

WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 25 February 2016

AGENDA ITEM 6

Questions from Members

1. Question from Councillor R Raja to the Leader of the Council

When Cllr Wood became Leader last May she made "finding homes for the young" one of her top priorities. She has now dropped that priority in the new corporate plan. Could she tell us what targets she set for this priority and how far she has been successful in achieving her modest targets? Could she also tell us why "finding homes for the young" is no longer a priority?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

2. Question from Councillor M Knight to the Leader of the Council

Could the Leader outline the ways that Wycombe District Council works effectively with Bucks County Council and give examples of recent achievements as a result of collaboration, shared objectives and joint working?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

3. Question from Councillor S Broadbent to the Cabinet Member for Community

Has the opening of the new Leisure Centre increased the level of participation in physical activity and exercise by residents of Wycombe District?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Mrs J Adey (Cabinet Member for Community)

4. Question from Councillor A Hashmi to the Cabinet Member for Housing

Three years ago WDC promised it would not use B&Bs for homeless families except in emergencies and then only for 1 week. It also promised not to use B&Bs outside Wycombe. It promised to set up a registration scheme for B&Bs in Wycombe and only use these B&B providers.

We now understand WDC is offering B&Bs outside Wycombe to homeless families causing them disruption to education, jobs and family support.

How many registered B&Bs in Wycombe does WDC have on its books for the homeless? How many homeless are in B&Bs and where are they? And how many families are being offered B&Bs outside Wycombe?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Mrs J Langley (Cabinet Member for Housing)

5. Question from Councillor S Graham to the Cabinet Member for Housing

When Wycombe's council homes were transferred to Red Kite in 2011, tenants were promised that Red Kite would invest £10.5 million to regenerate the Starblocks flats in Castlefield. The contract between Red Kite and WDC requires the redevelopment to be finished by the end of 2016.

Red Kite promised to keep local Councillors informed about what was happening. It hasn't.

What I have found out is that Red Kite plans to demolish the existing 69 social housing units at the Starblocks flats and replace them with 102 affordable units, 12 shared ownership units and 12 outright sale units - to be delivered by 2018/9. So redevelopment will be at least 2 years late and another 69 social homes will disappear from Red Kites books in addition to the 130 already gone.

Don't you agree that Wycombe needs more social homes not less? And if Red Kite is not going to build them, who will??

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Mrs J Langley (Cabinet Member for Housing)

6. Question from Councillor K Ahmed to the Leader of the Council

Nearly two years ago, WDC proudly rolled out an ANPR system throughout its 19 car parks. However, the 'all singing all dancing' system has failed to deliver. Thieves and vandals have targeted the new pay machines 49 times, stealing nearly £50,000, causing over £100,000 of damage and depriving WDC of who knows how much lost revenue. 49 times!

Cabinet should have made sure the pay machines were vandal-proof before they installed such an expensive system. But they didn't. Cabinet should have made changes when the first theft took place - or the second - or even the third. But apparently not. To get targeted 49 times is beyond belief.

Would the Leader agree that her Cabinet has been negligent - or asleep - or both?

Would the Leader agree with me that her Cabinet has failed miserably and should consider taking up jobs that don't have such severe consequences for ill thought ideas?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

7. Question from Councillor B Pearce to the Cabinet Member for Housing

Is the member concerned, like I am, that morale in the company carrying out maintenance work for Red Kite is very low.

Before Red Kite was set up, and the housing stock maintained by WDC, Mears, the company carrying out maintenance work had a logo on the side of the vans saying 'Invest in people'.

As you may recall I worked for Mears until the contract was not renewed so I have an interest to declare.

We are now on the 3rd company carrying out routine maintenance since Mears contract ceased and morale with the workforce seems to be getting lower as each company is removed from the contract.

Do you agree with me that this is of great concern because the tenants for Red Kite were once tenants of WDC? And the morale of the workforce has a direct effect on tenants.

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Mrs J Langley (Cabinet Member for Housing)

8. Question from Councillor Ms J Wassell to the Leader of the Council

Would the leader agree with me that the report by Muslim Women UK to the Labour Party raises important points. Is it time that all political parties locally examine the barriers that exist for women's participation, particularly those from minority groups?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

9. Question from Councillor R Raja to the Cabinet Member for Finance

The proposed revenue budget for 2016/17, based on the 4 year local government financial settlement, under which the Council receives funding from Central Government, has been reduced by 17% in 2016/17 and by 48% over the next 4 years towards the costs of providing services. The proposed budget is full of caveats, which makes the Revenue Budget nothing more than a guesstimate.

Can the Cabinet member with responsibility for the budget assure WDC residents that he has got his sums right and we will have sufficient resources to effectively carry out the Council's statutory responsibilities under any circumstances which are possible to know? and what happens if some of the assumptions upon which the budget is based do not materialise?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor D Watson (Cabinet Member for Finance)

10. Question from Councillor Ms J Wassell to the Leader of the Council

Would you join me in thanking the GPs from the Lynton House surgery for the service they have given to East Wycombe residents? They have had deteriorating working conditions. It is some consolation that a new premises will be provided at Wycombe General Hospital ?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

11. Question from Councillor Ms J Wassell to the Leader of the Council

What support will be given to Youth Enquiry Service now that the County Council is phasing their funding out?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)