

REIGATE AND BANSTEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL: 7 FEBRUARY 2019

Questions by Members

No.	Question by:	Answered by:	Subject
1.	Cllr H. Brown	Cllr M.A. Brunt, Leader of the Council	Children's Centres
2.	Cllr S. McKenna	Cllr K. Foreman, Executive Member for Planning Policy	Development Management Plan
3.	Cllr J.C.S. Essex	Cllr G.J. Knight, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Housing and Benefits	Affordable Housing
4.	Cllr H. Brown	Cllr A.C.J. Horwood, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	Redhill and Reigate Golf Club (Written Response)
5.	Cllr Ms B.J. Thomson	Cllr A.C.J. Horwood, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	Redhill and Reigate Golf Club
6.	Cllr N.D. Harrison	Cllr J.E. Durrant, Executive Member for Community Safety	CCTV

Council Meeting: 7 February 2019

Councillor H. Brown will ask the Executive Member for **Leader of the Council, Councillor M.A. Brunt** the following question:

Question: Children's Centres

Surrey County Council has proposed that four Children's Centres in the Borough of Reigate & Banstead cease to provide Children's Centre services and be "re-purposed" for alternative provision, so will no longer operate as Surrey County Council funded Children's Centres. These centres are: Dover's Green Sure Start Children's Centre; Horley Community Sure Start Children's Centre; Steppingstones Sure Start Children's Centre; and YMCA Sure Start Children's Centre in Banstead. This change means there is no longer local coverage in all parts of the Borough. And there is no assurance that the range of services currently offered by the Children's Centres now will continue in the future.

In his maiden speech, the Leader of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council pledged to support Children's Centres across the Borough. Please confirm what support has been provided so far and what form this will take in the future.

Response / Observations:

We feel the council has a very important role in supporting Children's Centres that help families in need. We've met with all the Children's Centres in our borough on multiple occasions and will continue to work with them as we formulate the most appropriate way forward that best serves our borough's most vulnerable families. Surrey County Council has recognised that the solution for supporting families across the county may be different borough to borough. We'll be using local expertise to help find a solution that works best for our communities.

We understand that families are worried about this issue but I'd like to reassure them that we have been and will continue to work with Surrey County Council and existing providers to ensure a smooth transition for the remaining centres over the next few months.

Council Meeting: 7 February 2019

Councillor S. McKenna will ask the **Executive Member for Planning Policy, Councillor K. Foreman** the following question:

Question:

Development Management Plan: Green Belt, Affordability, Housing Density

Following the recent examination hearings into the emerging Reigate and Banstead DMP, the Inspector Helen Hockenfull requested that the Council consult on major modifications to the Plan including the removal of the Redhill Aerodrome site. In addition the Inspector asked the Council to specify how many houses are planned on each of the sites proposed in the greenbelt.

Will the Council agree that there is now a great opportunity to revisit the DMP and make major modifications, including: (a) reviewing and assessing densities and numbers of homes on sites in the urban area, including in public transport corridors and town centres, and therefore (b) increasing the quantity of affordable housing significantly which will help make up the shortfall of homes in this category, whilst (c) relieving pressure on the Green Belt by reviewing those further sites being proposed there as a result of more units at higher density being created on urban land.

Response / Observations:

I very much agree that our focus should be on making best use of sites in our urban areas to ensure that we are able to deliver the homes, jobs and facilities that our residents and businesses need – and can afford – whilst minimising pressure on the Green Belt.

These fundamental principles already sit at the heart of our adopted Core Strategy. The approach we have set out in our Development Management Plan will support us in delivering on these aims.

The policies, site allocations and opportunity sites in the DMP have been carefully and thoroughly assessed to ensure that they deliver the best development possible for our borough in terms of density whilst needing to reflect the individual circumstances and constraints of each site. We are also proposing to increase the affordable housing required on sustainable urban extension sites in order to ensure we are maximising opportunities to deliver homes which our residents can afford where we can.

