

# Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

Meeting of Council 30 July 2020

## Questions by Members

<b>Number</b>	<b>Question by</b>	<b>To be answered by</b>	<b>Subject</b>
1	Councillor Brown	Councillor Humphreys, Executive Member for Place and Economic Prosperity	Communal Working Hubs (Written response)
2	Councillor Brown	Councillor Horwood, Executive Member for Wellbeing and Intervention	Theatre on Earlswood Common (Written response)
3	Councillor Essex	Councillor Knight, Executive Member for Housing and Benefits	Proposed Monthly Rents and Purchase Price at Council-led Housing Developments
4	Councillor Ritter	Councillor Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	Pollinator Action Plan
5	Councillor McKenna	Councillor Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy	Extension of Permitted Development Rights
6	Councillor Sinden	Councillor Ashford, Executive Member for Community Partnerships	Ground Floor Community Space – Former Youth Association Hall, Marketfield Way

**Councillor Brown** will ask the **Executive Member for Place and Economic Prosperity, Councillor Humphreys** the following question, for a written response:

**Question 1: Communal Working Hubs**

The coronavirus pandemic is changing the way we live and work, with many residents of Reigate & Banstead moving to a pattern of homeworking for the foreseeable future.

In this context, the many building developments in towns such as Redhill being constructed and marketed to cater for an expected demand from commuters could become redundant or at least underused.

Has the council considered adapting to the 'new normal' by developing communal working spaces instead, or assigning part of a residential development for a shared working space?

Any such space could double up as a community hub promoting local arts initiatives, enhancing wellbeing in the community through creativity and collective purpose.

Examples of local residential developments where this type of communal working/leisure space are could be installed include Longmead centre, the former gasholder site in Earlswood, or the former golf clubhouse on Pendleton Rd. The pandemic has been a tragedy but there is now the opportunity to reshape the kind of town we want to live in.

*A written response will be provided*

**Councillor Brown** will ask the **Executive Member for Wellbeing and Intervention, Councillor Horwood** the following question, for a written response:

**Question 2: Theatre on Earlswood Common**

Could we have a free open-air, natural, theatre on Earlswood common? If not, what are the valid reasons for denying the community such an asset?

*A written response will be provided*

**Councillor Essex** will ask the **Executive Member for Housing and Benefits, Councillor Knight** the following question:

**Question 3: Proposed Monthly Rents and Purchase Price at Council-led Housing Developments**

This question concerns the council-led plans to develop housing, at Pitwood Park, Cromwell Road and the Marketfield Way road (ex-car park) sites. Please can you confirm the monthly rents and purchase price proposed for the affordable rented and for sale units, and who will hold the freeholds for all of the homes, both for the properties to rent and the properties to be sold.

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

**Question 4: Pollinator Action Plan**

In September 2019 Cllr McKenna put a motion to this council about wildlife friendly verges and open spaces, seeking to address the urgent need to support the biodiversity of our borough by changing cutting regimes to enable seed setting by wildflowers, thus supporting vital pollinators. It also addressed the need to reduce the use of harmful pesticides and followed the motion passed by Surrey County council last July, which required the production and implementation of a pollinator action plan.

Residents have raised concerns this year about grass cutting being done too often and cutting down areas where lots of wildflowers were in bloom.

Reigate and Banstead website states the following: "The grass cutting programme starts in March each year and runs until October. Each verge cutting cycle takes about five weeks and the teams continually cut until the end of the grass growing season."

Can the Executive member for Neighbourhood services tell us what progress has been made in Reigate and Banstead towards producing and implementing a pollinator action plan?

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

**Question 5: Extension of Permitted Development Rights**

Relaxation of permitted development rules from August 2020 will allow extra flats to be built above existing blocks of flats built between 1948 and 2018, which could impact on the quality of our urban environments in many areas of the borough. In addition, the government has signalled its intent on undermining local planning, potentially replacing it with some form of zoning. This together with plans to require district councils to be replaced with unitary authorities could further weaken local democracy if this leads to decision making on planning being weakened. In light of these agreed and potential future changes will the Executive Member confirm if they have already written, or if not will write to the government objecting to these further extension of permitted development rights to resist these pressures, and what can the Council do to resist these and future muted measures so that the Council stand up against an increasingly centralised government?

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

**Question 6: Ground Floor Community Space – Former Youth Association Hall, Marketfield Way**

Please can you confirm what the future plans for use of the ground floor community space in the new block of flats on the site of the former Youth Association Hall on Marketfield Way, Redhill now that this building is nearing completion, including whether this includes evening and weekend use for activities that meet the needs of young people such as previous youth clubs and martial arts which took place in the earlier use of the site, and what support in terms of staff and funding the council will be providing to make this happen.