

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 8**

**Council 20 February 2019 - Questions submitted by Members**

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
1.	Councillor Roger Clark	After our recent visit to the Iwade Solar Farm does the Cabinet Member agree with me that all new housing should have Solar panels installed?	Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs, Councillor David Simmons	Head of Planning Services, James Freeman
<p><b>Response:</b> Whilst I have sympathy with the statement from Cllr Clark, there is no requirement under planning legislation or the National Planning Policy Framework to require new housing schemes to include solar panels. The Building Regulations are cited by the Government for providing the minimum national technical standards for the supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat and these do not necessarily require solar panels to meet the minimum standards. However, as members will be aware, the Council may be looking to bring forward garden communities as part of its Local Plan Review to meet future housing need. This approach could provide a basis upon which to seek local requirements for decentralised energy supplies, including the potential for solar energy using commercial and/or residential development opportunities.</p>				
2.	Councillor Mike Henderson	As the initial objective to house Syrian refugee families has been met will the leader make a further commitment to house more families into the future?	The Leader, Councillor Bowles	Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services, Charlotte Hudson
<p><b>Response:</b> There are now 11 families living in Swale so we have exceeded the initial target of 10 families. We are not looking to commit to take any further families because we need to ensure the current families receive all the support they need and are settled into</p>				

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<p>the community successfully. This is a long-term project over 5 years which we are now halfway through.</p> <p>We have chosen to take all the families in the first part of the project rather than staggering them over the 5 years. KCC is providing support for all families across Kent (with the exception of Ashford Borough Council). This will ensure that the families receive the maximum amount of support whilst the project is running.</p>				
3	Councillor James Hunt	Following the decision by KCC to charge residents for disposing of plasterboard, soil, rubble and hardcore will the Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs be asking officers to closely monitor any increase in flytipping of these items across Swale?	Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs, Councillor David Simmons	Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure, Martyn Cassell
<p><b>Response:</b> I was very disappointed to hear that the KCC committee voted for charges to be introduced for disposing of these materials at Household Waste and Recycling Centres. As you know, we submitted a response to the KCC consultation raising concerns about the potential impacts of this decision and suggesting how local authorities should be making it easier for householders to recycle their waste. I feel more can be done to create market places for some of these materials. This in turn would increase their value as a resource and potentially reduce the demand for other 'first time use' materials.</p> <p>The officers already monitor fly-tipping incidents and record all cases under the Government's reporting scheme. Whilst it will be difficult to break down the specific individual materials and to show true cause and effect, officers will indeed be monitoring those found amongst fly tipping as part of their ongoing analysis in tackling waste crime. The council has an excellent record in bringing fly-tippers to justice and this was reflected in the latest DEFRA statistics where fly tipping in Swale was reduced by nearly 20% in the last financial year.</p>				
4.	Councillor Cameron Beart	With the recent publicity regarding unequal access to GPs in Swale, could the cabinet member for health & wellbeing please advise me what communication there has been between Swale Borough Council and the NHS Swale CCG and what measures they are taking to address this concerning issue?	Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor	Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services, Charlotte Hudson

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			Sarah Aldridge	
<p><b>Response:</b> The general practice workforce has been one issue that I have had regular dialogue with Swale CCG during my time as the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Swale CCG met with the cabinet in October 2018 to discuss GP access as a key strand of their work. Swale CCG is not alone in having poor GP patient ratios and this is clearly a national issue which the NHS have strategic plans to address. That said Swale CCG have confirmed that the numbers do not take into account the regular use of locums and the wider general practice workforce. Swale CCG has responded by developing multi-disciplinary teams and care navigators, they have also extended the times GPs can be accessed. They are also working as part of the STP in improving recruitment and retention of GPs in the whole of Kent. Despite the challenges around the workforce, care standards are good within our GP practices. This is one issue that I will continue to monitor closely.</p>				
5.	Councillor Anita Walker	<p>A great proportion of Abbey Ward is covered by a Residents Parking Scheme for which far more permits have been issued than there are parking spaces. Residents in Newton Road were concerned about additional cars parking when Herbert Dane Court was converted from old people's sheltered accommodation to private 'for sale' flats. When I raised this with the appropriate department at SBC I was assured that parking permits would not be issued for any new developments in Abbey Ward, and that Herbert Dane Court would be considered a new development (so no permits would be issued).</p> <p>I now find that at least two permits have been issued to residents of Herbert Dane Court, although this building does have its own car park.</p> <p>When was this policy changed, and why were the Ward</p>	Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities, Councillor Alan Horton	Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure, Martyn Cassell

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		Councillors not informed?		
<p><b>Response:</b> The Traffic Regulation Order was amended, with effect from 10th November 2017, to state that any new properties created through development or conversion would be declined any applications to join the Residents Parking Scheme, and this policy has not changed. Our records indicate that no permits have been issued to residents of Herbert Dane Court, but if further information becomes available in the form of vehicle registration numbers or permit numbers we would be happy to investigate further.</p>				
6.	Councillor Anita Walker	Can the Council consider providing more taxi ranks in Faversham? There are numerous taxi companies operating in the area, who have nowhere official to go. At present there are only 9 enforceable spaces provided - 5 outside the Station (often now occupied by 3 taxis from Sittingbourne based companies), 2 opposite (usually filled by residents) and 2 in Stone Street. A fourth location for 2 taxis between the Bank Street car park and the rear of the old Woolworths is unenforceable, as are the double yellow lines in this area, for some reason of which I am not aware.	Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities, Councillor Alan Horton	Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure, Martyn Cassell
<p><b>Response:</b> The taxi rank at the rear of the former Woolworths store and the adjacent double yellow lines were unenforceable as they did not appear in the Traffic Regulation Order, this was rectified last year through an Amendment Order. I can therefore confirm both the taxi rank and the double yellow lines are enforceable, as they are covered by a Traffic Regulation Order which came into effect on 3rd September 2018.</p>				