

COUNCIL MEETING

19 November 2019

Member Questions under Council Procedure Rule 4.5 (K)

1. The following questions have been asked by Cllr Clarence

Question 1.

Given that TDC is now run by a Lib/Dem administration rather than a Conservative one, would the leader agree with me that having now a group of 26 L/D councillors, many of which are new members of the Council, 3 of which have gone straight onto the Executive which consists of 8 of you, effectively running the Council, it was really disappointing that only one of the 26 of the L/Ds turned up to the financial briefing on the 25 September?

Response from the Leader

We always welcome questions from members, but particularly those from Cllr Clarence.

1) Whilst the ideal situation is that members attend as many briefings as possible, the meeting referred to by Cllr Clarence was not attended by Exec members as most had previously arranged/other engagements that unfortunately coincided. The Exec does receive regular budget updates from both the Chief Financial Officer and the PH for Corporate Resources. I understand the problems of trying to fulfil all the demands placed upon a councillor whilst working full time.

Question 2

Does the leader recognise that Local Authority accounting is very different and recognised as complicated to comprehend and this two and a half hour briefing by the Chief Financial Officer and his team should certainly at least been attended by the three new members of the Executive when they are directly responsible for policy and spending the budgets under there Executive portfolios?

Response from the Leader

2) I am not inclined to take financial lessons from Cllr Clarence. It is worth noting that at least two of the newly elected councillors on the current Executive have advised Ministers of State on policy and legislation, including making the best of "ever-decreasing budgets", which will prove invaluable to this new administration.

Question 3

How can the leader assure me that those new members of the council, especially those three new to the Executive have the skills and comprehension to conduct their roles in the Executive and administer the councils finances in view of this disappointing showing on the 25th Sept?

Response from the Leader

3) Part of the answer to this question is in the response to 2 above. Here is an Executive of very real talents; experienced in some cases at the highest levels of Government, some with successful business experience, others with experience of management, but all very able people, in whom I have considerable confidence. A fresh and new outlook is clearly what is needed to reinvigorate this council and that is exactly what is happening following the election result in May, when Teignbridge residents roundly rejected Cllr Clarence's party. There are no vacancies.

2. The following questions have been asked by Cllr Purser

Question 1

What is Teignbridge District Councils view to any further increases in permitted development rights for telecommunications operators in relation to visual impact and health and safety. Despite the Government's attempts to do so, the issue of health cannot be separated from the relaxing of developer's rights to undertake telecommunications developments.

Question 2

Is Teignbridge District Council concerned that there are insufficient assurances in place that such permitted developments will not have a detrimental visual impact and be harmful to the health of residents of and visitors to Teignbridge.

Response from the Leader

Any proposal for telecommunications infrastructure that comes before the Council for prior approval includes the opportunity for the Council to assess the siting and design. This gives us the opportunity to consider visual impact and respond accordingly.

With regards to health impacts, this does not fall within the remit of the Local Authority. There are a large number of studies into impacts of telecommunications on human health. 3, 4 and 5G technologies fall within the 'non-ionising' bracket of the electromagnetic spectrum. The World Health Organisation states:

"In the area of biological effects and medical applications of non-ionizing radiation approximately 25,000 articles have been published over the past 30 years. Despite the feeling of some people that more research needs to be done, scientific knowledge in this area is now more extensive than for most chemicals. Based on a recent in-depth review of the scientific literature, the WHO concluded that current evidence does not confirm the existence of any health consequences from exposure to low level electromagnetic fields."

We welcome measures that help to bring forward the infrastructure that will enable our residents and businesses to access the latest and quickest technology, and believe that there are adequate safeguards proposed through the consultation document to allow us to properly scrutinise and challenge any proposals before they come into effect.

I am happy to give an assurance that this council places the health of all residents at the very top of its agenda, and nothing will be ever agreed that compromises that situation.