

REIGATE AND BANSTEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL: 2nd November 2017

Question by Members

Question by:	To be answered by:	Subject:
Cllr C.T.H. Whinney	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Environmental Services, (Councillor Dr L.R. Hack)	Greenspaces Department: Resources for Reigate Heath and other open areas

Council Meeting: 2 November 2017

Councillor C.T.H. Whinney will ask the **Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Environmental Services, Councillor Dr L.R. Hack** the following question:

Greenspaces Department: Resources for Reigate Heath and other open areas

I have been the elected representative for Reigate Central ward for some years and the ward includes Reigate Heath, most of which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, other parts are a Local Nature Reserve and Common Land. The majority is owned by this Council with legal and policy obligations on its upkeep.

In the last few months an Officer of the department and other staff have left the Council, and though the remaining Officers and staff are endeavouring to do a good job, there is much concern that these Officers and staff are under undue pressure.

So could the Executive Member give assurances that the necessary resources will be attributed to redress the balance to ensure that staff are available to execute the obligations of this Council on Reigate Heath and other open areas, please?

Observations

I can confirm that there has been no reduction in staff across the Greenspaces department, and that staff wellbeing is taken very seriously.

Staff resources have recently been reviewed and staff redeployed to meet operational requirements.

I'm very concerned by your suggestion that Officers are being placed under undue pressure, and that adequate staff resource may not be available to execute the obligations of the Council relating to Reigate Heath and other open spaces.

I can confirm that the legal and policy obligations on the Council to maintain Reigate Heath and other open spaces have been complied with in full.

We have recently received confirmation from Natural England that we are complying with our obligations to its upkeep – specifically in relation to the works undertaken on Reigate Heath to maintain compliance with the Higher Level Stewardship agreement, and our proposed future actions.