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## FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### **Minutes for the meeting of the Council held at the Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone on Wednesday, 24 November 2021**

**Present:** Councillors Mrs Ann Berry, Miss Susan Carey, John Collier, Laura Davison, Ray Field, Peter Gane, Clive Goddard, David Godfrey, Anthony Hills (Vice-Chair), Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee, Nicola Keen, Michelle Keutenius, Jim Martin, Philip Martin (Chairman), Jackie Meade, Ian Meyers, David Monk, Terence Mullard, Stuart Peall, Tim Prater, Patricia Rolfe, Rebecca Shoob, Georgina Treloar, Douglas Wade, Lesley Whybrow, David Wimble and John Wing

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Gary Fuller and Connor McConville

#### **39. Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Gane, Rolfe and Mullard declared DPI's in respect of the agenda items relating to the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as they were Directors of Oportunitas, but had received a dispensation. Councillor Rolfe also declared a personal interest in the agenda items in respect of her role as a member of New Romney Town Council.

Councillors Shoob and Mrs Hollingsbee declared DPI's in respect of the agenda items relating to the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as they were Directors of Otterpool LLP.

#### **40. Minutes**

A Member raised concerns about the factual correctness of the supplementary response to Councillor question one, shown in Schedule 2, appended to the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2021.

It was agreed that the matter be considered further, and reported back at the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

#### **41. Chairman's Communications**

The Chairman gave the following communications:

"Since our previous Council meeting on 29 September, I have continued to visit local businesses to see how they are progressing.

Events I have attended on behalf of the council included:

- 7 October – Eagle Heights wildlife foundation to support Sevenoaks District Council.
- 8 October – Rochester Cathedral I attended the Annual Justices Service for the county of Kent.
- 12 October – visit to Italia in Tenterden.
- 13 October – Sevenoaks Charity Event.

- 22 October – Big Cats Sanctuary visit on invitation from Sevenoaks District Council, where I was able to feed a big cat by hand.
- 30 October – Civic Wardens Turkish Night in support of Folkestone Town Mayor’s charities.
- 4 November – Visited the Bricklayers, Chipstead to support Sevenoaks District Council.
- 5 November – Annual Civic Service at All Saints Church, Maidstone.
- 11 November – Machine Gun Corps Memorial Service at the Military Cemetery in Cheriton Road, Folkestone.
- 14 November – Folkestone’s Annual Remembrance Sunday march and Memorial Service.
- 23 November – Maidstone distillery visit courtesy of Maidstone Mayor.

42. **Petitions**

The Lead Petitioner, Bridie Hill presented her Petition, which asked the council to withdraw its recently published regeneration proposal for East Cliff and instead work with the community to improve the existing play area and support the bowls club and existing sports facilities.

Proposed by Councillor Keutenius,  
Seconded by Councillor Keen;

That the petition be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their observations.

(Voting figures: 12 for, 15 against, 0 abstentions).

The motion was therefore LOST.

Proposed by Councillor Collier,  
Seconded by Councillor Monk; and

**RESOLVED:**

**That the petition be referred to the Cabinet, as Trustees of the Folkestone Parks and Pleasure Grounds Charity, after the conclusion of the public consultation, for their consideration.**

(Voting figures: 15 for, 8 against, 4 abstentions).

43. **Questions from the Public**

The questions asked, including supplementary questions (if any), and the answers given are set out in Schedule 1, appended to these minutes.

44. **Questions from Councillors**

The questions asked, including supplementary questions (if any), and the answers given are set out in Schedule 2, appended to these minutes.

45. **Announcements of the Leader of the Council**

The Leader gave the following announcements:

“Thank you Chairman, good evening to you all.

In survey after survey, the people of this district select the appearance of the district as one of their top priorities. As you know, our grounds maintenance team does a wonderful job in satisfying that priority and once again they have had recognition of this as Kingsnorth Gardens has been awarded a Green Flag, which is our fourth, Radnor Park, the Lower Leas Park, and Hythe Canal being the other three. Congratulations to them all.

