

Uttlesford District Council Meeting 6 December 2022

Written Questions to Members of the Executive and Committee Chairs

Written responses to be published on 5 December 2022

1. By Councillor Criscione to Councillor Lees - the Leader of the Council:

“Can I please have details of the present staff headcount by department and details of how many positions are unfilled for each department? Please identify how many staff in post are Uttlesford Employees and how many are agency or other third-party staff.”

2. By Councillor Sell to Councillor Armstrong – Portfolio Holder for Sport, Leisure and the Arts:

“Given the forecast £5 million black hole and cuts to the budget as a result of the R4U Administration's management of the Uttlesford District Council finances, can you tell this Council what your current management plans are to protect the services you are responsible for as portfolio lead?”

3. By Councillor Sell to Councillor Sutton – Portfolio Holder for Communities, Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service:

“Given the forecast £5 million black hole and cuts to the budget as a result of the R4U Administration's management of the Uttlesford District Council finances, can you tell this Council what your current management plans are to protect the services you are responsible for as portfolio lead?”

4. By Councillor Loughlin to Councillor Freeman – Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services:

“How do you intend to protect the community services and Council services for which you, as portfolio holder, are responsible now that such a huge deficit, as much as £5 million, has been forecast and which is bound to have a disastrous impact on the residents of Uttlesford and many of the community benefits they rely on?”

5. By Councillor Khan to Councillor Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing:

“Given the forecast £5m black hole and cuts to the budget because of the R4U led Administration’s management of Uttlesford District Council finances, can you tell this Council, as Lead Member for Housing, what your current management plans are to ensure a quality Housing service for Uttlesford residents.”

6. By Councillor Khan to Councillor Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing:

“Following the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak, caused by mould in his home that his parents rented from Rochdale Borough Wide Housing, could you provide the following information:

- How many residents by ward have complained about damp issues since May 2019 and how many of the problems identified since 2019 have been fixed?
- How many damp surveys have been undertaken by Uttlesford District Council of council owned properties since May 2019?”

7. By Councillor Isham to Councillor Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan:

“Given the forecast £5 million black hole and cuts to the budget as a result of the R4U Administration's management of the Uttlesford District Council finances, can you tell this Council what your current management plans are to protect the services you are responsible for as portfolio lead?”

8. By Councillor Smith to Councillor Evans - Portfolio Holder for Planning, Stansted Airport, Infrastructure Strategy and the Local Plan:

“It was reported that in July the Government had requested an action plan setting out how UDC intends to exit Designation, and that this was required urgently. Can you confirm when this was submitted and what response has been received to date.

Will the Council be kept informed of progress in this action plan via Cabinet or the Planning Committee?”

9. By Councillor Fairhurst to Councillor Lees – the Leader of the Council:

“On Tuesday November 28, 2022 we were informed by senior officers that there was a black hole in Uttlesford District Council finances despite an exposure to £280 million which was supposed to support Uttlesford District Council finances.

We were told that any discussions of this black hole would be held in secret Part 2 council meetings, but any suggestion of commercial risk must be weighed against the democratic right of residents to know how the Council has exposed them to the likelihood of reduced services.

Can you tell us how it can be democratically justified to hide the truth of the dire financial situation at Uttlesford District Council from residents on the eve of an election?”

10. By Councillor Light to Councillor Lees – the leader of the Council:

"In light of the most recent delay to the Local Plan, why were 3.5 years wasted on this Plan when it was so clearly destined for failure from the outset?"

11. By Councillor Light to Councillor Sutton - Portfolio Holder for Communities, Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Police and Fire & Rescue Service:

"Can you please update this Council on the progress of the Youth Council, when the last meetings were held, the political and civic work the Youth Councillors are involved in and how they are engaging with Members of this Council?"

12. By Councillor Caton to Councillor Pepper – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Green Issues; Equalities:

"Given the Senior Management Team is forecasting a black hole in the Council's future financial strategy requiring £5m cuts to the budget over the next five years because of the current administration's management of the council's finances, can you tell the Council what your plans are to safeguard the vital Climate Change Action Plan and Equalities activities that you are responsible for as portfolio holder?"

13. By Councillor Caton to Councillor Lees – the Leader of the Council:

"As Councillor Lees is aware the Senior Management Team (SMT) of officers forecast that any new administration elected at the May 2023 local elections will have to cut expenditure by £5m by the end of their term.

What plan of action does Councillor Lees and the Cabinet have to ensure that any incoming administration has the up to date information to enable it to take informed decisions on their priorities and the Council's finances by the summer 2023 deadline suggested by the SMT?"