

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

Meeting of Council 10 February 2022

Questions by Members

	Question by	To be answered by	Subject
1	Cllr Ritter	Cllr Ashford, Executive Member for Community Partnerships	Community Development Support
2	Cllr Booton	Cllr Lewanski, Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources	Benchmarking to support the Council's Sustainability Strategy
3	Cllr Chandler	Cllr Neame, Executive Member for Housing and Support	Update on the Afghan resettlement programme
4	Cllr Essex	Cllr Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	Energy efficiency ratings and penalties
5	Cllr Cooper	Cllr Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	Publication of grass-cutting schedules
6	Cllr Sinden	Cllr Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	Electric taxis and private hire vehicles and provision of charging points
7	Cllr Philpott	Cllr Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	Recycling pizza boxes
8	Cllr Ashford	Cllr Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy & Place Delivery	Flooding management in planning applications
9	Cllr McKenna	Cllr Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy & Place Delivery	Affordable housing in planning policy
10	Cllr Torra	Cllr Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy & Place Delivery	Affordable housing targets
11	Cllr Turner	Cllr Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy & Place Delivery	Water run-off from properties with impermeable driveways

Councillor Ritter will ask the **Executive Member for Community Partnerships, Councillor Ashford** the following question:

Question 1: Community Development Support

Previous councillors in the Earlswood and Whitebushes ward campaigned long and hard for a Community Development Worker to cover Whitebushes area because of the social needs of the area and one staff member was appointed in 2019 to cover the Woodhatch and Whitebushes areas.

Could the Executive Member responsible for Community Development please provide the rationale for not recruiting a replacement for this post now that the previous post-holder has moved on? Are the needs of this area now considered less important and how will the support that was so welcomed now be delivered?

Councillor Booton will ask the **Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski** the following question:

Question 2: Benchmarking to support the Council's Sustainability Strategy

The Council Climate Plan 2021 Scorecards* were recently published with this council scoring 64% against a national average of 43%.

This council should be proud of its achievement and I hope will share the feeling that we should not be complacent as more can also be done.

Somerset West & Taunton topped the league table at an impressive 92% and closer to home Waverley and Woking scored 76% and 70% respectively.

Will this council kindly commit to appointing someone to build upon our success, by performing a look-across exercise to see what other councils are doing, in a bid to help improve our position for 2022 and to support our Sustainability Strategy?

Councillor Chandler will ask the **Executive Member for Housing and Support, Councillor Neame**, the following question:

Question 3: Update on the Afghan Resettlement Programme

Can the Executive Member for Housing please provide an update on the progress made in the resettlement of Afghan refugees in the Borough following the council agreeing to provide three homes for families?

Councillor Essex will ask the **Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Bramhall**, the following question:

Question 4: Energy efficiency ratings in housing and penalties issued under the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard Regulations

Since 1 April 2020, landlords can no longer legally let properties if they fall below an Energy Efficiency Rating (EPC) of E, according to the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard Regulations. These regulations allow local authorities to impose penalties of up to 20% of the value of the property's rateable value, up to £150,000 per property for non-compliance.

Please can the Executive Member confirm that all the private rental landlords in Reigate and Banstead are on its register of private landlords, how many of these have EPC certificates, how many of these fall below the required standard and the number of penalties so far issued by the council under these regulations to residential landlords through its licensing scheme?

Councillor Cooper will ask the **Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Bramhall**, the following question:

Question 5: Publication of grass-cutting schedules

The Tadworth & Walton Residents Association has raised concerns about grass-cutting, sweeping and litter clearance.

On behalf of the TWRA I would like to ask the portfolio holder for Neighbourhood Services, Cllr Bramhall if the council could publish dates for grass cutting on its website to enable voluntary groups to readily access this information?

Councillor Sinden will ask the **Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Bramhall**, the following question:

Question 6: Electric taxis and private hire vehicles and provision of charging points

Could the Executive Member please tell me what the council, with its responsibility for regulating taxis and private hire vehicles and in line with its environmental sustainability strategy, is doing to require and incentivise taxis and private hire vehicles to shift to fully electric and support this with provision of designated charging points?

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

Question 7: Recycling pizza boxes

Most of our residents are very conscientious about recycling and the information on RBBC website recycling pages of "yes please" and "no thanks" criteria help them recycle correctly.

There are reports in various media articles that grease absorbed into a pizza box can be problematic for recycling and, according to those reports, can cause rejection of recycling batches. On the other hand, there are some articles that say this isn't an issue.

Appreciating the fact different recycling contractors will have different processes, please confirm if this is a problem for our own recycling processes? Or any other similar mistakes that spoil recycling batches, which our residents may be unwittingly unaware of?

Councillor Ashford will ask the **Executive Member for Planning Policy & Place Delivery, Councillor Biggs** the following question:

Question 8: Flooding management in planning applications

The Tadworth & Walton Residents Association has raised serious concerns about flooding caused either directly or indirectly by building works, dropped curbs associated concreted or tarmacked drives.

On behalf of TWRA I would like to ask portfolio holder for planning policy, Cllr Biggs, to explain what steps are being taken to include a mandatory question about how water will be displaced by the works included in every individual planning application.

Councillor McKenna will ask the **Executive Member for Planning Policy & Place Delivery, Councillor Biggs** the following question:

Question 9: Affordable housing in planning policy

It is now clear that the planning system is only capable of meeting our policy requirements for affordable/social commitments in new housing schemes when and if developers are able to secure significant profits, usually 15-20% on Gross Development Value, based on the requirements for 'Viability Assessment' as part of the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is also evident that when submitting applications the viability statement in support of the scheme can be manipulated so developers can repeatedly claim that they cannot afford to deliver the policy, whilst returning far larger profits than a decade ago.

In light of this, will the Council commit to review each and every scheme where affordable housing is needed, as follows:

- 1) At the application stage, ensure a comparison of standardised inputs including Gross Development Value, Gross Development Cost and Profit submitted by the applicant is undertaken with reference to other comparative data on new housing schemes within the Borough.
- 2) To assist understanding what is happening in reality to undertake a review of three recent schemes where the viability test was applied: Liquid and Envy, Marketfield Place and Marketfield Way developments in Redhill to compare the affordable homes required by policy against the number considered affordable based on the original viability estimate and additional 'claw-back' to fund affordable homes based on the latest financial estimates.
- 3) That where a shortfall is identified, that a commuted payment for affordable housing provision is sought from the applicant.

Councillor Torra will ask the **Executive Member for Planning Policy & Place Delivery, Councillor Biggs** the following question:

Question 10: Affordable housing targets

The latest Reigate and Banstead affordable housing completion statistics are ranked as red, which means they are way off-target. The council's affordable housing target is for 50 affordable homes to be built in the first 6 months of this financial year, of which 30 should be at social rent (i.e. at 50% of market rent). The total so far is 24 affordable homes which is less than half the overall target and just 2 (two) houses for social rent which is tiny fraction of what is needed. Please confirm what the council is doing to address this.

Councillor Turner will ask the **Executive Member for Planning Policy & Place Delivery, Councillor Biggs**, the following question:

Question 11: Water run-off from properties with impermeable driveways

The Tadworth & Walton Residents Association has raised a concern about water run-off from properties with impermeable drive-ways.

On behalf of the TWRA I would like to ask the portfolio holder for planning policy Cllr Biggs, how the Council intends to educate the public to this issue, and encourage people with impermeable surfaces that drain onto public roads to think about converting their drives to permeable surfaces.