Councillor Mrs Jenny Hollingsbee has been out and about, she and two of our officers have been holding equality and diversity sessions at the Turner Free School and the Folkestone academy. She also went to the Honorary Artillery HQ to receive on behalf of the council the Armed Forces Covenant “Gold” award, and here is the certificate to prove it (the Leader held up the certificate). We are very proud to have achieved the level of commitment to the Covenant that this award recognises. Well done.

Oportunitas has had a great boost taking possession of 18 apartments at RVH site earlier this month. They are built to an extremely high standard as those of you who took the tour of them will know. I am pleased to report that fifteen of the eighteen have already been let.

As this is the last Full Council meeting before Christmas, I wish all of you and our officers a very Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year”.

Councillor Keutenius, on behalf of the opposition, thanked the Leader for his announcements, and stated that she would like to start by wishing all staff, officers and Councillors a safe and Happy Christmas and New Year. A time we can take stock of how lucky we are in our country, and take a moment to think of those across the world less fortunate.

She also welcomed yet another award, for the tireless work of our grounds maintenance staff and teams. She also recognised the work of the many local young people from the Beacon School and Folkestone College, who have played a part in the transformation of Kingsnorth Gardens. The students are continuing the project by creating a Japanese style space for relaxation and reflection. She asked Members to visit Kingsnorth Gardens to see it progressing.

She stated that while the district has 4 of these green flag parks, (5 if you count the KCC run Brockhill Country Park) there is more to do. The KPI for this objective has been met, but she was hopeful this would increase in the next review, perhaps to extend to Romney Marsh, where there are none of this standard.

She commended the work of Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee and the team promoting such an important subject, and stated that she hoped this work continues, not just in the community but in our own houses, of our officers and Councillors, to value and recognise equality and diversity in all our people, so we might live together with a sense of togetherness and community. She also offered congratulations on the well-deserved Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award.

She stated that Oportunitas is a curious entity in that it provides housing in the district, but does so at market value which preclude many residents. It is important that as many homes as possible are under the council's control rather than unknown developers and landlords. She added that it would be nice to see the wheels turn faster on council housing, Highview School being one of those, as there are many people waiting.

She once again wished for a safe and inclusive festive period for everyone, and looked forward to a new year of progress, respect and good health for us all.

The Leader then thanked Councillor Keutenius for her positive response, and added that Oportunitas also helped create a revenue income, which was needed to provide our services and employ officers who were working on supplying more council homes.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,  
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

**RESOLVED:**

That the announcements of the Leader be noted.

(Voting figures: 27 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

**46. Opposition Business**

The Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Keutenius, set out the Opposition Business which related to the lack of regulation around Airbnb and self-contained holiday lets, and rising rental costs.

Proposed by Councillor Keutenius,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

**RESOLVED:**

That Option (b) (refer the issue to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for their observations before deciding whether to make a decision on the issue) be agreed for the business below:

- That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the current situation with regards to self-contained holiday lets (advertised on Airbnb and other such websites) This review should contain but is not limited to:
  - The current numbers of entire properties that are registered as businesses for the purpose of holiday lets within the district.
  - The affect that these houses being used in this purpose has on the need for housing by local residents.
  - If the rising rental market within the district is being partially affected by the existence of these self-contained holiday lets.
  - The details of grants awarded to these businesses in terms of Covid business relief.
  - The financial burden on the council created by these businesses in terms of council services, waste collection etc.
  - What methods the council has in its power to regulate these properties: Change of use within planning, business registration, licensing etc.

(Voting figures: \*26 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

\*A member was not present in the chamber at the point this vote was taken.

**47. Motions on Notice**

The Leader of the Green group, Councillor Treloar, introduced her motion, which related to allow members to attend council meetings remotely.

A debate took place, and with the agreement of the proposer and seconder, the motion was expanded to include officers, and the word “mandate” was amended to “ask”. Councillor Treloar was then invited to sum up the motion.

