

**North Somerset Council
Council Meeting 19 September 2023
Question Time (Agenda Item 12)**

Question 1

From Councillor Burden

To Executive Member for Safety in the Community – Councillor Clayton

Public Space Protection Orders – Report to Executive

Councillor Burden asked the Executive Member to ask officers to forward a list to him of the people consulted on the new Public Space Protection Orders to be introduced particularly with reference to the limit on the number of dogs one person may walk at any one time. He asked also whether he and officers agreed with the statement in the government's handbook on controlling irresponsible dog ownership that any measure brought in by the council in respect of dogs would not apply to working animals. As a supplementary question he asked the member for his understanding of the extent of the order which he believed covered land the public had access to and not just council-owned land.

Councillor Clayton thanked the member for his question and would contact officers regarding his question on consultation but as far as he was aware, dog clubs and owners were consulted on the proposed measure. He added that he understood that the limit of 6 dogs at any one time did not apply to working dogs on private land but applied to North Somerset Council owned land. In light of the member's supplementary question, he would check what land the order covered.

Question 2

From Councillor Crockford-Hawley

**To Executive Member for spatial planning, placemaking and economy –
Councillor Mark Canniford**

Development of council-owned land in central Weston-super-Mare

Councillor Crockford-Hawley asked the Executive Member the following question: "Having been involved in several past administrations' attempts to develop the vacant plots of council-owned land in central Weston-super-Mare, I look around and ask myself: what advances have been made? Answer: None, despite numerous computer-inspired pictures, consultant reports and London-based misunderstandings about how smaller settlements tick. Are we convinced that our model for development which encompasses all sites in one single large developer package is necessarily the right way to handle these former Homes England sites?"

Councillor Canniford thanked the member for his question and agreed that it had taken too long to bring the sites forward for development but added that land values and the building environment was currently very unfavourable to the council. He

added that he believed all opportunities should be considered around market sale, developer agreements, corporate joint ventures including offering all sites to one developer providing the council receives what it required in the town centre. He noted that whilst noting appeared to be progressing on the surface, a number of conversations were being held between officers and developers and designers and he would push harder for a more progress.

Councillor Crockford-Hawley asked that the Executive Member informed members of the conversations being held by officers.

Question 3

From Councillor Shopland

To the Leader - Councillor Mike Bell

Clevedon BID Election

Councillor Shopland asked the following question of the Leader:

“Who authorised the vote made by this Council in the Clevedon Bid Election and why weren’t the ward members, Clevedon Town Council or the traders’ views sought prior to the vote being cast?”

The Leader thanked the member for his question and noted that the matter of the Clevedon BID had been referred to the Secretary of State for review by both the council and other interested parties due to queries on the validity of the ballot. He added that officers had made recommendations to the relevant Executive Members in respect casting the council’s vote on the BID as had happened with previous BIDs in Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare in previous years and under previous administrations. The vote was cast in the council capacity as a rate payer under the BID and as BID levy payers. This was the reason for no consultation as the council was not casting its vote on behalf of others but on behalf of itself as levy payers.

Question 4

From Councillor Ellis

**To Executive Member for spatial planning, placemaking and economy –
Councillor Mark Canniford**

Nailsea Infrastructure

Councillor Ellis asked the Executive Member whether there would be a further meeting as promised following an initial meeting on 24 July between the Executive Member and the four Nailsea councillors to discuss infrastructure in Nailsea in preparation for the Local Plan to be signed off in October. He asked whether this meeting would be before the Executive meeting and with enough notice so that they issues could be worked through with everyone as he had not been consulted or agreed to any proposals so far.

Councillor Canniford thanked the member for his question and said he would pick the issue up the following day as there appeared to be some confusion but would arrange a meeting as soon as possible.

Question 5

From Councillor Charles

**To Executive Member for spatial planning, placemaking and economy –
Councillor Mark Canniford**

Placemaking

Councillor Charles asked the following question of the Executive Member:

“Would the Executive Member in his Placemaking brief consider developing with other Executive Members, Placemaking plans for the north that consider our differing demographics, needs and aspirations. In Portishead many see Bristol as our main social and economic hub and desire strong connectivity and links with the city across areas such as public and private transport, job creation and cultural and social links. Would the new administration dedicate itself to tackle the disconnect many feel in towns such as Portishead from what is perceived as a southern centric approach.”

Councillor Canniford thanked the member for his question and assured him that he would engage with all Portishead councillors. He noted that there was the Portishead masterplan which had both time and money invested but which had stalled at the Portishead Town Council. He would restart discussions and expand this to include other parts of the town in a placemaking. He noted the large investment in the town to bring the MetroWest rail link to Portishead and will continue to push to bring this scheme to fruition. He undertook to have further discussions.

Question 6

From Councillor Smith

To The Leader – Mike Bell

Digital engagement with the council.

Councillor Smith asked the Leader the following question: “According to the ONS, in 2018 10% of the UK Adult population and in the South West were digitally excluded/non-users with 91% of those being aged 55+. In ASH we have 14,672 carers (94%) are over 50 years old, and it is noted that the older the carer the more hours of care per week are performed. A main concern of WESTLINK is that it may exclude the elderly, the group most likely to use bus service, due to them being less digitally minded plus, there is countless criticism about the usage of online only consultations such as Clevedon Seafront”

Will the administration note that the digital only approach to delivering council services will exclude a large proportion of our residents in need of services and act to ensure that traditional methods are still simple, effective, and viable?”

Councillor Bell thanked the member for his question and noted that the council’s approach was digital first and not digital only because digital was more effective, efficient and saved the council money. He added however that this was not the only

channel of communication for residents to connect with council services but acknowledged that it was not always perfect. The council wished to improve customer experience and engagement and its understanding of residents' digital skills. A specific piece of work would look at digital uptake in the North Somerset and he asked members to look at the council's Customer Services and Digital Strategies. He encouraged members to let him know of examples where the council has not delivered alternative methods. In the coming weeks, consultation on the Corporate Plan and spending priorities would involve drop in sessions, face to face workshops, online and paper questionnaires.

Question 7

From Councillor Thornton

To Executive Member for Culture and Leisure – Councillor Solomon

Cleaning Uphill Wharf

Councillor Thornton asked the Executive Member the following question: "Can Cllr Solomon provide a date for when the report on the options for cleaning up Uphill wharf will be available?"

Councillor Solomon thanked Councillor Thornton for her question and replied that currently there was no date but he would contact the team the following day to set one up.