

Appendix 1

Council Meeting, 15 February 2022 Question Time (agenda item 14)

1. Question from Cllr Keating to Cllr Solomon, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Services

Cllr Keating asked the following question of Cllr Solomon:

“Residents are increasingly concerned around road safety on Ladymead Lane in Langford.

Traffic has increased due to new developments and the use of the road as a "rat run" to avoid congestion on the A38. Plans to develop a new school (and possibly new housing as per the draft local plan) will only increase the problem.

Given that this route is heavily used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, will the Executive Member commit to investigating how road safety and improving active travel facilities can improved on this route?" ”

Cllr Solomon responded he would look into this and discuss this with officers and ward councillors.

2. Question from Cllr James to Cllr Davies, Leader of the Council

Cllr James asked the following question of Cllr Davies:

“February marks LGBTQ History Month, and the theme is "Politics In Art: ‘The Arc Is Long’. Many residents may look back and learn about amazing queer artists like Clevedon's Doris Hatt who pioneered modernist art whilst running to be a communist councillor for Clevedon Walton whilst living with her long-term girlfriend in the 1940s.

This month it has also been one year since my petition, signed by 591 people, calling for a Rainbow Crossing on Portishead High Street - looking for a way to integrate equalities and inclusivity into our public realm by something visual which will highlight just how open North Somerset is.

How will this Council commemorate LGBTQ History Month, Pride Month - and how does it plan to honour its commitment to LGBTQ residents to improve the public realm?" ”

Cllr Bell as Deputy Leader responded on behalf of Cllr Davies. He confirmed the council was committed to equalities and inclusivity and suggested regular challenge of council commitments was useful. The council was working on a community inclusion calendar and was keen to ensure a focus on those issues that were most important to local communities and to embed this in our activities and reflect it in our communications. He confirmed this would include celebrating Pride Month and UK Pride next year.

3. Question from Cllr Charles to Cllr Petty, Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Engagement

Cllr Charles asked the following question of Cllr Petty:

"I, and I am sure other members, greatly appreciate the all member briefing on engagement held earlier on this year. I was hoping the Executive Member with portfolio responsibilities would consider the following: the creation of an engagement impact assessment tool similar in design to an EQIA that would ensure consideration of adequate engagement and the impact of engagement on any public facing policy, procedure or action of the council."

In response Cllr Petty welcomed the issue raised by Cllr Charles and reported that work was currently being undertaken on an engagement strategy and she would ensure that options for an engagement impact assessment tool would be considered as part of that. She undertook to provide a full written response and to circulate this to all councillors shortly.

4. Question from Cllr Haverson to Cllr Solomon, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Services

Cllr Haverson asked the following question of Cllr Solomon:

"One of my residents has asked if cyclists are permitted to use the Park & Ride at Long Ashton and use their bike instead of the bus to cycle into Bristol. As I understand it, this is currently not permitted. In answer to one of the FAQs: 'Can I park my vehicle and not catch a bus?' the Travelwest information website states: 'This is not currently possible. If you would like to get more information, please contact the local authority in charge of the site you are interested in.' I suspect that may be because we are trying to stop football fans parking their car and walking to the stadium. Can we reword this advice to permit drivers to either bus or cycle from the car park as I understand there is actually a cycle way exiting the site? I understand Bristol City Council is running the Park & Ride so would Councillor Solomon contact his counterpart at Bristol City Council to look into this."

Cllr Solomon responded that he would be happy to do so.

5. Question from Cllr Gibbons to Cllr Cartman, Executive Member for Corporate Services

Cllr Gibbons stated that Weston Town Council had recently been accredited as a Living Wage Employer and asked what the latest position was with North Somerset Council.

Cllr Cartman responded that all North Somerset Council staff were paid the Real Living Wage, with the exception of apprentices. In terms of the council's supply chain, he suggested this was not always affordable, referring to low wage sectors such as social care. However, he suggested these matters would be considered as part of the People Strategy that was due to come forward shortly.

6. Question from Cllr Shopland to Councillor Bell, Deputy Leader

Cllr Shopland asked the Deputy Leader why the clocks and the wyvern had disappeared from the Chamber and why the photograph of Her Majesty the Queen was located at the side rather than at the head of the Chamber.

Cllr Bell responded that the wyvern was still in its usual location but currently hidden by the projector screen and he would need to find out about the clocks. As for the photograph of the Queen he suggested maybe a more prominent position could be found in the Chamber for her Jubilee year.

7. Question from Cllr Willis to Cllr Solomon, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Services

Cllr Willis asked the following question of Cllr Solomon:

“What is the timeline for the rough sleeping or homeless issues in the doorways of Weston-super-Mare, particularly on Waterloo Street/The Boulevard? Some of my residents are distressed to see these people in such a state and asked me what is happening. I thought we had an initiative in place? Please could the Executive Member advise.”

Cllr Solomon responded he had monitored this recently and had only seen a couple of sleeping bags in doorways but understood this may now have increased. He agreed to contact officers to check whether the initiative was being actively pursued but referred to the importance of dealing with this issue sensitively.

Cllr Bell added it was really important to separate out the issue of unattended belongings left in doorways and those who were sleeping rough. He agreed action should be taken to remove unattended belongings and to deal with those who chose to camp out and beg, and confirmed there was no tolerance of those engaging in anti-social behaviour. However, he stressed no-one should be sleeping rough and anyone concerned about a rough sleeper should contact StreetLink, the national rough sleeping helpline which alerts local services.