Proposed by Councillor Treloar,  
Seconded by Councillor Wade; and

**RESOLVED:**

- That this Council asks the Leader to write to the Secretary of State to call for parity across the UK and enable Councillors and officers in England to meet and vote online as they see fit.
- That should the legal framework provide for remote meetings, this Council moves to investigate the feasibility of hosting hybrid meetings in one room, such as the Council Chamber.

(Voting figures: 27 for, 0 against, 0 abstention).

48. **Refresh of the Council's Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy**

The District Council is part of the statutory safeguarding role within the wider public sector, with responsibilities to children, young people and vulnerable adults. The children, young people and vulnerable adults safeguarding policy has been updated and is attached at Appendix 1. Council are advised that the safeguarding policy is refreshed every two years and that the changes made to the 2019 policy include new legislation and changes to practice that are incorporated in the 2021 policy.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee,  
Seconded by Councillor Monk; and

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That report A/21/17 be received and noted**
2. **That the refreshed Folkestone & Hythe District Council Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and recommend to Full Council be endorsed for approval.**

(Voting: \*26 for; 0 against; 0 abstentions)

\* A Member was not present in the chamber at the time of the vote.

49. **Licensing Policy Statement 2021-2026**

The Licensing Authority is required to review and publish a Licensing Policy Statement for every successive five year period. A new draft policy statement was prepared following a detailed process of review and consultation and reported to Planning & Licensing Committee on 11 November 2021. The committee have agreed for the new draft policy to be presented to Full Council for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Peall;  
Seconded by Councillor Wimble; and

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That report A/21/21 be received and noted.**
2. **That the final draft Licensing Policy Statement for the period 2021 to 2026 be approved.**

(Voting: \* 26 for; 0 against; 0 abstentions).

\* A Member was not present in the chamber at the time of the vote.

50. **Update to the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme**

The report sought approval to update the budget for the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme for decisions due to be taken by Cabinet earlier today regarding the District Owned Street Lighting and Biggins Wood Development schemes. The report also updates the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme for works to the Connect 38 building in Ashford which were originally agreed by Cabinet on 26 May 2021.

A Member proposed an amendment to the recommendations, which was accepted by the proposer and seconder, and is reflected below.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,  
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That report A/21/19 be received and noted.**

(Voting figures: 27 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

- 2. That the General Fund Medium Term Capital Programme be updated for the Cat A works to the Connect 38 building.**

(Voting figures: 23 for, 4 against, 0 abstentions).

- 3. That the overall budget for the Biggins Wood Development be increased by £158,000 and to provide a further contingency budget of £250k to meet any further costs associated with remediating and servicing the site from the Business Rates Growth Fund held in the Economic Development Reserve.**

(Voting figures: 21 for, 1 against, 5 abstentions).

- 4. That a capital budget of £745,000 be approved to be included in the MTCP for the works to council owned street lighting assets to enable them to be transferred to Kent County Council. This is to be funded from the Climate Change Reserve (£408,335) and the Capital Receipts Reserve (£336,665).**

(Voting figures: 27 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

51. **Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is the Council's key financial planning document. It puts the financial perspective on the council's Corporate Plan priorities, expressing the aims and objectives of various plans and strategies in financial terms over the four year period ending 31st March 2026. It

covers both revenue and capital for the General Fund. Also included are the Council's reserves policies. The MTFS is a key element of sound corporate governance and financial management.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,  
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Report C/21/20 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as appended to the report, be adopted by Full Council.**

(Voting: 22 for; 1 against; 4 abstentions).

**Council – 24 November 2021**

## **Public Questions**

### **1. From Mr Brophy to Councillor Monk, Leader of the Council**

Can the Leader guarantee the people of Hythe that the plans for Prince's Parade will not be altered to accommodate more than the 150 dwellings that have been suggested and also confirm that at least 50% of the space on Prince's Parade will be planted, open green space accessible to all?

#### **ANSWER:**

Thank you Mr Brophy for your question.

