

COUNCIL MEETING

30 September 2020

Member Questions under Council Procedure Rule

1. The following questions has been asked by Cllr Daws

Question 1

Grave concerns have been raised by the public and other councillors from outside Teignbridge about the standards procedures brought against myself and Cllr Mullone earlier this year, concluding in the public hearings in July. Can the Chair of Standards outline what steps are being made to address the well made and independent concerns?

Response from the Leader

As the Chair of Standards Committee has not yet been appointed, I am responding to this question. Complaints concerning Member conduct are and will continue to be dealt with in accordance with the Statutory Framework, the Council's Constitution and its Members' Code of Conduct.

Question 2

There is an outstanding FOI request made by the NSN Councillors in December 2019 for all communication between the landowners of NA3 and TDC to be made public. The ICO upheld this request earlier this year and asked the TDC to comply some months ago. The FOI remains unsatisfied. To gain any element of trust from the residents of the Teignbridge, can the council confirm when this request will be satisfied in full?

Response from the Leader

Searches of emails and documents have been completed and we are preparing these for release. This involves reviewing and removing the names of third parties where we are obliged to protect their privacy. Redaction is a manual process and very time consuming for the quantity of documents involved. The Environmental Information Regulations provide an exception to enable authorities to refuse requests which are manifestly unreasonable. We could have considered declining the request on these grounds due to the cost of compliance retrieving and redacting such a large quantity of information. However, our view is that the public interest in transparency and accountability in the Council's management of NA3 outweighed the diversion of resources necessary to provide the information. Covid has also extended the time taken to deal with the request, as Audit staff were furloughed and / or diverted to other duties for a period of time. We have been, and remain, fully committed to fulfilling this request and have released the first batch of information. The rest will follow by 16 October.