

COUNCIL MEETING – 8 NOVEMBER 2023

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

Q1 Councillor Kelly to the Chair of the Housing & Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Birch

Q1 Observer Scheme – As Chair of the Housing & Wellbeing Committee, could you please plan for Councillor Walsh, as this Council's nominated Outside Body representative on the Sussex Police and Crime Panel, to raise at the next meeting of the Panel the question below:

The Hampshire Constabulary run an observer scheme whereby members of the public, including Councillors, can ride in a police vehicle with a police officer and observe their duty and what it involves. Would the council ask Sussex Constabulary if they would run a similar scheme.

A1 Thank you for your question Councillor Kelly and I will certainly ask Councillor Walsh to raise this at the next meeting of the Panel.

Q2 Councillor Kelly to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Wallsgrove

Q2 Because of the large amount of over 65's in the Arun population , please can you confirm that this council will not be converting to pay by APP or credit / debit card and to keep cash payment an option at Arun Council carparks”.

A2 I can confirm that the Council has no plans to withdraw cash as a payment option from its car parks. Customers can pay by cash, bank card or app at all the Council's car parks.

Q3 Councillor Greenway to the Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee, Councillor Stanley

Q3 Can the Chair confirm the level of practical support Arun District Council has provided to residents in light of the recent flooding event in the district?

A3 Thank you Councillor Greenway. The Council has shared general and advice to residents through social media and has offered direct support to some specific cases. As this is a multi-agency situation, any residents who have contacted Arun have been signposted to the relevant organisations depending upon what their issue is. Our Building Control team have undertaken inspections when required, and our Housing Team has supported with the provision of temporary accommodation where needed.

Supp

Q Thank you for your response. Given the tone of tonight's debate, I do not wish to spoil it, however, it is disappointing personally that whilst Arun had done what Councillor Stanley has answered, I think that during the last 12 days what has been missing has been local leadership. I think that residents wanted to hear

COUNCIL MEETING – 8 NOVEMBER 2023

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14.3

from the Leader of Arun District Council, and I was certainly looking out for this and did not see it and so my question is, in your capacity as Leader of the Council, what actions had you taken to support residents?

Supp

A I take Councillor Greenway's views on board. My opinion was in terms of communications as we go through an operational stage. There was lots of practical advice coming from several different organisations and it is important that that this information is carried over. I have been involved in communications and meetings with Officers who have kept me updated on the situation; I have had interactions with my own residents; I have written to the Environment Agency (EA) specifically about the Aldingbourne Rife situation and so those are the kind of activities that I have been undertaking.

Q4 Councillor Pendleton to the Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee, Councillor Stanley

Q4 I did have a question about Southern Water which was circulated at the meeting. I am not going to call for a formal answer because we have discussed it very fully. Just a point of clarification when I was talking about the involvement of Southern Water, during the incident, I am happy to see as part of our previous discussion that Southern Water will be involved going forward and this is a very good resolution.

For information the question submitted in writing was:

I was talking about the Can the Leader confirm what conversations have been held between Arun District Council and Southern Water over the horrific and disgusting incidents of sewage outflow seen over the last 10 days during the recent heavy rainfall and storm conditions?

A4 No response was required.

Q5 Councillor Purser to the Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee, Councillor Stanley

Q5 In the absence of Councillor Purser, Councillor Gunner, as Leader of the Opposition, confirmed that as this matter had been discussed very fully as part of the Urgent Item, the question below was now withdrawn.

For information the question submitted was:

Can the Chair confirm what conversations have been held between Arun District Council and the Environment Agency over the significant flooding events we have seen over the last 10 days.

A5 No response was provided as the question was withdrawn.

COUNCIL MEETING – 8 NOVEMBER 2023

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

**Q6 Councillor Bower to the Chair of the Planning Policy Committee,
Councillor Lury**

Q6 Can the committee chair confirm what changes to planning policy he intends to make following the flooding incidents in the last 10 days. This question does not address future commitments as part of the Local Plan, I am talking about Policy implemented now.

A6 Thank you Councillor Bower. I have to say that I was somewhat perplexed by the question as I am indeed the Committee Chair of the Planning Policy Committee, a role that you previously held for two years so will now doubt you will be aware that I have no Executive power as it is not a Cabinet system.

I gather that you do not want to talk about the future, and that roughly forms the majority of my speech, however the Planning Policy Committee, which Councillor Bower is a member of, will be considering reports on coming agendas around what a future Local Plan might look like, the standards it wishes to apply to new development and assessing current and future flood risk data. These reports are already contained within the Work Programme of the Committee which I am sure you will have seen. As Councillor Bower is also aware, consultation and engagement with Southern Water and the Environment Agency will take place throughout this process to understand their data and commitments to infrastructure improvements. These will inform future planning policies that the Planning Policy Committee will consider.

Further, the urgent report before us this evening recommends that a forum is set up immediately to review the causes and impacts of the recent extreme weather as well as potential future mitigation of these impacts.

