

FULL COUNCIL – 10 NOVEMBER 2021

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

1. From Mr Cosgrove to the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee, Councillor Clayden
2. From Mr Cosgrove to the Chair of Economic Committee, Councillor Cooper
3. From Mr Cosgrove to the Chair of Economic Committee, Councillor Cooper

FULL DETAIL OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IS DETAILED BELOW

Note, the Chair 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 Chair of the appropriate Committee or the Vice-Chair in their absence
- 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.

QUESTION ONE

From Mr Cosgrove to the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee, Councillor Clayden

Recently a Member has resigned from a neighbouring authority following disclosure of his membership of a far-right white supremacist group which appears not to have been entered in the Register of Members Interests. Will the Leader of the Council and the Chair impress on the Group Leaders and all Councillors the issues of public trust and openness illustrated by this unfortunate episode?

Response

Thank you Mr Cosgrove for your question.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, your question to the Leader of the Council has been directed to me as the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee. As you may already be aware, the Council moved to a Committee structure in May 2021 whereby individual Committees were given delegated authority. As your question regarding governance falls within the remit of the Audit & Governance Committee, my response as the Chair of that Committee is yes.

I confirm that all Councillors are aware of their responsibilities in terms of the Code of Conduct when carrying out their duty as a Councillor for Arun District Council. However, it must be pointed out that we have no authority to deal with complaints which relate solely to a Councillor's private life or things they do which are not related to their role as a Councillor. All Councillors have agreed to sign up to the new Code that was adopted by the Council on 24 March 2021 and to completing a new Register of Interests showing any interests that they have.

The Chair of the Standards Committee, Councillor Tilbrook, fully supports this response.

QUESTION TWO

From Mr Cosgrove to the Chair of Economic Committee, Councillor Cooper

In asking this question I hope the Chairman has read the BBC article dated 27 September 2021 by Professor Chris Whitty, England's Chief Medical Officer of Health "[Deprived coastal towns need redesign](#)" quote: "One of things we need to do with all of them is take a long-term view of how we recreate a sense of excitement that you had along the coast when these towns were first produced,"

The Constitution states clearly: "Making recommendations to the Full Council in relation to all major regeneration projects, including **land and property**, affecting the towns and villages within the Arun District.". The Levelling-Up Bid submitted after agreement by the Committee included a recladding exercise on the Regis Centre, a designated Regeneration site for Bognor Regis. Why was this matter not referred to an extraordinary meeting of the full Council instead of the breach of the Constitutional provision above and counter to the existing Regeneration process which has since been stalled and does he not accept that success in the bid will seriously imperil other major proposals of greater financial value for that site? This matter concerns not a short political fix but the future of the Town as a resort.

Response

Thank you for your question Mr Cosgrove.

I appreciate you do not appear to support the proposed enhancements to the theatre but many others in the community do.

I can confirm, as has previously been explained to you, that Full Council will have an opportunity to consider whether it wishes to accept the Grant offered by the Government. However, at the time of writing we have yet to see the details of any requirements linked to the Grant.

QUESTION THREE

From Mr Cosgrove to the Chair of Economic Committee, Councillor Cooper

The current theatre on the Regis Centre site is under-leased to Arun Arts until August 2046. The Levelling-Up bid contains a proposal to increase the number of seats and improve ancillary facilities. Arun Arts is a charity and the provision over the years has been community-level.

Assuming that Arun Arts was consulted prior to the submission, can he state whether or not attendance figures provided by the charity were examined, eg in terms of % occupation of total main auditorium capacity/ use of ancillary provision to justify increase of seats etc based on the type of programming thus far provided, and whether the proposed improvements would generate the increase of e.g. footfall, level of production (eg attracting major shows and professionals) that would qualify the proposal as truly regenerative?

Response

Thank you for your question Mr Cosgrove.

I can confirm that as part of the submission, data on existing audience participation was analysed along with market potential.