

FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 15 JULY 2020

**AGENDA ITEM 3 – PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – ORDER IN WHICH THE
CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL WILL INVITE QUESTIONS BELOW RECEIVED
IN WRITING IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING**

1. From Mr Cosgrove to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Dr Walsh
2. From Mr Cosgrove to the Chairman of the Overview Select Committee, Councillor Northeast

**THE FULL DETAIL OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IS DETAILED
BELOW**

NOTE: The Chairman will:

- invite questions from members of the public who have submitted in writing their questions in line with the Council's Constitution;
- explain that the questions received will be answered by the appropriate Members of the Cabinet or the Chairman of the Overview Select Committee
- confirm that Public Question Time allows Members of the public to ask one question at a time and that a maximum of one minute is allowed for each question.
- state that questions will be invited in the order in which they have been received and that if there is time remaining from the 15 minutes allowed for Public Question Time, questioners will be allowed to ask a supplementary question.
- In line with current virtual meeting procedure rules that any submitted questions will be read out by the Committee Manager on behalf of the member of the public

QUESTION ONE

From Mr Cosgrove to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Dr Walsh

Question

The Regeneration of Bognor Regis has made little, if any progress for the past five or more years. In the post-pandemic setting, the local economy of Bognor Regis will urgently require major stimulus and investment. The Council is in urgent need of new/improved income streams.

The Council maintains an indefensible block on engagement with the Sir Richard Hotham Project which has neither logic nor advantage to justify its continuation which also risks the Council not fulfilling best consideration requirements.

Will the Leader of the Council now commit to a change in the current situation so that an engagement with SRHP can begin in the shortest possible time-frame, on the basis of sought-for and given flexibility in negotiations with no preconditions other than those imposed by virtue of the planning consent which SRHP gained from The Planning Inspector?

Will he also undertake that the Council will return to the principle of cross-subsidy as set out in the 2003 Masterplan and which has not been superseded which clearly has been abandoned without discussion by the Officers?

In line with quite clear concerns of many Councillors, will he disavow the idea of piecemeal development which is not Regeneration by any stretch of the imagination?

Will he pledge to Councillors and the Public that all efforts will now be made to see whether a deal beneficial to Bognor, the Council and SRHP can be reached?

Response

Thank you for your question.

The Council is currently determining what course of action it wishes to take in respect of the Regis Centre site. I believe most people would agree it is only prudent to consider this matter very carefully in light of the current Pandemic and how the economy is impacted.

With regard to the Sir Richard Hotham Project (SRHP) the Council has refused to support the SRHP on three separate occasions, twice in the previous administration and once during this administration. Furthermore, this administration has also made its opposition clear to any development on the Hothamton Car Park which forms part of the SRHP proposals.

I appreciate you are a passionate supporter of this project but at this time, and in fact at no time, has the SRHP garnered the support of any administration of this Council, regardless of political colour, I believe this demonstrates that the Council as a whole does not believe this scheme as a package is right for Bognor Regis.

Facts for your info – meeting dates

2015

Report to Full Council on 11.11.15

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/Data/Full%20Council/20151111/Agenda/Report%20on%20the%20regeneration%20of%20the%20Regis%20and%20Hothampton%20car%20park%20sites..pdf>

Minute 315 – Full Council Meeting minutes from 11.11.15

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/Data/Full%20Council/20151111/Agenda/Minutes.pdf>

2016

Report at item 25 to Full Council on 9.11.16

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/Data/Full%20Council/20161109/Agenda/Agenda.pdf>

Minute 307 – Full Council Meeting minutes from 09.11.16

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/Data/Full%20Council/20161109/Agenda/Minutes.pdf>

2017

Report to Bognor Regis Regeneration Sub Committee on 27.2.17

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/Data/Bognor%20Regis%20Regeneration%20Subcommittee/20170227/Agenda/Agenda.pdf>

Minute 494 – Full Council Meeting minutes from 8 March 2017 (considering minutes from BRRSC of 27.2.17)

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/Data/Full%20Council/20170308/Agenda/Minutes.pdf>

2018

- Report to Full Council on 18.7.18 (the report at item 30 was exempt)
<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/Data/Full%20Council/20180718/Agenda/Agenda.pdf>

Minute 108 – Full Council Meeting minutes from 18.07.18

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/Data/Full%20Council/20180718/Agenda/Minutes.pdf>

2019

Report to Cabinet on 8.7.19

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/documents/g649/Public%20reports%20pack%2008th-Jul-2019%2017.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

Minute 76 – Cabinet minutes from 8.7.19

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/documents/g649/Printed%20minutes%2008th-Jul-2019%2017.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=1>

Minute 116 – Full Council meeting minutes from 18.7.19

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/documents/g768/Public%20minutes%2017th-Jul-2019%2018.00%20Full%20Council.pdf?T=11>

Supplementary Question

NOTE: In line with the Council's Virtual Meeting Procedure Rules in place at 15 July 2020, the supplementary question below was submitted for the Leader of the Council to respond to in writing:

I have been made aware of an email which was signed by the Chief Executive in late June, sent to Councillors, which ones I am not sure.

In it, Mr Lynn states his awareness of the presentation last Monday and the one before by SRHP for Councillors. He says, I am informed, that he had been asked to contact Cllrs to ask them not to participate. This email is directly pertinent to the questions I have asked you, and so I ask, were you aware that Mr Lynn would be sending this email to Cllrs, were you the person who asked him to send it, or, if not, who was that person? I am told that Cllrs did attend, one to report to his Group, others of a larger group etc.

How can the Council justify this interference with elected Cllrs doing their jobs of which receiving information is a key part?

Supplementary Response

Thank you for your supplementary question.

I was not aware that the Chief Executive was intending on sending a letter to all Councillors but of course he is at liberty to do so. As the Chief Executive made clear in his letter *“it is for to Members to consider, in the light of the Council’s agreed position ... whether or not to attend”*.

QUESTON TWO

From Mr Cosgrove to the Chairman of the Overview Select Committee, Councillor Northeast

Question

Does the Chairman agree with me that there should be a full scrutiny of the way in which the Council has handled the application and regeneration proposals of the Sir Richard Hotham Project as an early and important item in the Committee's work cycle?

Response

Thank you for your question

It is for the Members of the Overview Select Committee to determine the work programme of the Committee. It is open for any Committee Member to ask the Committee that a matter to be added to the work programme and the first opportunity to do so would be at the next available Committee in September 2020.