

Full Council – 12 October 2023
Questions submitted by Councillors

Question 1 – submitted by Cllr K Clayton

On September 9th the first Dorset CoP took place in Dorchester. This was a very successful and inspiring event. Attendees included a number of high-profile climate activists, a number of Dorset Council officers, and 5 Dorset councillors. Unfortunately, none of these councillors were from the controlling party. Whilst the portfolio holder has my full confidence, this wider lack of support, together with the recent ‘watering down’ of the Government’s climate actions, could imply a lack of commitment – that our climate crisis is not the priority it needs to be. Should the residents of Dorset be concerned?

Question 2 submitted by Cllr B Trite

Assuming that Dorset Council is successful in its commendable objective of becoming carbon neutral in or by the year 2040, do we yet have an estimate (at present monetary values) of what the total net cost of achieving this will have been to the Council between 2019 and either 2040 or any earlier date of neutrality? If we don't, when will such a projection be available?

Question 3 – submitted by Cllr M Parkes

Before the dissolution of East Dorset District Council, a plan was created to improve Ferndown Town Centre.

There is an urgent need for these plans to be revived and updated and for the residents of Ferndown to be reassured that Dorset Council will deliver the improvements that our Town Centre needs.

Dorset Council owns several prominent assets in Ferndown that allow for a brilliant opportunity to improve Pennys Walk and the surrounding area. At a time when several major retailers are exiting the town, a proactive approach from Dorset Council would be welcomed in Ferndown. Will the relevant Cabinet member give me the assurance that plans for Ferndown will be progressed and delivered please?

Question 4 – submitted by Cllr A Starr

NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY

Following my recent question to this council regarding stories in the press about the scrapping of EU derived laws that provide much needed protection to the natural environment, I was reassured that this council would be watching the situation carefully and making representations to the government if required.

There has been a stop on new house building in the Dorset river catchment areas to prevent more nutrient run off causing eutrophication, particularly in my ward of Lytchett & Upton, which includes part of the very vulnerable Poole Harbour.

The recent announcement by the government, that Planning restrictions on nutrient run off are to be scrapped in favour of a promise to increase investment in a nutrient mitigation scheme, is very worrying. This would seem to be letting the developers build new homes and having the public pick up the bill for mitigation. It would also seem that the extra pollution could well be an issue long before the answer to the problem is in place. The Environment Agency seems to be very quiet on this issue at present. Can I ask then if it is going to work in Dorset?

Given that this council has declared an environmental and ecological emergency, can I ask if any representation has been made to the government about this issue. Have we assurances that funds are available from Central Government to put in place nutrient mitigation before houses are built or will the local taxpayer be expected to cover the cost?