

## **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

### **Question 1**

#### **Cllr Peter Ruffles to ask Cllr Eric Buckmaster, Executive Member for Wellbeing:**

I'm aware that a number other agencies worked with Highways at County trying to ensure that our High Streets and Shopping Centres were able to re-open safely. Could the Executive Member for Wellbeing please explain the role of our East Herts Environmental Health team, and describe any particular challenges they may have faced?

### **Question 2**

#### **Cllr Alastair Ward-Booth to ask Cllr Eric Buckmaster, Executive Member for Wellbeing:**

Could the Executive Member for Wellbeing give Council an update on our Social Prescribing programme. Prior to Covid the service had been referring many hundreds of residents to community activities. How and to what extent could the service operate during the months of lockdown and restricted movement?

### **Question 3**

#### **Cllr David Andrews to ask Cllr Linda Haysey, Leader:**

What steps is the Council taking to lobby central Government for additional funding for local authorities, such as East Herts, to help contribute towards the financial difficulties faced by the impact of the coronavirus pandemic?

#### **Question 4**

##### **Cllr Mione Goldspink to ask Cllr Geoffrey Williamson, Executive Member for Financial Sustainability:**

Will the Executive Member for Financial Sustainability commit to publicising the latest report on the financial viability of the Council's Capital Projects, and will he also publish the business cases for the projects and make them all easily available to members of the public?

#### **Question 5**

##### **Cllr Mione Goldspink to ask Cllr Linda Haysey/Cllr Jan Goodeve, the Leader/Executive Member for Planning and Growth:**

Why did the Leader/Executive Member for Planning and Growth decide to take a Non-Key Decision on this Council's response to the Consultation on the Government's White Paper on changes to the Planning System, rather than bringing it to Full Council for open, public discussion?

#### **Question 6**

##### **Cllr Louie Corpe to ask Cllr Graham McAndrew, Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability:**

On 11th February 2020, the Executive received the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group on Parking. Among its recommendations was a suggestion to change the threshold for eligibility for Restricted Parking Zones, which would alleviate many parking issues faced by residents in our wards. I can personally say that All Saints Ward would greatly benefit from such a change in position. The Executive asked officers to bring a further report setting out cost implications. I recall that Officers stated informally that such a report would take some 6-8 weeks to produce.

We are now 8 months down the line, and no update on this item has come forward. The pandemic of course has changed priorities, but also exacerbated parking challenges, so the changes in policy are needed now more than ever. Can the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability please comment on when we might expect the council to adopt the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group, and change the policy on RPZ eligibility?

## **Question 7**

### **Cllr Chris Wilson to ask Cllr Jan Goodeve, Executive Member for Planning and Growth:**

Members may be aware of the campaign called ForgottenLtd. This campaign is highlighting the difficulties that many small businesses are experiencing in these Covid-ravaged times. Directors of small limited companies are not eligible for small business grants especially as they are often not based in commercial properties. These businesses are the lifeblood of much of our local economy, and while the council has performed admirably in quickly awarding grants to eligible businesses, directors of limited companies have not been put on an equal footing with other businesses through no fault of their own. I ask, on behalf of some of my residents who are affected by this problem, whether the Executive Member for Planning and Growth would agree to write to the treasury and ask for the discretionary grant scheme to be extended to these limited companies and for the total grant to be increased so that all covid-damaged businesses in East Herts can get the helping hand they need.

## Question 8

### **Cllr Carolyn Redfern to ask Cllr Eric Buckmaster, Executive Member for Wellbeing:**

The existing theatre is a valuable community resource for local amateur performances as well as professional theatre companies and film. It is the only resource for some of the amateur activities. Its purpose is not to compete with other services already provided locally or top class theatres in London. A major investment of 20M should only be considered if the existing theatre is really not financially viable or if it is seriously inadequate in some way. There really needs to be a compelling reason to invest 20M, especially considering the uncertainty and effects created by COVID and Brexit. Before embarking on the programme, the council no doubt produced a report which identified why the Theatre was not felt to be viable and which essential services are inadequately provided by the existing theatre. I presume this report addressed the following aspects:

- what the impediments are to increasing profitability with the current theatre
- mitigations which were considered, including remodelling prices
- types of performance which are possible/ impossible with the existing theatre

Did the original report address these aspects, and is it still the bedrock of the decision surrounding the Theatre or is it being revisited with a fresh eye? Will you present an updated report to the council and/or Scrutiny committee that demonstrates that the existing theatre is not viable without the investment?