

Council
30 July 2024

QUESTION 1

Question from Councillor Julie Morris to the Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, Councillor Peter O'Donovan.

Is it correct that with the exception of the Q and A on the website, there have been no public statements or debate (in public) relating to progress of the Local Plan since the Plan was "unpaused" in October 2023 and is the Chairman able to provide a statement now?

QUESTION 2

Question from Councillor James Lawrence to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Liz Frost.

Would the Chairman please confirm:

- (a) what is the current operational status of the various tennis courts in the Borough
- (b) how much income has been raised since charges were introduced on 1st April and
- (c) what plans are there to ensure the public understands the meaning of "free tennis sessions for all ages"

QUESTION 3

Question from Councillor Alison Kelly to the Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Clive Woodbridge.

Can the council's housing and tax teams work with our social housing providers to emphasise the need for new residents to register for council tax, and is it possible to create a process that ensures residents are not in arrears by the time the council contacts them?

QUESTION 4

Question from Councillor Kate Chinn to the Chair of the Strategy & Resources Committee, Councillor Neil Dallen.

At the full council meeting on 16th Feb 2021 Cllr Monksfield tabled a motion. After an amendment the following motion was carried and accordingly the council resolved:-

This Council believes that greater digital inclusion will assist the borough in its economic recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic, which has had a devastating impact throughout the borough, particularly for the most disadvantaged residents. This Council further notes the steps already taken by the Council to support digital inclusion, including the provision of IT Training Sessions at the Community & Wellbeing Centre and the work currently being undertaken with Epsom BID to

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introduce free WIFI to the town centre. The Council therefore agrees to develop a Digital Inclusion Strategy and take action as part of the Council's Build Back Better recovery plan for the Borough.

I don't believe a strategy was ever developed and I understand much of the good work and steps taken to improve digital inclusion for residents has continued and a strategy may no longer be required. However, I do note that most places I visit, cities, towns and smaller communities that have grouped together, do provide free wi-fi many of whom report a boost to their economy.

- i. What has been done to assess the delivering of digital inclusion activities for all communities in the borough
- ii. has free wi-fi been progressed for the borough in partnership with Epsom BID.

QUESTION 5

Question from Councillor Steven McCormick to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Liz Frost.

The Chalk Pit site is still causing many of our residents noise and dust nuisance with several complaints being logged daily to this council, Surrey County Council and the Environment Agency. There are planning applications in process with Surrey County Council but in the meantime, residents are experiencing regular disturbance to the unencumbered enjoyment of their homes and gardens. What actions are this council taking to address these statutory issues that this council is responsible for?

QUESTION 6

Question from Councillor Julie Morris to the Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, Councillor Peter O'Donovan.

We missed an entire year of spending our CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) monies to benefit our residents because the rules for spending it were rewritten and it has now taken 6 months (18th January and 11th July meetings refer) to confirm which Councillors are to be involved in deciding which projects will be taken forward, so what actions are the council proposing to ensure that we are able to offer infrastructure improvements at a faster pace in the future?

QUESTION 7

Question from Councillor James Lawrence to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Liz Frost.

In the light of the continuing disturbance to residents near the Chalk Pit, how is the council proactively looking to monitor the site for statutory noise nuisance and use

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the money reserved at Strategy and Resources Committee to ensure the health and wellbeing of our residents in their own homes?

QUESTION 8

Question from Councillor Steven McCormick to the Chair of Strategy & Resources Committee, Councillor Neil Dallen.

Most recently we have seen public consultations of the SGN site regeneration plans and proposals which are most encouraging. It is noted that a state-of-the-art facility for Laine is proposed. Can this council confirm whether it will be funding this facility and where is the money coming from to do this?

QUESTION 9

Question from Councillor Steven McCormick to the Chair of Community & Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Clive Woodbridge.

A question was raised at committee on the subject of empty homes and what work is taking place and what can take place. Can an update be provided on this council's statutory vs non-statutory responsibility in this regard and what work has been done in the past year to address the issue of empty properties in Epsom & Ewell?

QUESTION 10

Question from Councillor Steven McCormick to the Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, Councillor Peter O'Donovan.

Richmond Council has adopted a sliding scale of affordable housing contributions from smaller housing schemes, 2 or above.

Para 65 of the NPPF states : *Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer). To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount.* We are not a designated rural area therefore to be compliant affordable housing requirements should be applied to major developments only.

Elmbridge are proposing a similar approach through their Local Plan which is at examination (but now paused for a few weeks for them to undertake additional work).

Turning to Epsom and Ewell, our own Local Plan viability assessment looked at introducing affordable housing on smaller sites (typologies 24-28) and identified that

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seeking affordable housing from 2 of the typologies would not be viable based on 35% affordable housing.

Can I ask that this council Introduces some form of offsite affordable housing contribution from smaller schemes, to be set at a level that does not make the development unviable?

In addition, this council explores schemes of 2 and above at varying percentages (5 to 40%) of on and off-site affordable housing contribution into our emerging Local Plan Viability Assessment and for inclusion into our emerging Affordable housing policy.

It is the ideal time to include these extra typologies in the affordable housing policy development and Local Plan Viability Assessment.

QUESTION 11

Question from Councillor Steven McCormick to the Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, Councillor Peter O'Donovan.

Can an update be provided on the progress made by this council to address Bio Diversity net gain policy development and updates?

QUESTION 12

Question from Councillor Steven McCormick to the Chair of Strategy & Resources Committee, Councillor Neil Dallen.

Surrey County Council are soon to start the next wave of Counter Fraud activity with focus of Single Person Discounts combined with additional scope to include a review of empty houses in the borough.

Can this council confirm that it will attend these meetings with Surrey County Council and take part in this activity, please?

QUESTION 13

Question from Councillor Steven McCormick to the Chair of Community & Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Clive Woodbridge.

At the Community and Wellbeing Committee meeting on 16th January 2024, agenda item 5 related to REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25.

Section 5 of this report highlighted a savings target of £30k following a review of the Community & Wellbeing Centre.

Can it be confirmed how this efficiency would be realised and confirmation that there are no current plans to reduce the services from this centre?

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QUESTION 14

Question from Councillor Steven McCormick to the Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Neil Dallen.

Last year I raised a question at Surrey County Council to ask that better integration with reporting applications such as FixMyStreet be considered and progressed.

This work has now progressed and is being implemented at Surrey County Council with FixMyStreet.

Is there a way this council can also explore improving the integration of this very useful and effective application to improve the experience for our residents in reporting issues and problems to this council?