

Uttlesford District Council Meeting 5 December 2023

Written Questions to Members of the Executive and Committee Chairs

Written responses to be published on 4 December 2023

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

“Please provide a progress update on Reynolds Court, the cost of remediation and recovery of costs relating to Reynolds Court?”

**2. By Councillor Sell to Councillor Hargreaves – Portfolio Holder for
Finance and the Economy:**

“Was any consultation held with town/parish councils or representatives of local business before the decision was made to slash the number of days allocated for free Christmas parking?”

3. By Councillor Sell to Councillor Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning:

“What was the rationale for not holding a local plan exhibition at Stansted (the district’s third principal settlement) and holding the exhibitions only in the evenings and not during the hours of daylight?”

**4. By Councillor Silcock to the Councillor Lees – Leader of the Council and
Councillor Hargreaves – Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy:**

“When is the car parking review likely to be completed?”

**5. By Councillor Silcock to the Councillor Lees – Leader of the Council and
Councillor Hargreaves – Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy:**

“What sub lets have taken place at Canfield Business Park?”

6. By Councillor Fiddy to Councillor Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning

“Planning conditions can enhance the quality of development and enable development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects. In the year ending 31.03.23 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman upheld just two complaints made against Uttlesford District Council, both of which were related to failures of the planning conditions process, one wholly and one partially. When the planning conditions process fails, the risk to the

council is high both in taxpayers' money and reputation. The Ombudsman letter says that complaints offer organisations a 'rich source of intelligence and insight that has the potential to be transformational'. Good corporate governance requires a review of the actions that resulted in these complaints so as to reduce future risk. Has such a thing been carried out? Specifically:

- i) Does UDC follow a documented, standardised process, preferably benchmarked against best practice, for writing and discharging planning conditions?
- ii) If so, have the actions that resulted in complaints been investigated against this process and has any remedial action (e.g. a review of process, or additional training) been put in place to ensure that these mistakes are less likely to reoccur elsewhere?"

7. By Councillor Barker to Councillor Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning

"Can I please ask for the number of Planning permissions granted since 1/4/2023 which have not been counted in the Local Plan numbers?"

These should be presented in the form of a table with the Parish/ Town identified as well as a split between Market and Affordable. The table should include permissions granted on appeal, granted by the inspector, granted by Committee or granted under officer delegation."

8. By Councillor Barker to Councillor Reeve – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change

"I understand that a number of Villages that purchase a Village Green Waste skip have been let down in recent weeks. Barnston, Newport, Hatfield Heath and White Roding have been reported to me.

Can I ask the Cabinet member for details of how many visits have been missed since August, what his plans are to rectify this situation and to confirm that Parishes will not be charged for visits not made.

Can I further ask him to confirm the timetable for the replacement of the ageing fleet that seems to be at the root of the problem and to confirm that this will be a fleet run on renewable energy?"

9. By Councillor Gooding to Councillor Hargreaves – Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy

"We note that the intention of the investment in commercial property is intended to provide a revenue income for the benefit of the Council. However, it is evident that the balance of short and long-term borrowing to fund this investment will be significantly affected by the recent rises in interest rates and the unlikely hood that these rates will decrease in the foreseeable future. Given this reality together with the fact that some of the investments will require upfront expenditure, funded by borrowing, that will take some considerable time to yield an income, will the Cabinet Member provide this Council with a fully costed cash flow forecast over the next five years setting out the times and dates for the cost of borrowing balanced with the revenue

income derived from that borrowing based on the best estimates of interest costs over that period.”

10. By Councillor Moran to Councillor Hargreaves – Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy

“Can you inform me what the current credit score of Uttlesford District Council is and where does it sit in regard to the national average and the eastern region average score for district councils?”

11. By Councillor Church to Councillor Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning

“Can I please ask for the intended level and frequency of planning training for members of the committee?”

12. By Councillor Church to Councillor Lees – Leader of the Council

“Can I please ask the expected timelines for the completion of the 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 External Audit?”

13. By Councillor Oliver to Councillor Hargreaves – Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy

"The Chancellor's Autumn Statement extended the 75% business rates discount in the Hospitality and Leisure sector. Can you tell me how much this will save in rates for our Leisure Centres and reassure the Council that this will be covered by a Government grant?"

14. By Councillor Regan to Councillor Evans – Portfolio Holder for Planning

“Why did the Council hold four Consultation Events about the Local Plan the week before distributing a leaflet explaining the proposals were delivered to Households?”