

COUNCIL – 16 APRIL 2008

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question 1

Councillor A D Dodd to ask the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Transport:

It was recently reported in the national press that planning laws are due to be changed in the coming months. One issue of considerable concern is that the government is going to remove planning appeals by the Planning Inspectorate, an independent government organisation and intend to have appeals settled by a local member review body - a group of councillors.

Was he aware of this proposed planning change relating to the hearing of appeals? When do the District Councillors anticipate receiving details of this and other proposed planning changes, and will there be an opportunity for the District Council to offer their comments/concerns on these proposed changes?

Does the Executive Member accept that although the District Council does not always agree with the decision of the Planning Appeals Directorate, it is a better system than what is now proposed, where it appears that the District Council will in future be judge and jury on both Planning Applications and the appeal system? This must surely be unacceptable to the Planning Authority and the general public at large.

Question 2

Councillor J O Ranger to ask the Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support:

Will the Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support please let us know the current position with the review of working arrangements?

Question 3

Councillor D Clark to ask the Leader of the Council:

On 9 January I asked if there were any plans to recruit a Head of Service for Human Resources. The Leader said yes. On 20 February I asked when the Leader expected to have a permanent Head in post. The Leader said an announcement to members was imminent. But by 14 April, when this question was submitted, no such announcement had been made. I ask again: when can members expect to have a permanent Head of People and Organisational Services in post?

Question 4

Councillor N Clark to ask the Leader of the Council:

On 12 February the Council withdrew the enforcement notices relating to the Esbies site in Sawbridgeworth after the public inquiry had started. This was a significant setback for the Sawbridgeworth community which had petitioned for this enforcement action. What was the approximate total cost incurred by the Council in preparing for and holding this inquiry, including legal fees, and will the Council be expected to reimburse costs incurred by other parties and if so how much?