You may recall that when the Princes Parade development was considered, both at the Planning and Licensing Committee in August 2018 and also at the Cabinet in 2019, the plans for the building of a brand new leisure centre, a comprehensive area of open space to the western end of the site linked to a central area of open space by a linear park, the moving of the road to provide an 11 meter wide promenade, in addition to additional housing and car parking for the area. The objective of this Council has also been to create a “destination” for all the community to use and for future generations to enjoy and benefit from. We know that the existing Hythe pool, although having been a fantastic facility in its day, is nearing the end of its useful life and is becoming increasingly expensive to operate and maintain. The current site of Princes Parade is, as we also know, a disused waste tip which has only very limited public access over much of its area. We want to achieve something which will last and will be enjoyed for many years to come. Houses are important, but they are not the only aspect of any place. The public amenity, green space, play areas and leisure activities are also important. I can assure you that there are no current plans to increase the number of houses and that we will ensure that there is full public access and green space across the site to make it a place people will want to go to and enjoy.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

How do you expect the public to believe anything you say concerning this or any other development, as thus far, the plans have been subject to a lack of information, misinformation, and the unforgivable deliberate attempt to deny the people a choice in the future of the district. Enough of paying lip service to public opinion, it's time to scrap the plans for Princes Parade before any harm is caused, and more money is wasted. How can you say anything that the public are going to believe?

#### **ANSWER:**

The answer was in my question – I answered as fully as I can. Whilst the planning permission for the leisure centre and swimming pool has been agreed

and granted, for the housing it is only an outline planning permission. There is a possibility for developers to ask for more, but it is not our intention to grant more. We give out as much information as we can. I can only say that what we want to do will provide something which is not there now which is green open space which is accessible to the public.

## 2. From Mrs H St Clair to Councillor Monk, Leader of the Council

Due to the hazardous and toxic nature of the waste contained on Princes Parade the ensuing increased traffic levels on the A259, and now a new planning application for a sub-station opposite the school, how are you, the council, going to protect the children of Seabrook Primary School and local residents - are you going to issue us all with the same protective equipment that is advised for the workers on site, and move the sub-station away from the area to protect us all from radiation emissions?

### **ANSWER:**

That wasn't the original question proposed, you added in the bit about the sub-station and I don't believe that there are any hazardous emissions that come from it. However, I will answer your original question.

I think it is really important to understand that the contractors we have employed for the development of the site, BAM, are a large and highly competent organisation who have the highest standards in health and safety and, as far as possible, will be focussed on minimising pollution and disruption not only for their own workforce but also for the wider community. Specifically actions they will take include:

- Dust and particulate sensors will be deployed at the boundary of the site which will allow realtime data to monitor on an ongoing basis any issues which may arise so these can be addressed immediately
- Similar data is used at the point of the works to ensure local control of dust and particulate is being managed effectively.
- Damping down will be deployed to ensure the area is moist and this also reduces the dust particles in the air through use of a misting system.
- Solid fencing will be installed to protect any low level dust generation by wheeled vehicles.
- Once areas are brought up to formation / level of the existing material these are bound together with lime / cement to form a layer over the contamination and assist with the capping and severing any pathways to the public in future.

Any works will ensure there is no outfall of toxic waste from the site which will have any impact on the local area. In any case, these type of sites are frequently worked on up and down the country perfectly safely and are tightly regulated to ensure that is the case.

With regard to the traffic levels, I believe this was thoroughly explored at the recent Public Inquiry and those issues were addressed there and will be determined soon by the Secretary of State.

I note your concern for the pupils of the school and we have been in contact with the school over a number of years to discuss any concerns they have. However I am sure you would also welcome the improved facilities and opportunities the development will offer future generations with far greater access to open spaces, cycling, walking, canoeing and a new leisure centre and swimming pool. That will benefit the young people of the area greatly over the years to come.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

It is your duty and responsibility to protect the people you serve, not to expose them to greater harm and risk. We all demand that a full and up to date report be published together with the costs regarding all the contaminates and their disposal, the pollution levels outside the primary school that are current, and a new site for the proposed sub-station before the work starts. When are you going to provide this for the residents and children of Seabrook, because we are all waiting and we are all watching?

