

Questions to Council Under Rule 11 of the Constitution – Council 4th December 2019

1 Councillor Mossop to Councillor Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning

Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SuDS) are often requested as a condition attached to a planning approval by this Authority as they assist in managing runoff volumes and flow rates from hard surfaces on new developments. They also manage water in a more environmentally sensitive way than traditional drainage schemes and should be designed to ensure that runoff volumes are no higher after their installation.

However, problems downstream of new development can still occur if maintenance of such schemes fails to be properly managed.

Once the condition is "signed off" to the satisfaction of the Authority, how is the SuDS scheme monitored and what course of action do you suggest a resident living downstream of a new development has available to him if he is flooded as a result of a badly designed scheme?

- A** *SUDs schemes can be maintained either by a management company or Anglian Water or LCC, they vary but in every case if there is an issue it is the organisation or company that a person(s) would go to if there was an issue with the scheme.*

2 Councillor Makinson-Sanders to Councillor Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning

When councillors support their residents in opposing a contentious planning application much store is set in being able to display comprehensive cognisance and knowledge (verging on the encyclopaedic) of the intricacies of both the District Plan and the NPPF. However, not all councillors undertake planning training so consequently their residents are disadvantaged by a) the call in process b) at planning committee. No training is in place to overcome this inequality. How do you intend to ensure that our residents are treated equally and fairly?

- A** *Planning training is always offered to all Councillors not only those that are the Planning Committee and those that are not sitting on Planning Committee are welcome to go along. There is no constitutional obligation for all Councillors to take up the training it is for them to make that decision as to whether the training will assist the residents of their particular wards.*

3 Councillor Makinson-Sanders to Councillor Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning

What is the logic behind granting planning permission to schemes which 1. Will not meet the requirements of Building Regulations 2. Are contrary to the Equalities Act 2010. How are the public reassured the well-being of disadvantaged groups is paramount?

- A** *The Council is under a legal duty to determine all planning applications that are put before it, with reference to material planning considerations, national planning policy and the adopted development plan. There are other legislative safeguards that address the specific points you raise.*

4 Councillor Leonard to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

Will ELDC ensure the purchase of the land currently held for other purposes by the County Council at the Horncastle Hub will be included in the initial overall sale of the site? If left out the District Council could face a ransom strip scenario in the future thus costing the ratepayers even more money when the deal should be dealt with now. This would ensure the site is big enough should ELDC need expansion potential for the future. Alternatively should we perhaps have purchased something that was big enough in the first place given that what we need now could change in years to come?

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A I refer you to the report to Council on 9th October 2019. Paragraph 2.3.-

From an initial desktop exercise the Horncastle College site was the only site available that was considered suitable to progress to the feasibility stage and is of sufficient size to work towards co-location with key partners. The proposed site to be acquired is capable of physically accommodating more than double the Council's known requirements. Therefore to purchase the whole site is not only potentially prejudicial to the County Council's aspirations to bring forward Extra Care Housing but is also unnecessary to deliver known and likely future requirements.

5 Councillor Leonard to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

The executive will have considered I presume the fact that they would never be able to recover any where near the total project cost for the Horncastle site and buildings once complete? Therefore given they will be writing off millions from the day they walk into the site. How will they justify that to the ratepayers of the district?

A I refer you to the financial model set out in the report to Council on 9th October 2019. The project is forecast to be cost neutral over a 15 year period.

6 Councillor Leonard to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

When will you be releasing to councillors the outcome of recent senior management meetings with the staff over the Horncastle Hub site and therefore the views of the staff?

A Thank you for the question.

Colleagues across the organisation have been briefed by the Chief Executive and Assistant Directors (Neil Cucksey and James Gilbert) on the Council decision to create a Public Sector Hub with touchdown points; and the introduction of more agile ways of working.

Colleagues are therefore aware of this Council's direction of travel.

There is no 'outcome' or information to share other than the fact briefings have taken place and colleagues across the organisation are now being given the opportunity to help shape their future working practices; as well as having an input into aspect of the Public Sector Hub design.

7 Councillor Leonard to Councillor Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning

When the recent application for a school sports hall was submitted in Louth I seemed to be unable to find out why the applicant was advised of the outcome, even though it had not been to committee and subsequently it transpired that Sport England had not given their response either. Sport England said it was because they had been given insufficient time to comment. Why was the applicant informed of the green light scenario without the endorsement of Sport England or the committee? Further to this I gather the applicant was able to request a timescale on completion of the decision making process. At what point did this become a policy of the planning department that clients can set the timescale? Having had a recent business application myself prior to becoming a councillor I was not made aware I could set the timescale for the decision making process. Was I not offered the same option because of inconsistencies?

