

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10

Council 26 June 2019 - Questions submitted by Members

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
1.	Councillor Tim Gibson	Do you have any plans to restore concessionary parking rates to the Leisure Centres in Sittingbourne and Sheerness?	Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Roger Truelove	Martyn Cassell
<p>Response:</p> <p>One of the Coalition’s priorities is the health of the residents. We want to ensure there are opportunities for improving both mental and physical health and the leisure centres provide both. The removal of the car parking subsidy by the previous administration was a signal of an approach to disincentivise usage of the centres.</p> <p>The centres offer a range of uses including children’s learning to swim classes, GP referral schemes and we want to remove any barriers to people attending. The renovation work to both centres is nearing completion so the range of facilities on offer has increased.</p> <p>Therefore we are currently looking at the option to re-install the subsidy and will bring a report to the July Cabinet to discuss further.</p>				
2.	Councillor Tony Winckless	Do you have plans to improve the public facilities at Milton Country Park?	Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Roger Truelove	Martyn Cassell

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<p>Response:</p> <p>A further Coalition priority is to introduce a Special Projects Fund of £1m a year, over the next four years, to make improvements to the public realm of the Borough.</p> <p>The allocation of this fund will depend upon bids for projects and I know Cllr Winckless will lend his support to Milton Creek Country Park, given his dedicated support to the site over the years.</p> <p>The Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure will be taking a discussion report to Policy Development and Review Committee (PDRC) in due course to start off the process.</p>				
3.	Councillor Ken Rowles	What are the prospects of Government funding coming into Swale and the rest of the Thames Corridor to meet the enormous deficit between housing growth and infrastructure?	Cabinet Member for Economy and Property, Councillor Monique Bonney	Emma Wiggins
<p>Response:</p> <p>Funding opportunities are currently intermittent, and infrastructure goes beyond highways. At present delivery of wider infrastructure needs, including health and schools, are expected to be met through developer contributions, where possible – and developer funding can only be sought for need arising from new development, not to meet existing deficits.</p> <p>The current arrangements are failing to deliver what is needed, along the Thames Corridor and in Swale, both now and to meet the impact of enhanced development targets being set by Government. Other proposals, such as the Lower Thames Crossing, will also</p>				

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<p>create additional pressures and there is currently no indication from Government of any planned future investment that will alleviate the concerns that all Local Authorities in North Kent have.</p> <p>In the immediate future we need to see Junction 5 improvements confirmed, along with the £40m that is being sought from the Housing Infrastructure Fund for improvements to the A249 Junctions. However, over coming years there is a need for a more integrated and planned approach towards funding infrastructure.</p>				
4.	Councillor Steve Davey	Having read the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 5/06/19 I would like to know how a contractor could be engaged that has a problem laying hot rolled asphalt to acceptable KCC Standards, and if the necessary repairs are covered by said company with no cost to SBC?	Cabinet Member for Economy and Property, Councillor Monique Bonney	Emma Wiggins
<p>Response:</p> <p>All surfacing contractors that have been used by the Principal highways contractor are on the KCC approved list. All works that do not meet KCC's requirements are/will be re-done at the contractors cost with no cost to SBC.</p>				
5.	Councillor Mike Whiting	Will the Leader confirm he supports Highways England's proposed Orders to progress the much needed improvements to Junction 5 at Stockbury, and that he is responding in the strongest terms in support of the Orders to both Highways England and the Secretary of State?	Leader, Councillor Roger Truelove	Emma Wiggins

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<p>Response:</p> <p>I do support Highways England’s proposals to improve Junction 5. I’m surprised you needed to ask.</p> <p>I have written to the Secretary of State in line with the existing view of this Council, supporting Option 4H1 and I have stressed the need for urgency in taking this essential project forward.</p> <p>I have re-enforced the exceptional daily inconvenience to local people using the A249 and other local feeder roads caused by daily processional congestion, the continuing risk of serious accidents and the significance of this junction to the bifurcation of Kent and the Lower Thames Crossing.</p> <p>Apart from the absolutely key strategic importance of these projects, they offer a golden opportunity for employment in construction and engineering for local people in North Kent, including Swale. It is with this in mind that the administration puts such a high premium on closing the skills gap and therefore on the need for further education investment in the Borough</p> <p>We need to pull together on this. I note the energetic backing of the MP for Sittingbourne and Sheppey and wish it were also backed in the same way by the MP for Faversham and Mid Kent.</p>				