

COUNCIL MEETING – 9 MARCH 2022

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO
COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14.3**

Q1 **Councillor Dixon to the Chair of the Economy Committee, Councillor Cooper**

Q1 How will the council utilise a bypass at Arundel to assist its regeneration efforts?

A1 Thank you for your question.

As you are aware, I am just one individual member of this council. However, I am sure this is a question that this council and the Economy Committee will seek to address when it is confirmed that there will indeed be a bypass. I would anticipate the Committee would seek to utilise the improved journey times to demonstrate that Arun is even more open for business to accommodate those who may have previously over-looked the Arun area due to its lack of wider connectivity.

I am passionate for progress in this district without dither and delay.

Supp

Q Would it be fair to say that Councillor Cooper, at this stage, does not actually have a clue?

Supp

A As I have stated in my previous answer, I am one Member of this Council and as such I have no more sway than any other Member here. As for me having a clue, I would ask you the same, do you have a clue because it is clear that all you want to do is dither, delay and obstruct.

Q2 **Councillor Dixon to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Edwards**

Q2 The question as to whether we have a low or high-level deck for the A27 Arundel Bypass is an important issue for the people of Arundel. It has a major impact on the landscape and environment to the south of Arundel.

At the Special Council called to consider the council's A27 Arundel Bypass consultation response you and your group declined to debate the substantive motion which included this important issue.

Can you please explain why you felt that it was not important enough to debate?

A2 As the Chair of the Environment Committee I am always happy to answer questions from members and members of the public.

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However, according to the Committee system that you and your coalition colleagues brought in, at a Full Council meeting, be it scheduled or specially convened, I am no more important than any other Member. I do not hold a portfolio and I have absolutely no delegated authority other than deciding what goes onto the agenda for the Environment Committee in consultation with the Vice-Chair and the Officers.

Your question relates to a Special Meeting of the Council and asks for my personal opinion, neither of which relate to the business of the Environment Committee. Therefore, I cannot answer the first part of your question because I have no authority to do so and my opinion is my own and I am not required to share it with you or anyone else unless I choose to do so.

Supp

Q I think that some Members are hiding behind the Committee system. Councillor Edwards is the Chair of the Environment Committee and so I would suggest that the environmental issues in the foreground at Arundel are quite important to the people of Arundel. He may well criticise me personally, but the reality is that it is not about us it is about the people of Arundel. Does he accept any responsibility for environmental issues relating to Arundel?

Supp

A I would suggest that Councillor Dixon sends his questions to the Environment Committee where they will be fully discussed and voted upon.

Q3 **Councillor Stanley to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Edwards**

Q3 Can the Chair please provide a detailed breakdown of what the £320,000 budgeted for Bersted Brooks will be spent on?

A3 Thank you Councillor Stanley for your question.

Given that you voted not to progress this project when you voted against the budget, I am somewhat surprised by your continued interest in this and indeed any other of the wonderful projects being delivered by this Conservative administration.

An answer was provided to you by me and by the Director of Services at the Special Meeting of the Council on the Budget telling you that when the information you were asking for was fully available, you and the rest of the Members would receive it.

Until that happens, and despite your incessant attempts, I am not able to provide you with an appropriate answer to your repeated question.

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Q I apologise for clearly riling Councillor Edwards because I have. My assumption is that the £320,000 has come from somewhere, would then Councillor Edwards please share any information we have on the current Bersted Brooks project with Council, with the Friends of Bersted Brooks and Bersted Parish Council.

Supp

A As I have already stated, the moment that we have all of this information all stakeholders will be made aware.

Q4 **Councillor Dixon to the Vice-Chair of the Housing & Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Gregory**

Q4 Can the Chair please confirm if the District Council has an up-to-date accessibility policy?

A4 We have provided bullet points to assist in the overall response for Q4

- ADC have an Equalities and Diversity Policy, which has been updated and is available on the Arun District Website
- The Allocations Policy has information in respect of access to suitable housing for those with disabilities as does the Tenancy and Lettings Policy.
- As part of the recent new website redesign a key priority was to make the website as accessible, a link to can be found on our website [Accessibility | Arun District Council](#)

Q5 **Councillor Stanley to the Vice-Chair of the Housing & Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Gregory**

Q5 Can the Chair please confirm how much of the money budgeted will be spent resolving the accessibility issues that have recently been highlighted in the District Council's sheltered accommodation?

A5 A full options appraisal of Sheltered Housing has been commissioned this will be presented to the Housing and Wellbeing Committee once completed. It is not possible to quantify how much will be spent on accessibility until projects are drawn up in detail.

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Q6 Councillor Stanley to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Edwards

Q6 Can the Chair please confirm when the first meeting of the Beach Access Working Party will be held and what timescales he hopes the work will be completed in?

A6 Thank you Councillor Stanley for your question.

The Beach Access Working Party was put in place at the Environment Committee meeting on 17 November 2021 and it was decided to have its first meeting in the spring when the tide in Bognor Regis was favourable, allowing us to access the beach past the shingle.

We are currently looking at 9 May 2022 as the date to attend the beach in Bognor Regis and as soon as this is confirmed all Members of the Working Party will be informed.

With regard to the timescales in which the work will be completed, I cannot give a definitive answer because at the moment we have no idea what options we are going to be discussing. The original seven options were all dismissed by the Environment Committee and Officers were tasked to go back and then bring forward new options.

All I can do is assure you and every other member that once we get the Working Party underway, we will endeavour to reach an agreed position as quickly as we can, at which point we will know the likely cost and the time required to complete the works.