I am personally heartened by the feedback we received from the Inspector recently: the very few modifications which she has suggested to the Plan is testament to the

strength of our evidence base and the good work which this Council has put into the preparation of the Plan before, during and after the examination hearings.

Whilst I therefore agree that we must continue to ensure that we deliver on these important aims, I am confident that the DMP already does this. The DMP we have put forward will help give us this control over development in our Borough and unnecessarily delaying it for further revisions would actually risk increasing speculative applications for development of sites outside the urban area which we want to avoid as much as possible.

Council Meeting: 7 February 2019

Councillor J.C.S. Essex will ask the **Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Housing and Benefits, Councillor G. J. Knight** the following question:

Question: Affordable Housing Provision

Does the Deputy Leader agree that to address the affordability gap in our area the Council should take more direct action to create homes in urban areas by using our powers to fund and build more homes, including genuinely affordable housing and where possible the Council should undertake to acquire sites and provide developments to ensure there is adequate future supply of land for housing including affordable homes at the full policy requirement?

Response / Observations:

Thank you for your excellent question. It gives me the opportunity to highlight the work the Housing team began soon after the Leader took office last year, to develop a comprehensive Housing Strategy for the borough. Your colleague Cllr McKenna will recall the meeting of the Development Management Advisory Group on 15 January where I outlined the goals of our strategy and asked for planning policies to facilitate the building of starter homes and one- and two-bedroom homes. An early outline will be taken to the March meeting of the Executive.

It is always a pleasure to agree with you, Councillor Essex, and I am confident you and your colleagues will welcome our strategy. We are committed to delivering more affordable housing for our residents and for people who work in our borough. Indeed, by way of example the Council has begun discussions with Raven Housing Trust around opportunities to deliver more homes. You will be aware that the Pitwood Park development in Tadworth will deliver 17 Starter Homes. Furthermore, the recently examined Development Management Plan sets out a revised affordable housing policy which brings the 30% affordable housing site threshold down from 15 to 11 new homes and also raises the greenfield site affordable housing requirement to 35%. We should be clear to developers. The National Planning Policy Framework has substantively changed its requirements in respect of viability. Those wishing to build high-value houses in our Borough will no longer be able to inflate their costs in order to avoid their obligation to build affordable homes.

The Housing Strategy will seek to increase delivery of all tenure types including social & private rentals through to affordable home ownership options. A variety of opportunities to deliver more homes and in partnership with others will be pursued. To support delivery, the Council will be assessing its own land for housing including affordable housing at the full policy requirement. The Strategy marks a reinvigoration of the Council's role of working with others to enable the delivery of more housing choice than before for local residents and workers.

Council Meeting: 7 February 2019

Councillor H. Brown will ask the **Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor A.C.J. Horwood** the following question:

Question: Redhill and Reigate Golf Club

It was recently announced that Redhill & Reigate Golf Club will be closing as of March 31st 2019 due to financial difficulties, which means that management of the land will revert back to the Council. In response the Council has stated publicly that it will manage the land until it finds "a viable alternative solution". In addition, we note that this common land is designated as a Local Nature Reserve, so future management plans should also provide an opportunity to increase the wildlife value of the common, and be reflected in the Management Plan for Earlswood Common as a whole.

Could you confirm what 'viable alternative solutions' are being considered, including taking resident's views on board, and confirm retention of the Council's commitment to manage this as both common land and a nature reserve

Response / Observations:

I can confirm that our future intentions are only to consider solutions which are appropriate for the area and the site. The land designations and their associated maintenance requirements remain constant regardless of a solution being found, and as such, habitat management and nature conservation activities will continue as per the site's prescriptions. Therefore, potential solutions will need to be compatible with and complementary to the site's existing ecological features, maintenance prescriptions and land designations.

The options considered in this case are to either retain the site for golf usage, delivered by an alternative operator, or to enhance the biodiversity on the site through the development of a conservation management plan, or a combination of the two options. It is important to note that these options are still in the early stages of being explored, and it is expected that further discussion and consultation will be required prior to a firm decision being taken on the future of the site.