**ANSWER:**

I thank you for your observations.

**3. From Ms C Farrell to Councillor Monk, Leader of the Council**

The three Green Councillors who represent Hythe were voted onto FHDC by the largest majorities in the district, on a mandate to save Prince's Parade. Meanwhile you clung onto your seat in Folkestone by the smallest majority in the district – 19 votes. You have publicly referred to Prince's Parade as a 'blasted heath and the biggest dog's toilet in the south east of England'. Even though the result of the public inquiry is the decision of the Secretary of State for Transport and not you, work has continued on the site as if the result is a foregone conclusion. If the Public Inquiry finds in favour of the people who have voted democratically to save Prince's Parade, who you have consistently undermined, will you resign?

**ANSWER:**

Thank you Ms Farrell for your question.

Thank you for recognising the fact that I have been democratically elected to the Council along with 29 other members of this chamber. It is an honour and a privilege which is something I am sure the elected members for Hythe will agree with me on. As someone who is the elected Leader of this Council, it is my responsibility to deliver for the whole Council area and to invest across the district to deliver services, not just for now for a few, but for the future for all residents.

As such, we have led on a range of investment across the whole district including a new business hub in Romney Marsh, proposed new beach huts in Dymchurch, and developed a Place Plan for Folkestone and a soon to be Levelling Up bid, a brand new town at Otterpool Park to provide high quality housing for future generations, as well as continuing our outstanding services across the district. Of course I have not forgotten Hythe in this and the development of a new leisure centre, opening up for public use of an inaccessible unusable waste tip, provision of new play areas, green space and a better environmental landscape, a widened promenade for general public use as well as the housing planned, will help create a fantastic location for future generations and will help renew community infrastructure and replace a much loved but ageing swimming pool.

I appreciate these are not views you will accept. However I, and this Council, firmly believe this is for the long term benefit of the area and this is something I am proud to promote and advocate for and were the Secretary of State to not grant permission, I would be sad.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

I have communicated with Historic England and established that you, Councillor Monk, are the FHDC nominated heritage champion. As such, you are responsible for promoting all aspects of the historic environment in your area. In particular, you have responsibility “to help ensure that commitment to the proper care of the historic environment is embedded in all relevant activities and plans of the local authority, for example, helping to ensure good quality planning decisions are made”. Could you explain how you have used your role of heritage champion to ensure that the Napoleonic and Victorian heritage of Princes Parade and its relationship to the canal remains?

**ANSWER:**

I don't believe there is any conflict there, I don't think we are harming the Napoleonic canal or the wall behind it. I think we will be enhancing its accessibility and I have no problem as heritage champion in supporting it.

## **Councillor questions:**

### **1. From Councillor Whybrow to Councillor Monk, Leader of the Council**

Local residents are naturally very concerned about the discharge of sewage into the sea around our coastline. Will you please invite Southern Water to give a briefing to all members of this council to set out what steps they are taking to avoid this happening in the future?

#### **ANSWER:**

Thank you for your question Councillor Whybrow. As you are the Cabinet Member for the Environment and therefore the relevant Portfolio Holder, you may request that a Member Briefing be held and ask officers to assist you with arrangements. A further option would be to submit your suggestion as an item on the future Scrutiny work plan.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

None.

### **2. From Councillor Whybrow to Councillor Monk, Leader of the Council**

The Environment Agency have objected to planning application ref 21/1997/FH regarding the storm water outfall pipes for Princes Parade. They have also pointed out that a flood risk activity permit will be required and that this is unlikely to be granted for the current proposal. What are the implications of this for the Princes Parade project?

#### **ANSWER:**

Thank you Councillor Whybrow for your question. I am aware of the objection from the Environment Agency. However much of this relates to the need for further information. Our technical team are working with the Environment Agency in order to provide that information and we believe that this will be sufficient to satisfy their concerns. Of course planning permission has already been agreed for the discharge of the water into the canal. However this is not our preferred approach, nor do I believe it is the councillors preferred approach. I hope she will be encouraging her colleagues to support the discharge into the sea which is by far the most favourable solution.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

The Leader's answer only related to the objections of the Environment Agency, my question also related to the flood risk activity permit, could you please comment on that?

