Council 27 July 2016: Questions submitted from Members of the Public

Question No.	Question from	Question:	Question to:	Responsible Officer:
1.	Mr Greenhill	As a council tax payer who considers that £85K plus per year is much better spent on, for example, cleansing the streets of Sittingbourne of debris and weeds than on a non-strategic, non-operational so-called Director of Regeneration, may I ask what qualification and experience can be brought to the role and give meaningful effect to hitherto empty words "it's here" where the others have patently failed and having regard to Cllr Cosgrove's obvious sole delight that there had previously been a strong field of candidates and that (his) expectations were high?	Councillor Mike Cosgrove, Cabinet Member for Regeneration	Abdool Kara, Chief Executive

Response:

I thank Mr Greenhill for his question, and am happy to give him an answer that I hope he will accept.

In medium and large organisations I am sure he will agree that there is a 'chain of command'. Given that planning and regeneration schemes across Swale run into hundreds of millions of pounds, it would seem sensible that the Council appoints someone with the highest level of skills to oversee them and the staff involved.

Previously we have been fortunate in that we have had two first class Directors of Regeneration. On Pete Raine's retirement I certainly considered we had a strong field of applicants for his replacement. So I am especially sorry that Kathryn Carr was simply not able to continue in her role because of family commitments, and because of these personal circumstances we supported her decision.

He will, I am sure, understand that the regeneration of Sittingbourne is not simple, but we are resolved to continue because Sittingbourne deserves it, and month by month we can see visible evidence of progress in more planning applications for key sites, and further completion of much detailed and complex work.

I would be happy to invite Mr Greenhill to the first site when work starts.