Today, I have also resent the letter that we sent to Michael Gove about our concerns about what is happening in terms of the recent flooding and so I am hoping that we will get a response back from Government. This has really expressed the concerns of residents that are seeing their places flood around them and are worried about their own safety and about future developments.

Supp

Q Councillor Lury will be aware that there are certain authorities in this country which have had a moratorium put on house building because of the EA under certain circumstances. We here, of course, have a serious problem which is the water table and the recent flooding. The Policy that I am talking about is current policy not about the direction of travel for the new Local Plan. I accept the discussion that we had earlier and that we are going to have this Forum, we need to see things coming out of this Forum that will enable us to adjust current planning policy – and that is the point of the question.

COUNCIL MEETING – 8 NOVEMBER 2023

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

Supp

A In the letter that we sent to Michael Gove; we talked about the constraints that we have in this Authority. The fact that we have the South Downs National Park, and we said that there is a clammer from the public for a moratorium on future development. What we have added this time and we have made it clearer is that given the recent flooding, we are concerned about the effects, and would they look at a moratorium on future huge, large scale development until we have sorted out Southern Water and the sewage. I have acted on that as directed by Full Council and so hopefully we will get a response from Mr Gove.

Q7 **Councillor Lloyd to the Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee, Councillor Stanley**

Q7 Is the Chair happy with the content and number of communications issued to inform and help residents and businesses with the flooding issues over the last 10 days?

A7 The simple answer is ‘yes’. This is a multi-agency situation and I think that Arun has played its part with communications having been provided across the Council and beyond. It has been mentioned already this evening that Arun is not the lead agency for this incident, it is important to allow space for all agencies to communicate this being Southern Water, the Environment Agency, West Sussex County Council, the emergency services and the met office. I have a list of information and communications provided over the last 10 days and this was provided as Appendix 2 in the urgent report discussed earlier.

Q8 **Councillor Gunner to the Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee, Councillor Stanley**

Q8 To the Chair of Policy and Finance Committee: On 11 May, the previous Liberal Democrat leader Cllr Walsh told me of the intention to set up a LibDem-Labour-Green “Alliance” administration. He said that this administration would be underpinned by a “Memorandum of Understanding” which would outline the policy platform the administration intended to pursue for the Council. 6 months on, has a Memorandum of Understanding been written, and when will we see it?

A8 What we have currently is the broadest cross-party administration in Arun’s history. The Liberal Democrats, Labour, Green and Independents are working together, and I believe that this spirit of co-operation is showing tangible results in our culture and our reputation. Our combined understanding is that we have more in common now than what we do that separates us. We are working together to make Arun a better place to live, work, learn and visit.

Supp

Q Has a Memorandum of understanding been written and when will I see it?

COUNCIL MEETING – 8 NOVEMBER 2023

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14.3

Supp

A The only thing I will add is, and I am sure that Councillor Gunner will remember in January 2022, the Independent Group submitted a motion asking a similar request to the Conservative Group, which he and the Conservative Group voted against.

Q9 Councillor Gunner to the Chair of the Economy Committee, Councillor Nash

Q9 To the Chair of Economy Committee: You have mentioned online that this administration intends to take some “tough decisions”. Can you let us know what those tough decisions are and when we can expect to see them?

A9 Thank you for the question. The tough decisions have been made as we have been left in a situation with this new administration with a very difficult financial situation – perhaps if tough decisions had been made a few years ago then we would not be in quite the same situation. We are in a situation where we have got to make something like 20% cuts in our budget over the next few years. So, we are looking to save a lot of money which will have an impact, and this is where the tough decisions will need to be made. The context of this, is of course the fact that over the last few years, especially since 2010, every Council in this country has had a huge cut in revenue support; we have had inflation; we have had the current Government crash the economy and the fact is that we are in an even tougher situation than we would have been previously. We have had a failed Brexit which has contributed to where we are. In terms of what decisions are going to be made, quite rightly the Officers and others are working diligently to come up with ideas and proposals which will be put to Members in the next few weeks, and we will all have the chance to debate those and put our ideas together and I would say to Councillor Gunner, hold your comment until we have been able to do this.

Supp

Q I would like to thank the Deputy Leader of the Council for confirming that he intends to make 20% cuts. He has just announced that he has made tough decisions but did not announce what they were. In terms of savings, the only saving that I am aware of is to get rid of the coffee machine. I would like to ask the Deputy Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Economy Committee – he says he is planning on making 20% cuts, but he does not seem to have any ideas himself – I would like to ask perhaps he could outline what his own views are in terms of where he would like his 20% cuts to fall.

COUNCIL MEETING – 8 NOVEMBER 2023

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

Supp

A As being a previous Leader of this Council – in terms of the cuts you should have been doing that some years ago and you did not do it. I will not presume to stand here today and say what I think, it is for the whole Council to contribute and come up with a solution. As I said, Officers are working very hard to look at the whole situation and come up with proposals that are going to be debated in due course and I won't say any more than that.