

COUNCIL MEETING – 7 December 2022

CABINET QUESTION TIME

1. Question from Councillor G Pooley to the Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford

I understand that the council is reviewing the Over 65s swim scheme to improve the offer. Can the Cabinet Member please explain what is proposed?

Cabinet Member to respond

2. Question from Councillor B Knight to the Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford

I note that The Council has launched a Women's Safety Charter. I fully support any worthwhile initiatives to ensure the safety of all Chelmsford's residents and understand that women and girls are particularly vulnerable.

What were the criteria used to choose Ms. Whybro as the consultant and what experience and success has she demonstrated in any similar role elsewhere? This is a very sensitive appointment and it may well be that members of the administration know Ms. Whybro from her business activities, so I would be grateful if the Cabinet Member could advise Council on these matters.

Cabinet Member to respond

3. Question from Councillor P Clark to the Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford

Question for the Deputy Leader - In March this year, the Council approved an increase in the Capital budget for Theatres.

This was increased from £1.5m to £2.746m. The cancellation of the pantomime this year is a loss to the residents of Chelmsford, but also a loss in revenue at a time when this Administration is spending money it clearly doesn't have. Therefore, can the Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford, who proposed the budget increase, confirm how much the Council will lose this year, because of the cancelled Pantomime performances?

Cabinet Member to respond

4. Question from Councillor P Clark to the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford

When this Administration took office in 2019, the MRP figure was zero (excluding leasing costs), can he confirm the current MRP liability for 2022/23 (including leasing costs) and how far does he intend to increase this debt burden on the taxpayers of Chelmsford?

Cabinet Member to respond

5. Question from Councillor R Poulter to the Leader of the Council

The information from Mr Graham concerning allegations of the condition of some social housing shows a devastating state of affairs. We, as a Council have a responsibility to our residents to take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety and wellbeing. This includes the condition of the properties in which they live, particularly those for which we have nomination rights. However, for a multitude of reasons it is not practical to monitor or inspect every such house in the city area. Yet we cannot ignore the problem. What we need to do is to find a way of receiving a certificate from each housing association confirming that all of their properties are in good order and fit for housing tenants. They could be asked to do this, say every six months and give that certificate to Council Housing officers. That would encourage housing associations to ensure that their properties are fit for habitation and to deal with complaints expeditiously. For our residents it would give assurance that housing associations are taking their repair obligations seriously and for us as a Council it would provide evidence, should it be necessary, to put before Public Health officers. Will the administration approve such a scheme?

Leader of the Council to respond

6. Question from Councillor R Lee to the Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford

Could the Cabinet Member for Greener Chelmsford please explain to us all how they plan to encourage older people to take up swimming

Cabinet Member to respond

7. Question from Councillor R Hyland to the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford

Post Public Question, raised tonight on the housing provision by Chelmsford's Registered Housing Providers.

I am keen to understand what exactly this Council does to "Overseeing and coordinating the performance of housing associations." Can we be provided the last report published, the metrics being used, and the performance baseline to improvements we have measured and monitored ?

In the members booklet of April 2022, we confirm CCC "Overseeing and coordinating the performance of housing associations." pg21

Given it was the Lib Dems in previous administration that sold off, the publicly owned housing stock, I would see the Overseeing and co-ordination of the performance of housing associations was a measure introduced to monitor housing standards, mitigate risks to residents and ensure Chelmsford City Councils previous decision, didn't leave residents vulnerable. Are we achieving for these residents, served by registered housing providers, to make Chelmsford "a place where people want to live", or can we make Chelmsford even better?

Cabinet Member to respond

8. Question from Councillor R Hyland to the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development

In the Local Plan review, will this administration be taking the opportunity this time to review all sites that are currently in the plan and in particular those have not yet begun construction, like Site 5a East Chelmsford (Manor Farm) where there I understand there is strong local objections?

Can you provided and explain the criteria that will be used to validate these plans, sites and future sites, are fit for purpose, serve Chelmsford well and deliver to support housing need ?

Cabinet Member to respond

9. Question from Councillor R Whitehead to the Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford

Residents have continued to express their disappointment that the café at Hylands Park is closing on 24th December.

After the loss of the Pantomime this Christmas, this further blow to Chelmsford is most unwelcome.

At a recent Cabinet meeting officers said that the imposition of parking charges at Hylands Park were not the cause of the closure of the café, so can you provide the statistics to confirm this or advise Council as to the Administration's understanding of the reasons for this failure.

Can the Cabinet Member update Council on the efforts being made to find a new operator for the Hylands café.

Cabinet Member to respond

10. Question from Councillor W Daden to the Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford

Some new parishes as created by the Governance Review are finding it challenging setting up. Finding clerks and attracting parish councillors.

What investigation was done to establish if enough clerks existed when creating new parished areas, and what can or is being done to address the shortfall?

Cabinet Member to respond