

Cabinet 3 November 2020

Councillor Questions

1. Question from Cllr Jon Orrell

Would the cabinet agree to a new management policy for all the county farms to ban hunting of wild animals with dogs (including trail hunts that can then use a loophole and legally kill live wild animals)?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property

The Hunting Act 2004 is law and as such bans the hunting of wild mammals with dogs in England & Wales and to do so is illegal.

The Council will not allow any illegal or unlawful activity to take place on its land and will only condone legal activities to take place and at this moment in time trail hunting is considered a legal activity.

The Council Farms Estate is the only area of land owned by the Council where trail hunting takes place. Council Farms are leased to tenants and it is for those individuals who manage the land to decide whether to allow legal activities to take place on the land.

A prohibition on trail hunting which manifestly interferes with lawful freedom of those who take part in sport can only be justified if the Council reasonably concludes that prohibition is the best means of managing the land which under the lease arrangements currently in place is the responsibility of the tenants.

2. Question from Cllr Jon Orrell

Would the Council use the lockdown to push for reform of the track and trace, so it is local? And what other local measures are intended?

Response from the leader of the Council

In short, yes. There was a clear announcement of additional funding of £8 per head to support localising the test and trace system, along with the lockdown announcement on Saturday. Directors of Public Health are meeting at regional level with Public Health England to establish a new model for test and trace. In addition to this, Dorset Council has signed up with the Dept. of Health and Social Care to pilot the new rapid tests that are being made available. These will be helpful in being able to respond and test more quickly in our communities, and to support testing in high risk settings including schools and care homes.

As well as localised test and trace, there will be additional work on communications and social marketing campaigns targeting specific groups in which we have seen

barriers to complying with public health measures such as self-isolation. Enhanced support will also be stood up to protect the clinically extremely vulnerable.

This is set out in a new local Contain and Enable strategy which will strengthen our local interventions ready for when we emerge from lockdown.

3. Question from Cllr Matt Hall

In light of the recent conversations between Dorset Police and Dorset Council over the future of South Walks House could the Portfolio Holder explain the democratic and scrutiny process any sale of Council property would go through?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property

As identified within the Property Strategy & Asset Management Plan Cabinet Report under paragraph 11.15 Dorchester Office Estate it is the intention to bring to cabinet a separate paper with regard to the Council's office needs within Dorchester (including South Walks House) and its future strategy. This paper will be subject to the normal processes with regard to Scrutiny.