I hope my response provides comfort that the Council is committed to the management of the land in accordance with its designations, and that any solutions being sought must be compatible with the site.

➤ **WRITTEN RESPONSE**

Council Meeting: 7 February 2019

Councillor Ms B.J. Thomson will ask the **Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor A.C.J. Horwood** the following question:

Question: Redhill and Reigate Golf Club

As Chairman of the Earlswood Common Management Group can you please give me details on what steps the Council has taken in recent years to help the viability of Redhill and Reigate Golf Club, what is the status of the course in terms of its protection against development, likewise the status of the site of the clubhouse, and the Council's plans for maintenance of the Common in future?

Response / Observations:

Thank you for your question.

The Council has established a positive working relationship with the Golf Club, and as a result, we have been aware of their financial challenges for a number of years. In light of this knowledge, the Council's Executive agreed to grant the club a significant concession from the site's market value upon the inception of the licence in 2009. This concession was offered as a means to support the club and to help them achieve viability. Further support was given in recent years, with additional financial concessions granted in 2014 and 2017.

Earlswood Common and the area currently used as a golf course are very important from a nature and recreation perspective, and I can offer reassurance that the site cannot be developed upon. The course itself is protected by a number of land designations, local and national policy – the site is Metropolitan Greenbelt, a Local Nature Reserve, a Site of Nature Conservation Importance and is registered Common Land. The combination of these designations places specific limits on its future use.

I can confirm that our future intentions are only to consider leisure solutions which are appropriate for the area and the site. In addition, the land designations and their associated maintenance requirements remain constant regardless of a solution being found, and as such, habitat management and nature conservation activities will continue as per the site's prescriptions. Therefore, potential solutions will need to be compatible with and complementary to the site's existing ecological features, maintenance prescriptions and land designations.

The options considered in this case are to either retain the site for golf usage, delivered by an alternative operator, or to enhance the biodiversity on the site through the development of a conservation management plan, or a combination of the two options. It is important to note that these options are still in the early stages of being explored, and it is expected that

further discussion and consultation will be required prior to a firm decision being taken on the future of the site.

I can also confirm that the clubhouse associated with the golf course is privately owned, and as such, its intended future use is not presently known or directly controlled by the Council except for when discharging its functions as a Planning Authority.

Whilst an alternative leisure solution is being sought, the golf course area will be maintained using the same area-appropriate regimes as the Council implements over the rest of Earlswood Common. Some of the larger open areas will be maintained on the commons regime, which comprises 3 cuts annually. Some areas with rare plant species will be maintained on a more regular cutting regime, such as the wild chamomile found near the current 18th hole. The rights of way footpaths will continue to be maintained year-round, and all areas currently maintained as meadows will continue to be maintained in the same way.

I hope that my response offers reassurances and comfort around the site's intended future use and the maintenance regimes to be applied to it.

Council Meeting: 7 February 2019

Councillor N.D. Harrison will ask the **Executive Member for Community Safety, Councillor J.E. Durrant** the following question:

Question: CCTV

In January there was a robbery at knife point at the Co-op store at Tattenham Corner. This is the second robbery in the last twelve months. Could the Portfolio Holder confirm that the two CCTV cameras at Tattenham Corner are operating, to provide evidence for the Police?

Response / Observations:

The Council has two locally recording CCTV cameras situated at Tattenham Corner. Whilst there can never be a guarantee that CCTV will capture all events that occur, these cameras can provide footage to potentially aid investigations, and also act as deterrent to those committing crime or anti-social behaviour. My understanding is that footage is currently being reviewed to see if there is anything of use in this investigation.

Across the Borough we have 119 cameras, including in two of our car parks. In terms of monitoring, this is done either at the police control room or via local recording. As some members may recall, a few years ago we looked at a programme to gradually upgrade our cameras and so we have a mix of wired, wireless and recording cameras. That work is continuing and widening to look at body and vehicular devices.

Further, the council is duty bound to keep the provision of CCTV at all its locations under regular review to ensure it remains fit for purpose and continues to be used in the most effective way to support public safety and law enforcement.