

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9**Council 26 July 2017 - Questions submitted by Members**

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
1.	Cllr Roger Truelove	There is a severe need for extra parking room in the area of East Street, Sittingbourne. Local residents deserve some relief. An answer would be for the Council to acquire the land off East Street which once accommodated the Maidstone and District Buses and which is now owned by the Mormon Church. Will the Council pursue this as a serious option?	Cllr Duncan Dewar-Whalley	Nick Vickers/ Anne Adams

Response:

Thank you for your question and Cllr Truelove will be aware that I share his desire to do something with a significant site which is currently an under-utilised eyesore.

So I can report some progress in terms of opening communication with the Mormon Church European agent, we are at an early stage of negotiations which I do not expect to be easy.

As these negotiations proceed we will need to look at what options we have for the use of the site, it has redevelopment potential and I am keen to pursue that option.

2.	Cllr Roger Truelove	There is cross party support for the argument that we must invest in skills to improve local productivity and economic diversity. There has also been cross party agreement for many years that we need a Further Education or Technical College in Sittingbourne. What progress is there on this matter?	Cllr Mike Cosgrove	Emma Wiggins
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Response:

As part of a national process, the Skills Commissioner concluded the Kent Area Review of Further Education in March of this year. Swale Borough Council made strong representations for a more substantial provision in Sittingbourne and whilst publication of the report has been delayed (but expected imminently) there is a consensus that there will be a specific recommendation around addressing the

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<p>paucity of provision in Sittingbourne.</p> <p>After past set-backs, dealing with a range of providers over a number of years to address this issue, the anticipated conclusion of the report has given refreshed impetus to our discussions.</p> <p>Having both been through a period of change and uncertainty, the relatively new management teams at Mid-Kent and Canterbury Colleges, are committed to pursuing the issue with us. We are meeting regularly with the Colleges and KCC, working together to scope what model of provision can be sustained financially and what skills capital funding might be pursued.</p>				
3.	Cllr John Wright	Can the Cabinet Member update Members on the progression towards the renewing or otherwise of the leisure services contract at the Swallows Sittingbourne and the Sheerness Leisure Centre, at present run by Serco and overseen by Swale Community Leisure Trust. The contract ends in 2019 and therefore its construction and implementation is of huge interest to the many residents that use these facilities? Can the Cabinet Member assure the Members that all options are being considered including new facilities that could be run at zero cost to the council as have been demonstrated by Spirit of Sittingbourne partners Cathedral in the not too distant past?	Cllr Ken Pugh	Martyn Cassell
<p>Response:</p> <p>I am pleased to inform you that there is a project set up to review the future leisure provision in the Borough. This started in November 2016 and is registered as one of the Council's major projects. Reports are made to SMT on a monthly basis and a progress report was recently taken to Informal Cabinet.</p> <p>The project has two key strands. 'What model of operation is best for the future?' and 'What type of facilities are required for the future?'</p> <p>The initial stages have been very much based on desktop research. A number of surveys and reports have been conducted that look at benchmarking the performance of the current operators of the centres against national leisure indicators, the condition of the current facilities, what demand there is for the facilities now and what is likely to be in the future and finally what new markets/facilities could be</p>				

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<p>explored. We have also visited other authorities who have completed or are further down the line in projects to understand today's market.</p> <p>There are a number of possible outcomes for the project – improved facilities, new users, improved health outcomes, contribution to Sittingbourne and Sheerness regeneration and of course an opportunity for contract savings.</p> <p>The aim is to pull all of the information together to deliver a set of options towards the end of the year which would then go out to consultation, leaving us 18 months to progress preferred routes ahead of the Sept 2019 expiry date of the contract.</p>				
4.	Cllr Ghlin Whelan	A few months ago there was a degree of mutual congratulation in the Council about the imminent commencement of works on the Sittingbourne Skate Park, since then I have not been aware of very much progress. Is there any?	Cllr David Simmons	Charlotte Hudson
<p>Response:</p> <p>You are correct that we announced at Council that the Sittingbourne Skate Park had secured the necessary funding and Brogdale CIC had come forward with proposals to manage the skate park which enabled the project to go forward. Since then we have appointed Gravity Skateparks to design and build the skate park. Gravity have been working hard with the user group to design a skate park that meets their needs and have been working on the detailed design proposals, these have now been submitted to planning for approval. In addition to the design work the land has been transferred to the Council and the essential ecology works have been taking place. Construction will begin when all the necessary permission are in place.</p>				
5.	Cllr Nigel Kay	New rubbish bins have started appearing around the streets of Faversham with separate sections for recyclables and non-recyclable rubbish. Is this a trial of the new bins, and if it is what were the results and will these new bins be put throughout Swale?	Cllr David Simmons	Martyn Cassell
<p>Response:</p> <p>The new bins located in each of the towns are part of a trial funded by Kent County Council to encourage recycling in town centres. They have two receptacles: one for general litter and one for recycling, making it easy for people to get rid of their rubbish responsibly when</p>				

