

Full Council – 3 September 2020 Questions from Councillors

Question 1 – submitted by Cllr Alex Brenton

A question for Cabinet member for Children's Services and Planning. 3.9.2020
The plans to build a new Children's Home at 45 Dorchester Road Weymouth is good news for the looked after children of Dorset.

I hope it is also good news for Dorset to prove it is fully committed to a Low Carbon future. The plans for 45 Dorchester Road we assume will include modern green building techniques. Such as using low carbon concrete, Ground source heat pump (GSHP) or air source heat pumps (GSHP) solar panels, rainwater storage and grey water usage system and all the other eco-friendly adaptations built in.

If we care about the future of our children Dorset Council should prove a leader in building for the future and be an example to the County developers that good modern design should last lifetimes.

Can the cabinet member confirm that low carbon building techniques will be used on all public buildings from now on?

Question 2 – submitted by Cllr Maria Roe

Tetra Pak is a food packaging used for dairy, beverages, soups, ice cream and other prepared food. One of the biggest benefits of Tetra Pak is that it is completely recyclable. Most Councils accept Tetra Pak with their kerbside collection. Aluminium foil and foil trays are also collected at the kerbside by 86% of councils according to Aluminium Insider (31/12/2015).

In Dorset this waste is either sent to landfill or people have to drive to a recycling centre or recycle bank to dispose of it which if you live in a village can be some distance. Why can't Dorset Council include this waste in its kerbside collection?

Question 3 – submitted by Cllr Nick Ireland

Back on the 1st October 2019, I asked a question of Cabinet concerning the drastic reduction of service levels relating to bin collections and particularly recycling collections experienced by my constituents in the Crossways Ward and also in neighbouring areas. This stemmed from a shortage of serviceable vehicles combined with a chronic lack of qualified drivers.

Cllr Alford responded that *"There have been a number of vehicle breakdowns and issues with driver recruitment ... Upon investigation, we have concluded that Dorset Council currently pays the DWP's LGV drivers less than neighbouring authorities and comparable companies. Therefore, we are reviewing Dorset Council's pay rates for DWP drivers. Officers are working closely with HR*

colleagues to explore all options on pay and grading, including the option of a market supplement being applied to DWP driver posts.”

I have followed this up numerous times since and the service hasn't improved; if anything it has got worse and I'm hearing the same from fellow members whose wards are served by the Wareham Depot.

I see no evidence that the vehicle situation has been resolved and have yet to be informed that we are now competitive in our offer to LGV drivers.

Seemingly nothing has been achieved since the issue was raised; why hasn't this been sorted and who's taking responsibility to ensure it is?

Question 4 from Cllr Nick Ireland

The proposed development of Dorset County Hospital is extremely important not just to those patients local to Dorchester but also to patients further afield who choose our local hospital to meet their health needs. With the likely merger of the Poole and Royal Bournemouth & Christchurch Trusts, combined with the changes proposed under the Clinical Services Review, we are seeing a migration of services away from Poole to the more distant Bournemouth campus and a likely increase in the demands on DCH as the treatment centre of choice.

The planning application was submitted back in October 2019 and has since been deferred three times from the Northern Area Planning Committee by Dorset Council.

The £65m funding allocated for these improvements has to be applied for and there is a real danger that further delays in considering the planning application could impact upon the central government set deadline of December for the submission of the business case and the subsequent loss of some or potentially all of the funding.

Can the portfolio holder explain in detail the reasons for the delays in considering DCH's planning application and give assurance that it will be considered before the December deadline?

Question 5 from Cllr Robin Legg

It looks inevitable that a sum of nearly £21.8M will need to be returned to the Treasury as the unallocated portion of funding made available by Government for Small Business Grants and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants during the Covid Crisis. Whilst acknowledging the efforts made by many authorities and MPs to get 5% of the original funds useable on a discretionary and more flexible basis it is now clear that 5% was not enough. What work is this authority presently doing to engage with Dorset's Members of Parliament so that they can

lobby on our behalf for a large part of that £21.8M to be used where it is desperately needed to support local business.

Question 6 from Cllr Robin Legg

The appendix to the Independent Remuneration Panel report sets out a long list of things which the six new Lead Members might be called upon to do in support of Cabinet colleagues. At the present time, with so many suffering financial hardship as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, there is an even greater need to justify these posts and their associated costs. What therefore will be done to monitor the performance of those appointed so that at the end of twelve months a clear, transparent and public account is given of their work in relation to each of those elements in the appendix.

Question 7 from Cllr Beryl Ezzard

Issues with Dorset Waste Partnership Recyclates Collections. On behalf of my ward community, I wish to complain of the woeful lack of service, over a 6-week period (3 collections), when no collections were made, during the hottest spell of the summer. Having been in close contact with the Wareham Depot and defended the DWP Service many times stating to folk of the exemplary service that DWP staff have done throughout the Covid-19 lockdown, I was being told in July/August of Staff absences; sickness and holidays, plus truck breakdowns, in circumstances with no spare capacity or backup plan!. Why?

It is painfully obvious that the DWP Service is lacking in maintenance and adequately trained staff; with common knowledge that we lose HGV Drivers to neighbouring Councils as the Wages are better than DC's. This is and will cause continuing problems with keeping staff and particularly HGV Drivers? When, I ask, will this be addressed?

Also, when we encourage our communities to access the DC website, local folk find it unhelpful, not updated or gives inaccurate information, causing more issues. Usually then calling the local Members with complaint after complaint. Can we have an update on this too please?

Question 8 from Cllr Beryl Ezzard

Electricity Charging Points for Vehicles. Where and when is DC going to show the way by putting in Electric Charging Points on Car Parks? I know there has been some work done in encouraging buying electric vehicles, but we have to follow-on to make it easy for folk to re-charge their vehicles, within the Dorset Council area; there are very few at the present time.

When will DC be lobbying the Motor Manufacturers & Government? We need to bring them together to enable a universal charging system as now, most makes of vehicles have their own charging machines. This does make it difficult to decide if it is viable to choose a system that may go out of date within a few years! However,

we must not be daunted by the fact that if we don't, we will be unable to achieve our Carbon Footprint and air pollution reduction significantly.

We are all conscious of our Climate Change & Ecological Emergency commitment, we need some action now! When, where and how many are Dorset Council prepared to install Electric Charging Points in the next year? Please give it this some resource, as we need to demonstrate we have an action plan for the community to change to cleaner and greener electric vehicles.

I and other Members would willingly give up our £500.00 (5% increase in our allowance) to achieve this in the next year.