

Full Council – 18 July 2019

Questions from Councillors

Question 1 – submitted by Cllr Alex Brenton

Town and Parish Councils

“The Dorset Council is a new sort of Council for Dorset, the purpose was to streamline local government. Parish and Town Councils have a proud history of centuries of effective government.

There has been concern that communication between the two tiers has not been effective lately, with confusion and lack of knowledge in Dorset Council about the valued and effective roles of Town Councils and Clerks.

What steps is the Dorset Council putting in place so as to improve this?

Suggestions from some Town and Parish Clerks include :-

Making a particular portal on the Dorset website for access by Town & Parish clerks.

Having a dedicated communication team for local councils,

More training for Switchboard and Reception staff about the many valued roles of Parish & Town Clerks.

Has the Leader of the Council any plans to improve the situation? “

Response by Cllr Spencer Flower

“I have addressed the importance of this council’s relationship with parish and town council’s in my announcements as Leader, earlier in this meeting. I hope that the formation of an Executive Advisory Panel, Chaired by Cllr Tony Alford, will reassure Cllr Brenton that as Leader I am committed to working with parish and town councils.”

Question 2 – submitted by Cllr Beryl Ezzard

Local Area Forums/Community Network Groups

There was always when re-organising to a Unitary Authority, an aspiration to form Local Area Forums or Local Community Network Groups where DC Cllrs in adjoining Wards would keep a local focus and connection by meeting with local stakeholders: This could be a selection of local businesses, community voluntary groups and trusts, Youth groups, Town & Parish Councillors and environment groups to discuss, debate and be hands on the local communities on issues, growth and projects in that area. I envisage this would involve Officer support and a small budget for Community Projects.

Has this been discussed by the Leader and Cabinet and if not, why not? And if so in what form would this engagement take and when will it be implemented?

E.g. The Cornwall & Wiltshire Unitary Councils' are both approaches that work well.

Thank you for your consideration in this important community engagement

Response by Cllr Spencer Flower

Similar response to that given to Alex Brenton, based on information given by the Leader in his announcements.

Question 3 – submitted by Cllr Kate Wheller

Budmouth College

“At a recent Full Council meeting of Weymouth Town Council a Notice of Motion regarding the formation of Academies was debated. A Notice of Motion on the academisation of Budmouth is to be tabled at the next Full Dorset Council meeting.

I do not want to rehearse that NOM which has departed somewhat from the original.

I understand that the subject of Academies is complex and the scope for us as a local authority is limited however I request that this council looks at how it can better support those schools being threatened with academisation.

The education of our children is our future not just of Weymouth but of our whole County. Whilst of course I care about Budmouth and am particularly concerned by the MAT that is proposed to take it over my concern is much wider.

The goal posts have been moved in assessing the performance of our schools with a clear intention of opening the door to academisation. I have spoken to many parents, teachers and ancillary staff about their experiences working within an Academy, none have reported good things. I am asking you to make a determined effort to give our schools in Dorset all the support they need to resist the march of academisation. Teachers, parents and children are unhappy with Academies, our local schools should be run for the benefit of our local children and our local communities not for some faceless, arms length profit machine. We had excellent local authority schools across Dorset, we still have many, why not all?

You have shown great strength in the debate on Budmouth already I ask you now, to maintain that strength, join councils across the country who are resisting academisation. “

Response by Cllr A Parry