

## REIGATE AND BANSTEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL

**COUNCIL: 25 JULY 2019**

### **Questions by Members**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Question by:</b>	<b>To be answered by:</b>	<b>Subject</b>
1.	Cllr J. Essex	Cllr M. Brunt, Leader of the Council	Gatwick Airport
2.	Cllr S. Kulka	Cllr A. Horwood, Executive Member for Wellbeing & Intervention	The Harlequin
3.	Cllr S. Sinden	Cllr A. Horwood, Executive Member for Wellbeing & Intervention	The Harlequin
4.	Cllr J. Philpott	Cllr N. Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	Consequence of new charges for waste disposal by Surrey County Council
5.	Cllr R. Ritter	Cllr G. Knight, Executive Member for Housing and Benefits	Reasonable expenses and intentional homelessness
6.	Cllr S. McKenna	Cllr Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy	Longmead School, Redhill

**Council Meeting:** 25 July 2019

**Councillor J. Essex** will ask the **Leader of the Council, Councillor M. Brunt** the following question:

**Question: Gatwick Airport**

On Thursday 18th July 2019 Gatwick Airport Ltd announced their intention to seek permission for Gatwick Airport's emergency runway to operate as a de-facto second runway, increasing airport capacity.

Four years ago, in July 2015 the Airports Commission concluded that no more than one new runway should be built in the South East if the government was to stay within its (now old) target of 80% carbon emissions reduction by 2050 - and this required other airports to reduce flights so overall our airports did not exceed the budget for aviation (which was to remain the same whilst all other sectors had carbon emission reductions).

However, this year, the government and Surrey County Council committed to the reduce emissions to zero by 2050, meaning stronger constraints on aviation expansion are required.

Last Thursday this council's Executive agreed a draft Corporate Plan for consultation, noting that it recognised the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) warning that urgent action is required in order to avoid runaway global warming and climate breakdown, and committed to take a proactive approach to reach both the government's and global targets.

Please would the Leader clarify that our commitment means in regard to the proposed expansion of Gatwick Airport which this council recognises as it least part in our borough and in our area of strategic influence, and clearly state our opposition to this proposed expansion of Gatwick Airport, as being inconsistent with our position on climate change.

**Council Meeting:** 25 July 2019

**Councillor S. Kulka** will ask the **Executive Member for Wellbeing & Intervention**, **Councillor A. Horwood** the following question:

**Question: The Harlequin Upgrade**

The Waller Cinema in Redhill was a later conversion to the Harlequin Theatre to generate more income, so that the theatre complex would become more financially viable and would thereby reduce the necessary annual Council subsidy.

As the cinema has been closed for approximately nine months for refurbishment with lost income, can the Executive Member for Wellbeing & Intervention advise as to why the programme has taken so long and if there is a projected opening date?

**Council Meeting:** 25 July 2019

**Councillor S. Sinden** will ask the **Executive Member for Wellbeing & Intervention, Councillor A. Horwood** the following question:

**Question: The Harlequin**

The Harlequin cinema has now been shut for around six months. Why is it taking so long for the Harlequin cinema seating to get replaced? What went wrong, when will it be back in use, and what provision has been made over the summer holidays?

**Council Meeting:** 25 July 2019

**Councillor J. Philpott** will ask the **Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor N. Bramhall** the following question:

**Question: Consequence of new charges for waste disposal by SCC**

The introduction of further charges for the disposal of waste material by Surrey County Council will undoubtedly lead to an increase in fly tipping and may also encourage residents to dispose of their waste by the use of bonfires or incinerators. Some of this waste could be toxic.

Can the Executive Member advise if RBBC needs to be thinking about mitigations to potential consequences of this? And perhaps what by laws govern the use of bonfires and how these laws are enforced?

**Council Meeting:** 25 July 2019

**Councillor R. Ritter** will ask the **Executive Member for Housing and Benefits, Councillor G. Knight** the following question:

**Question: Reasonable Expenses and Intentional Homelessness**

This concerns the 'reasonable expenses' and intentional homelessness, since the 2019 Supreme court ruling, *Samuels v Birmingham City Council* in which the decision to evict Ms Samuels for rent arrears by Birmingham CC, having found her 'intentionally homeless' was quashed.

Ms Samuels had been judged as having enough 'flexibility' in her finances to cover a £34 per week shortfall of her rent over housing benefit, which the Supreme Court considered to be the subjective view of the case officer as it did not make the required objective assessment of her 'reasonable living expenses' (other than rent) that being determined with regard to both her needs and those of her children.

The Supreme Court judgment has made it clear that 'subsistence benefit levels' are a reasonable objective baseline to ensure that an applicant can afford their housing costs without being deprived of basic essentials such as food, clothing, heating, transport and other essentials specific to their circumstances. Housing costs should not be considered 'affordable' if the applicant would be left with a residual income that is insufficient to meet these essential needs.

In light of this can the Reigate and Banstead Borough Council housing and homelessness team share with Council what steps they have taken to incorporate this Supreme court judgment into their procedures?

**Council Meeting:** 25 July 2019

**Councillor S. McKenna** will ask the **Executive Member for Planning Policy**  
**Councillor R. Biggs** the following question:

**Question: Longmead School, Redhill**

For far too long Redhill has seen many of its old characterful buildings lost to new development without even a modest attempt to consider the benefits of refurbishment. It seems because developers prefer to start with a cleared site that we allow them to do so. Yet there are numerous examples of old schools, churches, cinemas and other buildings in other towns that have been sensitively converted to provide much needed homes. It is the case that retaining buildings and spaces with local meaning and significance that helps make great places.

We have a locally iconic building, the 109 year old former Longmead School in Holland Close, Redhill, left vacant by Surrey CC for 14 years and now SCC seek its demolition. Yet we know that if this happens the chances of new development contributing to the character of the town, which is itself 175 years old this year, will be very poor. It is understood that the site will have affordable housing for local residents in due course.

Can the Council advise what steps they have taken to persuade Surrey CC, the present owner, to retain the building for refurbishment, including the possible transfer of the building to our local Council, especially in the knowledge that many local people see this as an iconic structure worthy of listing, and what action has been taken to explore the following material considerations:

- The relative benefits of carbon saving compared with new build, including reuse of roof materials and brick;
- the level of tax incentives for refurbishment including reduced VAT and other allowances; and
- the scope for a more viable high density housing scheme utilising the height of the structure and retaining more of the site for green space when compared with new build.