 39% in the last two years. For residents on low incomes and claiming housing benefit this is causing financial hardship and some have fallen in dept. FHDC pay one of lowest Housing Benefit rates in East Kent and fall behind most other councils across the county. With the lack of council housing many of our residents have to privately rent, this is driving families out of our town in their effort to find accommodation they can afford. Why is our housing benefit lower than that of Ashford and Canterbury?

16. From Councillor Keen to Councillor Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Housing and Special Projects

How many of our residents who find themselves homeless or in overcrowded accommodation have been relocated outside of the district?

17. From Councillor Keen to Councillor Peall, Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Regulatory Services, Waste & Building control

Folkestone has become a popular destination and most weekends we see many visitors arriving in our town and visiting our beaches. In order to accommodate this footfall we need to provide adequate service. What plans have we got to improve the car parking, street cleaning, enforcement officers and refuse collection during this period?

After the deadline, with the consent of the Chairman, the urgent question below was submitted, as per Part 4.2 (Council Procedure Rules), paragraph 10.3 of the constitution:

18. From Councillor Peall to Councillor Keutenius, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Following the appalling traffic chaos of the weekend, that led to queues for the first time in both directions of the M20, the length of the M20 being used again for Brock, the M2 and A2 brought to a halt, local residents being stuck in traffic for hours on journeys that would normally take minutes; the people of Hawkinge being essentially denied access to buses, schools, Folkestone, the beaches and shops on another great weather weekend; the impact on council services such as waste collection and street cleansing; tourists to our area; and local businesses, it is clear that in all the so called planning, Folkestone and Hawkinge have been forgotten, whilst focus is given to keeping streets clear in Dover.

Can I ask that Overview and Scrutiny arrange an urgent special meeting, open to include all members of the council if they so wish, to invite the Kent Resilience Forum, KCC Highways, National Highways, the Police, Eurotunnel, Port of Dover, the French authorities and any other relevant party to explain why we can expect a summer as “the hotspot of hell” and what they will do to avoid such issues with immediate effect?