



Cabinet

Date: Tuesday, 10 September 2024
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: New Town Hall, Commercial Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 8NG

Chief Executive: Matt Prosser, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

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4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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Representatives of town or parish councils and members of the public who live, work, or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area are welcome to submit either 1 question or 1 statement for each meeting. You are welcome to attend the meeting in person or via MS Teams to read out your question and to receive the response. If you submit a statement for the committee this will be circulated to all members of the committee in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes for the formal record but will not be read out at the meeting. The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received from members of the public or organisations for each meeting will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline set out below. Further information read [Public Participation - Dorset Council](#)

All submissions must be emailed in full to Kate.Critchel@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Thursday 5 September 2024.

When submitting your question or statement please note that:

- You can submit 1 question or 1 statement.
 - a question may include a short pre-amble to set the context.
 - It must be a single question and any sub-divided questions will not be permitted.
 - Each question will consist of no more than 450 words, and you will be given up to 3 minutes to present your question.
 - when submitting a question please indicate who the question is for (e.g., the name of the committee or Portfolio Holder)
 - Include your name, address, and contact details. Only your name will be published but we may need your other details to contact you about your question or statement in advance of the meeting.
 - questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda.
 - all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.
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Public Questions for Cabinet – 10 September 2024

Question from Martin Saberton

Preamble: Prior to its closure, QE leisure centre offered the only roped indoor climbing in the local area. Unless I'm mistaken, the only other publicly accessible roped climbing facility in the entirety of Dorset is in Bridport, and the next nearest roped climbing is Parthian in Southampton.

The relevance and value of the wall stretches far beyond the local Wimborne area as, prior to QE's closure, people travelled from across the county to use the facility.

Roped climbing should not be confused with bouldering, which is available at a great facility in Poole. The lack of a rope in bouldering changes the risk profile and is a very different experience which I would be happy to explain in more detail.

For those that may not be aware, climbing is a very popular sport in Dorset, with outdoor climbing (in the warmer months) available from Swanage all the way to Portland (people travel from all over the world to climb here). When the weather turns, climbers head indoors, and with the loss of QE, many local climbers will be lost for somewhere to climb or face a long drive to Bridport or Hampshire.

Indoor climbing also suits new climbers, those less able or in rehabilitation, and, critically, kids clubs who not only need to learn the basics before heading outdoors, but have lots of fun and learn new found confidence and bravery through the sport. This is in addition to the numerous mental and physical health benefits presented in a way not found with other sports.

The climbing wall at QE has been enjoyed by kids clubs and adult climbers for many years, is a unique asset that is currently lost and the prospect for the winter months is bleak.

These points were all raised in individual responses to the original public consultation on the closure of QE and again more recently with local councillors. I have had some limited engagement from Initio learning trust about possibilities and am pursuing those, but I haven't had any commitment from Dorset council to look at what is possible at QE or elsewhere.

Climbing is a rapidly growing sport, and the Team GB gold medal at the Olympics shows that it is now in the mainstream. I'm confident that there is commercial viability for a well-run roped climbing facility, and as I see it this isn't a QE specific issue. It is a question of maintaining provision of roped climbing in the local area.

Q: With this in mind, is the council open to engaging on the matter of ensuring public and club access to roped climbing for the local area is not lost for good?