A The nature of the recommendation to Committee would be known to the applicant as the negotiations on the second application progressed. It is common/ good practice for an applicant to know what a likely recommendation is to be so that any outstanding issues can be discussed openly and, where possible, resolved.

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Cllr Leonard received a full reply from the Head of Planning on 6 November to his earlier enquiry when it was explained that the intense negotiation on this and the earlier scheme had got to a point where a 'no objection' was now expected from, for example Sport England and the Conservation advice. It was nevertheless a recommendation to Committee and the applicant was fully aware of that since it would be the Committee which would make any decision. The applicant was therefore, rightly aware of the recommendation but of course the outcome would not be known until and if the Planning Committee made a decision on 7 November; there was no 'green light' scenario.

There had been visits from and dialogue with Sport England, it was just that when the Committee papers were finalised, the expected Sport England concluding response had not been received.

The Head of Planning had to make a decision in putting the item onto an 'earlier' Committee but in view of the officer recommendation and that a 'no objection' response was by then expected from Sport England, it was not at all unusual for an item to go onto the agenda before the full expiration of consultation periods. This practice is not uncommon subject to safeguards and it is a sign of a responsible authority seeking to be more responsive and understanding of applicants and to seek to be supportive of schemes when through processes of negotiation, legitimate planning concerns had been addressed as far as possible sufficient to be able to then make a positive recommendation to Committee.

8 Councillor Mossop to Councillor Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning

National Tree Week took place between 23rd November and 1st December. Trees give us oxygen, store carbon, improve air quality, conserve water, preserve soil and support biodiversity. What steps are the Council taking to increase tree cover on a) Council-owned land and, b) on privately-owned land?

- A There are no firm plans at present to plant trees on Council owned land other than as consideration of any landscape implications on future development proposals. However once the Council has completed the re-baselining of its carbon footprint, one of the potential actions to further offset the footprint could be to consider suitable land in the Councils ownership for tree planting.***

On privately owned land, the Council encourages developers to design development around existing trees/landscape features, if necessary to remove them we generally like to see some kind of replacement scheme and any additional landscaping on a site including tree planting is always welcomed.

9 Councillor Horton to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

It is pleasing to see this authority is investing in senior management. However, when are we going to consider increasing the number of enforcement officers within the licensing team, given we are such a large district?

- A Resource allocation to services is considered in line with evidence of need and demand, in addition to ensuring that statutory and regulatory requirements can be fulfilled. Resources are deployed in accordance with the needs of the district. If for any reason, the evidence suggested a need for increased enforcement resource, this would be considered through a formal review and robust analysis of service delivery options.***

It would be helpful to understand what draws Cllr Horton to make the conclusion that more resource is needed in this area of the Council?

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10 Councillor Horton to Councillor Fry, Portfolio Holder for Finance

How many people work in the Growth team and what are their roles and how many work in Economic Development, as well as Tourism, and what are their roles? What in effect is the difference between growth and economic development?

- A** *The Growth Team is a generic term for a wide cohort of staff contributing to the potential for generating growth in the districts economic outputs and quality of life. It includes service areas such as Planning Policy, Development Management, Economic Development, Tourism, Building Control, Property, Street Scene and some aspect of Environmental Health for example.*

The Councils Economic Development team contribute to more focused support for business, for example through administering grants, facilitating business advice, servicing business centres, bid writing for funding streams such as the Future High Streets fund, Heritage Action Zones etc, bringing forward serviced land for industrial and commercial development and place marketing to support the visitor economy and tourism sector businesses for example.

*There are up to 65 FTE's in services supporting Growth.
There are 7.98 FTE's in the Economic Development Team including Tourism.*

11 Councillor Horton to Councillor Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services

What is the cost to this authority of fly tipping and how many successful prosecutions have there been in the last 18 months? If equipment, such as fridges and cookers etc, are tipped into watercourses, such as Stewton Beck in my Ward, which authority is responsible for removing them given ownership of these watercourses?

- A** **The Council does not maintain figures on the cost of clearing fly tipping.**

In the period referred to there were 3 successful prosecutions by the Council for fly tipping related matters.

With regard to the clearance of waste the duty to carry out the work lies with the landowner. In the specific case you refer, this could be drainage board, Environment Agency or a private land owner. I will ask officers if they can determine who the landowner is in this particular case.