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<p>they're out and about.</p> <p>The bins are not bolted into fixed locations so they can be moved about during the trial period which will run to 30 September 2017.</p> <p>Swale Borough Council is committed to improving recycling rates with our partners across the County as part of the Kent Resource Partnership. Any scheme like this must be embraced and whilst it may not provide huge tonnage, it is all about changing behaviours and perceptions about recycling. Early feedback is that in the main, they are being used correctly. We are assessing the waste discarded over the period which will determine whether or not the scheme is rolled out Borough wide.</p>				
6.	Cllr Mike Baldock	Two years ago I asked about the Borough's Conservation Area statements and pointed out that many were years if not decades out of date. I was assured this was being looked into and that updates would be carried out. Can the Cabinet Member update us on the progress made since that time?	Cllr Gerry Lewin	James Freeman
<p>Response:</p> <p>Conservation Area Appraisals have been completed for Boughton and Dunkirk Parishes earlier this year, which was undertaken to complement and inform the Neighbourhood Plan being prepared there. Development management conservation responses have first call on available resources to ensure timely delivery of planning application decisions. Policy CP8 of the Local Plan which Members will be asked to adopt this evening has provision for preparation of a Heritage Strategy. This will include amongst other heritage objectives, a realistic programme for the preparation of consultation area appraisal for those CAs which do not have them; and review and identification of those where action plans are needed. A brief for the Heritage Strategy is under preparation and the work completed within this financial year. This will identify necessary conservation work and help prioritise it in a way which can be undertaken within the resources currently available and identify the potential for funding bids to carry out further reviews should that be required.</p>				
7.	Cllr Mike Baldock	What level of harm to human health does the Leader personally consider acceptable in the pursuit of new houses being built?	Leader	James Freeman
<p>Response:</p>				

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<p>I do not intend to dignify the member with a specific answer to his question. I am sure that everybody would like to answer zero. This is the type of question that is submitted to a junior school debating society. I suggest, Mr Mayor, we move directly on to the supplementary question which is obviously the point of this exercise. Had Councillor Baldock genuinely wished to submit the supplementary question he is now going to come forward with, he would obviously encompassed it with the original question on the agenda paper.</p>				
8.	Cllr Cameron Beart	<p>In my supplementary question at the last full council meeting regarding the lack of a marina at Queenborough, I made the Cabinet Member for Regeneration aware that works were in progress to attempt reinstatement of the Queenborough to Southend ferry service.</p> <p>I would like to make the cabinet member aware that since that meeting, a trial service was announced and advertised online to take place on Monday 28th August. Both sailings from Sheppey sold out within 18 hours of going on general sale. In return, a single sailing from Southend to Queenborough on the same day has also attracted high ticket sales with 70% of tickets sold to visitors coming to Swale.</p> <p>Given the high amount of public interest, would the cabinet member and/or his deputy be prepared to meet with myself, the organisers behind the plans and the other Sheppey councillors who have been supporting this project and discuss ways that this council could support the restoration of this transport link between Kent and Essex?</p>	Cllr Mike Cosgrove	Emma Wiggins
<p>Response:</p> <p>I am delighted to hear this news and congratulations for the hard work you and other councillors have put into this. I welcome the opportunity to meet with you, the organisers and other Sheppey councillors who have been supporting the project to look at what is possible and how the council may support this excellent initiative.</p>				