Bearing in mind that because of the Committee system, now one Councillor can simply push the button and get things going. Therefore, the findings from the Working Party will have to be reported back to the Environment Committee to be discussed and voted upon. The date for this discussion and vote is therefore also dependent on the schedule for the Environment Committee meetings.

If the Environment Committee approves what is recommended, a supplementary estimate will need to be put before the Economy Committee, discussed and agreed and then will need to be agreed by Full Council.

The 9 May 2022 is the date that is being worked towards for this first meeting.

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Q7 From Councillor Stanley to the Chair of the Planning Policy Committee, Councillor Bower

Q7 Does the Chair agree with me that the consultation undertaken by developers in reference to the Felpham Golf Course was completely inadequate?

A7 As with all live planning applications and in accordance with the established custom and practice of this council, we do not discuss or comment on such applications in public. So, in accordance with the Planning Code of Conduct and in the interest of planning probity, I ask that this question be withdrawn. I decline to give my opinion on the subject of the question, and I ask you Chair not to accept a supplementary, otherwise Members of the Planning Committee, including myself, will have to retire before that supplementary question is posed.

Q8 From Councillor Stanley to the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee, Councillor Clayden

Q8 Can the Chair please provide Council with an update on the progress of the District Council's Equality and Diversity Audit?

A8 Thank you for your question, Councillor Stanley. This matter was considered previously by the Overview Select Committee on 23 March 2021. This should now be referred to the Policy & Finance Committee for consideration as part of its future work programme. As Chair of this Committee, I feel that we need to have more training on the Constitution and the Committee system as there seems to be a lack of understanding on how the new system works.

Q9 From Councillor Stanley to the Chair of the Economy Committee, Councillor Cooper

Q9 Following his proposal of the urgent agenda item to sell the Bognor Regis Coach and Lorry Park can the Chair share his aspirations for this site?

A9 As an individual Member of the Council governed by the Committee system, my personal aspirations are of little consequence, but I am aware that the Economy Committee is due to consider a report on this matter at its next meeting to be held on 29 March 2022 and I look forward to hearing the views of other Committee Members to inform my own view.

Supp

Q As the proposer I would assume there would be an end goal in this urgent agenda item and so can the Chair confirm that there was no aspirational aim when putting this up for sale other than to receive a capital receipt.

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Supp

A The aim was to prevent dither and delay and to get on with the business of this Council to move things forward. That was why it was an agenda item that was brought forward urgently, and I hope that Councillor Stanley accepts that.

Q10 From Councillor Stanley to the Chair of the Economy Committee, Councillor Cooper

Q10 Would the Chair look favourably on a proposal for a future agenda item to explore the expansion of the Windmill Theatre to enable a Theatre and Cinema to be able to run concurrently, as well as the inclusion of a purpose built foyer to allow for a bar/café?

A10 I can confirm that I am a huge fan of the Windmill Theatre but that aside, any Member of the Economy Committee can ask for an item to be added to the work programme and then it is for the Committee to decide whether that should happen. However, any new work items would need to be adequately resourced. Given the large amount of work that has already been committed to the budget, we would need to consider any additional staff implications seriously.

Supp

Q I acknowledge the potential both budgetary and resource constraints that Councillor Cooper mentions. As per his suggestion, I will be submitting this as an additional agenda item for the Economy Committee and may I ask if he has any concerns about this prior to the meeting that he comes to me and potentially we can work together to submit something that we both might find acceptable.

Supp

A Moving this item here is not acceptable. When he puts it in writing to the Committee, I will look at it and see if we can come to a mutual agreement to make something happen that is acceptable not only for us but for the staff and the resources.

Q11 From Councillor Stanley to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Gunner

Q11 Following the recent Member Training session where a Councillor was overheard talking about possible referendums and the subsequent lack of budget for any referendum, can the Leader of the Council confirm if it is the intention of his administration to hold a referendum on the governance structure of this council?

A11 I think that it is extraordinary that the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats wants to ask me yet again about processes and yet again about the Council and committees. This council is doing important work in terms of refurbishing the leisure centre in Bognor Regis; in terms of money for our high streets; in terms of our support for business across our entire district and the Liberal

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Democrats want again to talk about referendums and committees. Not only have the introduced the Committee system at incredible cost they are now asking loads of questions about a referendum. There is no budget for a referendum and so it is clearly not going to be happening in the next year but if he really wants a referendum, I suggest that he propose one at the Policy & Finance Committee and we will look at it.

Supp

Q A simple yes or not would have sufficed. Can I ask him again, within his administration does he plan on holding a referendum on the Governance structure of this council?

Supp

A I refer Councillor Stanley to my previous answer.

Q12 From Councillor Stanley to the Vice-Chair of the Housing & Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Gregory

Q12 Following the announcement that £1m has been budgeted for upgrades to the Arun Leisure Centre and the subsequent information that we do not know when or even if £700k will come to fruition, can the Chair inform us when the council plan to invest their £300k into this project and precisely what it will be spent on?

A12 The project will remodel the swimming changing rooms at the Arun Leisure Centre to improve accessibility, capacity, and customer experience. The project will be completed in the financial year 2022/23; the changing rooms require investment to bring them up to the standard of a modern leisure centre.

The budget report clearly states that the scheme will initially be funded through internal borrowing and identifies the phasing of the anticipated s106 receipts, and the risk attached to the timing of this funding. Housing & Wellbeing Committee agreed to proceed, and Policy & Finance committee agreed that the risk was acceptable and let it go forward to Full Council for approval. It is our intention to plug the funding gap with further s106 sums and CIL if available and other grant funding.