12 Councillor Horton to Councillor Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services

What fuel will our new fleet of refuse vehicles run on and what plans have we to introduce green powered vehicles for this purpose and for our fleet of pool cars?

- A** *The new fleet of refuse collection vehicles will run on diesel, however the engines are Euro 6 emissions standard and have reduced levels of harmful exhaust emissions in line with current EU directives.*

Although refuse collection vehicles are available which use alternative fuels, these are not widely available, and are not included on the fleet purchasing framework. The geography of, and infrastructure within the East Lindsey district does not easily enable the Council to use either electric or gas powered HGVs.

Lincolnshire Waste Partnership have an action within the countywide Waste Strategy to reduce the carbon impact of the county's waste services, and will be investigating possibilities for using vehicles which run on alternative fuels.

The Council will consider vehicles using alternative fuels for the fleet of pool cars when they are due for replacement.

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13 Councillor Horton to Councillor Marsh, Portfolio Holder for Partnerships

What representations have you made about projected police numbers in East Lindsey?

- A** *We have a good working relationship with our local police – formally through the Safer Communities Partnership and the Lincolnshire Police & Crime Panel (which is consulted annually on the Police budget); and we also have an ongoing working relationship more directly related to our services.*

For example, the Portfolio Holder for Communities has had recent discussions with local policing teams in relation to anti-social behaviour, where we have explored more collaborative working in recognition of resource shortages in both organisations.

I am not sure if your enquiry is in relation to the recently announced increase in police numbers, or the resources currently in place. The ELDC Chief Executive has recently received a letter from Jason Harwin (T/Chief Constable), confirming that Lincolnshire will receive an additional 50 officers but that they are awaiting the detail behind that announcement in order to understand how they will receive the funding for this recruitment, and details of any associated costs related to the uplift. I'm sure that there will be some discussion with partners in the future to share what the timescales are and what the deployment plans are; but of course, police resources are primarily deployed based on need and demand.

We have not directly 'lobbied' the police on how new resources are to be deployed, as it is uncertain how this will work, nor over what period at this stage.

However, if you wish to discuss any particular concerns or thoughts about policing that can contribute to any future discussions I, or my colleagues are involved in, please do let me know.

14 Councillor Mangion to Councillor Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning

Given the persistent rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels what is ELDC doing to encourage and support tree planting in the district in order to reduce the risk of global warming

- A** *There are no specific policies regarding tree planting in connection with global warming.*

In terms of Development Management- On privately owned land, the Council encourages developers to design development around existing trees/landscape features, if its necessary to remove them we generally like to see some kind of replacement scheme and any additional landscaping on a site including tree planting is always welcomed.

There are no firm plans at present to plant trees on Council owned land other than as consideration of any landscape implications on future development proposals.

15 Councillor Mangion to Councillor Leyland, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs

What is the current ELDC strategy towards improving fast broadband provision and uptake in the district? Is this solely a matter of waiting for government initiatives?

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A All broadband infrastructure development in East Lindsey is undertaken through the Onlincolnshire programme (or, where commercially viable, the private sector). Onlincolnshire (Lincolnshire County Council) have a phased programme of delivery which has, to date, delivered over 90% superfast coverage in the District. Future phases of the programme will target the District's 'not-spots', utilising more cost effective technologies to ensure the benefits of Super Fast Broadband can be enjoyed by as many East Lindsey residents as possible. Take-up of the infrastructure improvements in East Lindsey is 61.4% and rising at c.1% per month, a figure which is higher than the UK take-up average. Steve Brookes, Lincolnshire Broadband Programme Manager, is always happy to come and talk to stakeholders should further clarification be required.

16 Councillor Mangion to Councillor Grist, Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and the Rural Economy

What is the current eldc strategy towards preservation and regeneration of the cultural heritage of the wolds towns. In particular what support is being offered for the regeneration of the Spilsby theatre?

A The Council has recently appointed a Historic Environment Officer to take forward initiatives and funding bids to support preservation and regeneration of cultural heritage assets and conservation areas across the district. The Council has also been working with the Institute of Place Management and conducted Vital and Viable workshops in the market towns including Spilsby. The reports developed from these workshops will help inform future strategy around place based initiatives and actions.

With regard to Spilsby Theatre in particular, as a Grade 2 listed building it may be eligible for grant funding from bodies such as Heritage Lottery or Heritage England. The buildings owner should therefore seek assistance from the Historic Environment Officer at ELDC to explore what options are available to support its regeneration.