



PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1 Public Questions

- 1.1 The Proper Officer reports that, pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 12.10, the following questions have been received:-

2 MR MARTIN ENGLAND

To the Leader

- 2.1 Following on from the previous Cabinet meeting, do you and the Deputy Leader acknowledge that residents are very concerned about Labour's planning housing reforms, that could set a mandatory housing target for Castle Point, which is almost three times higher than the Council's own housing need assessment from December last year; and is he concerned about the future of many of the sites in the Council's Issues and Options Document that local residents believe should not have been included in the consultation and that should never be built on?

3 MR JOHN STONE

To the Deputy Leader

- 3.1 Can the Deputy Leader explain why the Council included Canvey Fire Station, Canvey Police Station, Canvey health centre and the Paddocks community hall, War Memorial, Canvey Island Conservative Club as options for housing development in the Local Plan?

4 MS ALISON MILLIN

To the Deputy Leader

- 4.1 Can the Deputy Leader confirm whether or not Castle Point Borough Council obtained the agreement of the local NHS prior to including South Benfleet, Thundersley, Hadleigh and Canvey local health clinics as options for development presented in their recent consultation on the Local Plan?

5 MR ANDREW SHELDON**To the Leader**

- 5.1 Recently the fly-posted signs on public land on the Benfleet and Canvey side of Sadlers Farm roundabout, at the borough's border with Basildon borough, were removed by Essex County Highways at my request using powers granted to Essex County Council under section 143 of the Highways Act 1980. Under section 225 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Castle Point Borough Council as the local planning authority is able to remove such signs and, I understand, also pursue costs via the company being advertised rather than it being left to the taxpayer to foot the bill.

I want to thank Cllr Dearson, Cllr Wimbledon and Cllr Bowker for their efforts on behalf of residents on this matter so far and ask the Leader if you will support them and ensure that any future signs put up without permission on public land on the Castle Point borough side of the border at the Sadlers Farm junction are removed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and that those responsible are pursued for any associated costs?

6 MR HENRY THOMAS**Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing & Housing**

- 6.1 On 13 September Castle Point Borough Council received a summary judgment from the Social Housing Regulator that stated the Council had serious failings in relation to outcomes in the transparency, influence and accountability standard. As of the date of the submission of this question, Castle Point Borough Council has not published this judgment on its website, issued a public apology, or even given a commitment to improve its service. I would like to ask why was no public apology made when the Council received the judgment. Would he like to give one now to tenants of the approximately 1,500 Council properties in Castle Point the Council has failed, if he hasn't already. Why was the judgment not published on the Council's website and does he believe that the performance of the housing department that he is himself responsible for has been properly scrutinised by his independent party colleagues in light of this judgment?

7 MS ELEANOR DIXON**To the Portfolio Holder for Resources**

- 7.1 In your report on the Council's quarterly performance at the Cabinet meeting on 18th September, you announced that the Council was below its target for swimming lesson participants. Why was this worthy of a mention in the Cabinet meeting, but no mention was made of the Council receiving a C3 judgment from the Social Housing Regulator on 13th September, that stated there are serious failings of Castle Point Borough Council as a social landlord in delivering consumer standards for its tenants?

8 MR MICHAEL DIXON

To the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing & Housing

- 8.1 In response to the Labour Government's planned withdrawal of the Winter Fuel Allowance for millions of pensioners across the UK, Basildon Council has launched the 'Warm Home Guarantee' to ensure affected pensioners in Basildon get some relief this winter. Sadly, 20,000 pensioners in Castle Point will be effected by the withdrawal of Winter Fuel Allowance. Will the Cabinet member commit to looking into setting up a similar 'Warm Home Guarantee' scheme in Castle Point for those pensioners worst affected?

9 MS JACQUI THORNTON

To the Leader

- 9.1 Following the Council's decision to raise social rents and the financial impact it would have on a number of the borough's pensioners, the following Motion was put to Full Council on 13 March 2024:

“That £30,000 be taken out of the Joint Strategic Plan Reserve (currently standing at £110,000) and used to establish a Discretionary Fund aimed at any Council tenant experiencing hardship after the 7.1% increase in social and affordable rents, who are not eligible for benefits or existing hardship funding in already place.”

These are the same pensioners that will now also be impacted by the Government decision to cut the Winter Fuel Payment, adding even greater financial burden on them in the coming year.

Can the Leader please answer if it is now the intention of this Council to drop this Motion and if not, why after six months it has not been progressed to Cabinet?

10 MR JAMES CUTLER

To the Chair, Development Management Committee

- 10.1 What training did members of the Development Management Committee receive on legitimate grounds for refusing a planning application and how to word Motions for refusal prior to the Development Management Committee meeting on 25th June of this year?