

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

Meeting of Council 16 January 2020

Questions by Members

Number	Question by	To be answered by	Subject
1	Councillor S. Kulka	Councillor N. Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	Parking Income
2	Councillor H. Brown	Councillor N. Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	Water Fountains
3	Councillor R. Ritter	Councillor R. Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy	Permitted Development
4	Councillor J. Essex	Councillor R. Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy	Doctor and School Provision
5	Councillor S. Fenton	Councillor E. Humphreys Executive Member for Place and Economic Prosperity	Gatwick Airport

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

Question 1: Parking Income

Recent media coverage of the profits from off and on-street parking made by Councils have raised questions from residents. Could the Executive Member please clarify how much profit has been made by our Council over the past year and what has benefited from the parking related income?

Response:

The numbers quoted by the press in their recent article are found in a return made every year by Councils to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The total figure quoted was £3.17m

From this figure all income after expenses recovered from on street enforcement is passed on to Surrey County Council, the authority responsible for the implementation of parking controls. In 2018/19 this was £406K

The remaining overall income of £2.77m shown for off street parking includes pay and display car parks, contract parking, season tickets and penalty charges from Council owned car parks. This does take account of certain reportable costs such as staff and equipment however there is no allowance for depreciation or impairment of assets for example.

Taking these factors into consideration the overall income from on street parking is £2.2m. To clarify we do not 'make profit' we return a surplus each year to the core budget which contributes to funding Council operations alongside Council Tax and other income sources.

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

Question 2: Water Fountains

Water fountains are popping up in towns and cities in the UK, promoting health and helping to reduce buying of plastic bottles. Can Reigate and Banstead Borough Council pledge to have a modern water fountain in the Borough, preferably in the two centres of Reigate and Redhill?

Response:

As members are aware, we have engaged Environmental Sustainability consultants to develop an Action Plan and Strategy around climate change.

A recommendation likely to come out of this consultancy is a suggestion to support and expand the Refill Redhill scheme to Reigate and the other Towns within the Borough.

There are a number of business in Reigate which support the scheme including Art of Living in the High Street and also Pistachio's in Priory Park and in Redhill Memorial Park offer the facility to refill water bottles.

We do already have a drinking fountain in Priory Park.

I am therefore not currently in a place where I would wish to make a pledge, however I welcome the outcomes of the Environmental Sustainability consultants work and at that time can consider what is appropriate.

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

Question 3: Permitted Development

Reigate and Banstead's new housing strategy clearly recognises the need to increase the number of affordable homes in the Borough and especially social rented homes. However, there are now two major residential developments underway in Redhill, at Quadrant House and Furniss House, converting offices to residential units under Permitted Development Rights (PDR) which don't have to comply with normal planning conditions regarding nationally described space standards, affordability, contributions to CIL funding, amenity or energy efficiency standards.

Given that these PDR conversions bypass the normal planning system which means bypassing many of the standards that exist to protect housing quality and that far from curtailing PDR the government have recently consulted on extending it to other types of change of use and 'upward extensions,' will the council be lobbying the new government to change the rules and end this dangerous policy?

Response:

We have consistently objected to Government consultations relating to the roll-out of new permitted development rules allowing offices to convert to housing without any scrutiny by the local planning authority and will continue to do so in the future.

I was also disappointed to learn of the latest office to residential conversions in Redhill, particularly at Quadrant House, and on the back of that the chair of Planning together with Officers has met with local MPs to highlight the issue. They have prepared a dossier of some of the worst examples, including some from this Borough, in order to bring MPs attention to the concerns of the Executive. The Leader has also raised the issue with the Chair of the LGA and with our MPs.

Following the recent general election and on the back of a report by the LGA this week which estimates that over 13,000 affordable homes have been lost through PDR conversions, it is planned to follow up on the lobbying to see what progress has or will be made.

Councillor J. Essex will ask the **Executive Member for Planning Policy, Councillor R. Biggs** the following question:

Question 4: Doctor and School Provision

Whilst the Local Plan makes an allowance for the number of doctors and school places across the Borough, how is this updated to make sure there are enough doctors and school places provided in the areas where the most houses are being built. In particular, please confirm what details of new doctors' places are required to be provided by the Council to reflect the recent current and planned developments in Redhill town centre, Watercolour and Horley so those living there can be supported by a local surgery?

Response:

The Development Management Plan seeks to ensure that the infrastructure required to support all planned new development is provided for. It does this both by setting out the broad infrastructure requirements to support the plan as well as including within the various site allocations the need for new provisions, such as doctors surgeries and new schools.

The Horley North West Sector is currently underway and was required through the plan allocation and planning application to provide a new medical centre and school. Within the DMP, the Sustainable Urban Extensions, should they be needed, are also required to make provision, such as a new primary school at the Former Copyhold site and a new medical centre at the Sandcross Lane allocation.

Allocating sites is only part of the solution however as it requires the infrastructure providers to be willing and able to take up the sites offered. Officers are therefore in regular dialogue with providers such as the NHS, CCGs or education authorities to match the infrastructure requirements with each provider's needs.

The plan also has a role to play in upgrading existing facilities by setting out new infrastructure provision to be funded by CIL and we have recently awarded CIL funding to the upgrade of the Tattenhams Medical Centre as well as Oakwood School.

I hope this demonstrates my commitment, together with that of this Executive, to doing all we can to ensure that developers pay their way in providing new infrastructure alongside any new homes built.

Councillor S. Fenton will ask the **Executive Member for Place and Economic Prosperity, Councillor E. Humphreys** the following question:

Question 5: Gatwick Airport

Under the Planning Act 2008, the proposed growth of the main runway at Gatwick Airport must be considered as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) as it will add about 55,000 extra flights a year, increasing passenger numbers by significantly more than the 10 million increase identified in the 2008 Act as requiring scrutiny.

Will the Council ask the Secretary of State for Transport to ensure this main runway growth - which is in addition to plans to use the emergency runway as a second runway - is fully examined on the grounds of climate emergency, lack of road and rail access, decline in air quality, lack of affordable housing, healthcare, schools, amenities and significant increase in aircraft noise?

Background:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/aviation-strategy-making-best-use-of-existing-runways>

Response:

I believe that your question relates to measures proposed by Gatwick Airport to increase the capacity of its existing runway. This is separate from the airport's proposals to bring their emergency runway into routine use as a second runway.

In relation to the former, I can confirm that we are working with the other authorities around Gatwick, and taking external advice, to investigate this question.

As is often the case with planning matters, the answer is not straightforward, and requires consideration of legislation, the specific proposals, and the current legal agreements that are in place.

This piece of work has not yet been finalised, so it would be premature for me to answer your question at this stage.

However, more generally I can confirm that the Council's Executive is fully committed to ensuring that future growth at Gatwick airport is properly scrutinised.

We will be sure that - when responding to any future proposals for the use of the emergency runway - account is also taken of the cumulative impacts resulting from any proposed increases to the capacity of the existing runway.

And we will continue to work closely with our neighbouring authorities to make sure that the potential impacts of growth are properly understood and that any growth that does take place is accompanied by measures to maximise benefits and minimise negative impacts to an acceptable level.