

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

Meeting of Council 7 April 2022

Public Questions

Number	Question by	To be answered by	Subject
1	Mr Mick Hay	Councillor Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy and Place Delivery	Adoption of Central Government's Levelling-Up Agenda at Local Level
2	Mr Chris Reynolds	Councillor Ashford, Executive Member for Community Partnerships	Woodhatch and Whitebushes Community Development

Council Meeting: 7 April 2022

Mr Mick Hay will ask the **Executive Member for Planning Policy and Place Delivery, Councillor Biggs** the following question:

Question: Adoption of Central Government's Levelling-Up Agenda at Local Level

Madam Mayor, Councillors, thank you for allowing me to speak this evening.

The general principles of Central Governments Levelling-up Agenda appear to be solid and sound and my question is in respect to an opportunity, as I see it, to adopt similar at the local level, in particular to a project in Merstham where the Council has promoted and supported in equal measure.

We have all been encouraged over the last couple of years in particular to "Buy Local," "Save the High Street," etc etc, can I ask Council to contemplate in principle adopting an "Employ Local" in as far as the redevelopment work for the Merstham Rec ?

Is there an opportunity for locally based construction companies, locally based joiners, plumbers, glaziers, labourers and tradesmen and women to lead and project manage the redevelopment of the Rec ? Is there an open opportunity to offer apprenticeships to local school leavers and work on the project locally.

Or is the Council contractually obliged to engage with large out of Borough companies commuting from afar tradesmen and women occasionally on zero-hours contracts.

Far from asking Council to give Merstham residents involved in the construction industry be given preferential treatment, there are, as Central Governments agenda notes, a multitude of benefits. To the local economy, to the local workforce, to the local Council being seen investing in local apprenticeships.

More importantly to the local residents of Merstham who for years to come will have the chance to walk and enjoy with pride the open space of the Rec knowing it was built by the tradesmen and women of the immediate area.

Many thanks

Mr M P Hay

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Mr Chris Reynolds will ask the **Executive Member for Community Partnerships, Councillor Ashford** the following question:

Question: Woodhatch and Whitebushes Community Development

Woodhatch and Whitebushes Community Development Worker has done a great deal of good over the last 3 years, bringing a Food Club, a community fridge, and a new pump track to the area, as well as the switch on of the Christmas lights in Woodhatch, along with linking up partner organisations such as churches and charities to work together to improve outcomes for residents.

When the previous Community Development Worker left the council, recruitment was suspended pending a review of the council's Community Development provision. On 24th March at the council's executive meeting, it was announced that the vacancy would be filled temporarily, for 2 years, meaning we may soon lose this pivotal role from our community.

The selection of Woodhatch and Whitebushes to receive this funding cut appears to be nothing more than an unfortunate coincidence based on the vacancy, rather than related to the need for the role - a role which is extremely important to our local community, and has already been shown to have a huge positive impact.

Will the council commit to employing a permanent Woodhatch and Whitebushes Community Development Worker, showing commitment to Community Development work, to our communities, and to ensuring this extremely valuable work can continue to deliver positive outcomes for residents?