

Uttlesford District Council Meeting 21 March 2023

Written Questions to Members of the Executive and Committee Chairs

Written responses to be published on 20 March 2023

1. By Councillor Gregory to Councillor Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing:

“What progress has been made on Reynolds Court remediation, and at what total cost to UDC to 28 Feb 23?”

2. By Councillor Gregory to Councillor Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing:

“What efforts are being made to recover those sums and what investigations have/are being carried out as to culpability in this matter?”

3. By Councillor Barker to Councillor Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing:

“How many of our Council properties have had a condition survey done within the last six months and what percentage of our properties is that?”

Of those properties surveyed how many have been identified as having defects requiring remedial work/maintenance and what is the timescale to complete such works?”

4. By Councillor Smith to Councillor Hargreaves – Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Budget:

“The CEO has suggested that a newly formed administration in May should expect to receive a paper on potential increases to UDC owned car park fees. What proposals are currently in development that would potentially increase the Councils income?”

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

“The Uttlesford Norse Partnership, which R4U implemented in 2019, has clearly been a disappointing venture, as has been reported to this Council and the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee. In addition, the failure by R4U to

put in a place a robust process to manage the Partnership has contributed to the poor performance of the service.

The proposal which R4U negotiated offered several areas of benefit. Can the Lead member provide clear evidence that the following areas in the proposal have been achieved:

Page 1 states that profits will be shared 50/50. How much has Uttlesford Council received and where can this be evidenced.

Page 22 states the following benefits to the people of Uttlesford:

- Improvements to people's lives.
- Raised service standards.
- Greater customer satisfaction.
- Continuity of service.
- A boost to the local economy.
- Community partnerships.
- Improved environmental standards.

What evidence can the Lead Member provide to corroborate on **each** of the above points?"

6. By Councillor Khan to Councillor Lees – Leader of the Council:

“The impact of not building council homes can have far-reaching consequences for both the council and the residents we serve. When R4U were elected, the Leader of the Council, Cllr Lees, pledged to build 184 new council homes over the lifetime of this administration. So far 55 have been built, a number of these were projects started under the previous administration. Now all new council home building is frozen.

Does the Leader of the Council agree that the impact of not meeting the pledge will be the following:

1. **Increased housing costs:** The freeze on new council homes means that the demand for social housing will further outstrip supply, increasing costs for residents seeking properties that have higher rents. This aggravates the inability of people on lower incomes to find suitable accommodation and may result in overcrowding, homelessness, or people being forced to move away from the area.
2. **Social inequality:** The lack of affordable housing can lead to social inequality, with those on lower incomes being disproportionately affected. This can have a knock-on effect on health, education, and employment opportunities.
3. **Increased pressure on services:** A lack of social housing can also put pressure on other public services, such as healthcare and education. For example, overcrowding can lead to increased demands on healthcare services, while children living in inadequate housing may struggle at school, which can impact their future prospects.

4. **Reduced income for UDC:** Building council homes generates income for UDC through rents and other charges. Failure to build new council homes will lead to reduced income for the council, and poor-quality service to existing tenants. ”

7. **By Councillor Caton to Councillor Armstrong – Portfolio Holder for Sports, Leisure and the Arts:**

“As you will recall the Council provided a £500,000 contribution towards establishing a running track at Carver Barracks. Can Cllr Armstrong please provide the Council with a progress report, including reference to the following:

- the level of use of the running track by Uttlesford residents;
- who is responsible for the management of the track;
- what is being done to promote the use of the track and
- any other action that the council is taking to ensure that the £500,000 investment is providing value for money for local Council Tax payers.”

8. **By Councillor Light to Councillor Lees – Leader of the Council**

“I would like to thank those Cabinet members who have regularly presented to Council reports on their portfolios.

Could the Leader of the Council explain, however, why some Cabinet members and all councillors who are designated Topic Leads have not submitted any written reports to the Council providing an update on activities they have undertaken since the administration came to power in 2019?

In the case of Cabinet Members who receive an additional allowance, given the lack of reports, does the Leader think that the public are getting value for money?”