

**FULL COUNCIL – 17 APRIL 2023 – QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER  
STANDING ORDER 22A**

**Question 1**

**From Cllr Malcolm Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Partnering and Wellbeing, Cllr Blunden**

The Liberal Democrats in Hythe and Dibden brought in Accredited Community Safety Officers to support the response to community safety issues the Police do not have the resources to deal with. Would this authority work with Town and Parish councillors across the New Forest to bring back a community safety service to the whole District?

Answer:

*The New Forest District was one of the pilot areas in Hampshire which introduced the role of Accredited Community Safety Officers in 2004 to support the community in dealing with incidents of low level anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime. The service was initially launched in four areas including Basingstoke and Deane, Gosport, and Havant, with an average of six officers covering the New Forest District area. The role out of Accredited Community Safety Officers pre-dated the introduction and roll out of Hampshire Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), providing a new resource model when addressing low level crime, ASB and community reassurance.*

*Following a review in early 2014 by Hampshire County Council and relevant contributing authorities, the Accredited Community Support Officer scheme was withdrawn as it was identified that the work of the service overlapped with the role of the PCSOs. This model of Police engagement and community reassurance has extended further with the New Forest being supported by 20 full time PCSOs.*

*The District Council, through its partnership arrangements with the Safer New Forest Strategy & Delivery Group, in consultation with members of New Forest Association of Local Councils (NFALC), formulate an annual strategic and operational partnership plan to tackle and reduce crime and disorder within the District. This Partnership is an extremely successful partnership, bringing together resources from the Police, Hampshire County Council, the Probation Service and other statutory partners. The Council plays a lead role in that Partnership, I am pleased to say.*

*As Members will know from this Administration's budget set just two months ago, we have committed a further £300,000 to be spent on enhancing our public space CCTV network to include additional areas of coverage and this will be done in consultation with local Town and Parish Councils to inform local needs. All of these actions, including our commitment to and support of the wider community safety partnership, will continue to ensure the New Forest District area remains a safe place to live, work and visit. This has been borne out by our recent Residents Insight Survey.*

*Members, I am delighted to see the Council playing a leading role in helping to keep our District a safe place to live, work and visit.*

*Note – in response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder highlighted the work of the Council in to reduce crime and disorder as part of the partnership arrangements and reiterated that a need for ACSOs had not been identified with partners.*

## Question 2

### **From Cllr Stephanie Osborne to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services, Cllr Steve Davies**

What is the administration doing to address the flooding we are experiencing? Recently, Shore road in Hythe was impassable. The water was so deep it would have entered even a 4x4 car outside the sailing club. Beaulieu was flooded by the river and huge congestion built up as cars could only pass on the kerb side.

Answer:

*Thank you Cllr Osborne for your question which raises concerns that many share; the potential impact of flooding is a concern to us all. As you will no doubt be aware there are various partner organisations with responsibilities for flooding, particularly where it is coastal or fluvial. In fact, these concerns were discussed in December when, with Steve Cook (Service Manager Coastal), I met with Hythe's Cllr Dowd and a resident.*

*As was explained in that meeting, this is a case where the flooding referred to would appear to be the remit of the Environment Agency. With regards to Hythe, we are aware that the Environment Agency has a proposal to undertake an FCERM, a Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for the eastern side of the district. Specifically, the FCERM will cover the Lymington to Redbridge coastline in its forward programme of work - this is provisionally planned for commencement in 2025/26.*

*I have asked our officers to forward on the concerns you have raised to our contacts at the Environment Agency so that they can be aware of the localised issues that you have raised and I will share any response received directly with you.*

*I note your comments about Beaulieu. I've seen the results of spring tides on the river banks and adjacent roads a few times – this matter is again one to be discussed with our environment partners and I would think the land owners - Beaulieu estates.*

## Question 3

### **From Cllr Mark Clark to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Investment and Corporate Services, Cllr Jeremy Heron**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Finance please outline at the close of this administration what key extraordinary debts are outstanding to this authority and the level of any debts outstanding to any other authority in the form of loans from NFDC?

Answer:

*Cllr Clark, as there is no activity out-of-the ordinary planned between now, and the date of the election, I have used the 31st March as the year-end date to answer your questions, as opposed to forecasting to the election date in May.*

*In terms of extraordinary debts, I can assure the Councillor we have none that would be considered extraordinary.*

*The Council provided a loan facility to the New Forest Enterprise Centre during 2022, to support a major maintenance project at the centre. The Council has a significant vested interest in the operation of the centre, and has 3 members on the board of directors. The loan was issued on commercial terms, and as of the 31<sup>st</sup> March, there is £300,000*

*outstanding. The outstanding loan has not yet surpassed its expiry date, and in fact the directors opted to repay some of the initial loan early during January 2023.*

*In terms of lending to other Local Authorities, as allowable through the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, a strategy approved and adopted by this full Council, the Council had no loans outstanding as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March.*

#### **Question 4**

##### **From Cllr Caroline Rackham to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Jill Cleary**

Would the current administration let us know exactly how they're going to safeguard Dibden Bay from development after allowing it to be included in the freeport area?

*Answer:*

*As has been discussed a number of times, any development on this site will need planning permission either from the District Council or the Secretary of State depending on the scale of the development. As and when there is a proposal, the impact of the development on the environment will be fully assessed. Designation as a tax site within the Freeport in no way changes or impacts on this process.*

*Note – in response to a supplementary question on what NFDC would do in the event of the scale of the development being a matter for the Secretary of State to determine, the Leader confirmed that this would be a matter for the new administration post May 2023.*

#### **Question 5**

##### **From Cllr Jack Davies to the Portfolio Holder for Partnering and Wellbeing, Cllr Geoff Blunden**

Will any pressure be put on Freedom Leisure by the Council to re-open the sauna and steam room permanently at Lyminster Health and Leisure Centre?

*Answer:*

*I am really pleased that Freedom Leisure have taken the decision to trial the re-opening of the Sauna and Steam room facilities, initially at Lyminster and Totton Health and Leisure centres. They intend to capture usage data and customer feedback over the period of the trial, and will make an informed decision on whether permanent re-opening makes good business sense. It certainly wouldn't be sensible for me to commit to exerting pressure on a permanent re-opening, considering these facilities are high consumers of energy, if data down the line suggests an extremely low level of usage.*