#### **ANSWER:**

The situation is ongoing and I believe it will be resolved.

**3. From Councillor Shoob to Councillor Wimble, Cabinet Member for the District Economy**

The Council recently announced "free" car parking in the lead up to Christmas. How is waiving charges for car parking compatible with the climate emergency?

**ANSWER:**

Thank you Councillor Shoob for your question. Free parking in the district's car parks and on-street pay and display bays has been agreed for the three Saturday's leading up to Christmas commencing on Saturday 4th December. This initiative is put in place to support local traders and encourage people to 'shop local' helping to boost the local economy in what has been a very difficult time. From the perspective of the climate emergency the initiative encourages the use of our local town centres potentially reducing longer car journeys to other towns and shopping centres outside of our district.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

Will the council be subsidising those who do not have, or choose not to drive a car?

**ANSWER:**

I don't see how they can subsidise other ways of getting to the shops. It is something the council has done for many years, free parking to boost local trade.

**4. From Councillor J Martin to Councillor Monk, Leader of the Council**

Can the Leader tell us, what the value of the two stage design and build contract with BAM will be signed for?

**ANSWER:**

Thank you for your question. For this project, a 'Two Stage Develop and Construct' procurement route was chosen. The contractor was procured through the Southern Construction Framework which is an OJEU compliant procurement route.

'Stage One' resulted in the appointment of BAM under a Pre-Construction Services Agreement to work with the Council's consultant team to develop the design and price the works.

'Stage Two' will see BAM tender the sub-contractor packages and confirm the total cost of the works. This process is underway the cost of the works is due to be confirmed this December and reported to Cabinet early next year.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

Just to paraphrase, he doesn't know what the contract will be signed for, but if we assume that the £25m budget will not be exceeded, that compares poorly to the £16m required to build the same pool at Nichols Quarry.

Regarding the evasive answer at the last meeting on this topic - The S106 was for 1.6 hectares of land plus £3.2m in cash. That's been indexed, I think it's about £4.5m now. 1.6 hectares is just under 4 acres. I want to know not only what is happening to this land (I believe it is reverting to developer), and also why is this developer being so advantaged?

**ANSWER:**

I don't know that he is, but had I had prior knowledge of this question, I might have been able to give a reasonable answer. I will provide a written response.

*After the meeting, the following response was provided:*

*The land would revert to the land owner and would require planning permission.*

*Im not aware how the landowner has been advantaged. Land they own has been sterilised until such time as the Council makes a decision. Should this site not come forward as a leisure site the applicant still has to apply for a new use which would involve further costs and uncertainty.*

**5. From Councillor Meade to Councillor Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Housing and Special Projects**

With the cold weather fast approaching can you please inform us of what SWEP protocols are in place this year and how many days at zero temperatures will our homeless suffer before we can offer a warm and safe roof over their head?

**ANSWER:**

Thank you for your enquiry regarding the Council' Severe Weather Emergency Protocol. Unlike many local authority areas in the Country, as in previous years, our Emergency arrangements to assist people who are rough sleeping are triggered when the temperature is predicted to be zero degrees Celsius or below, or where other extreme weather conditions are predicted throughout any one night time period.

In addition to this, our local housing outreach services continue to work with anyone identified as rough sleeping to enable them to access accommodation and ensure that they have the appropriate support to ensure they are able to retain their accommodation going forward.

Over the coming winter period we will also be working closely with the Rainbow Centre and local churches as they provide the annual winter shelter service. We and other partners will support the project to enable the people assisted through

the shelter to access suitable long-term homes and support services where necessary.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

Thank you – I believe that one night at this temperature would be hard, but I'm happy we do this in our district, as some authorities wait three nights. What were the numbers on the last homeless count, and when was it done, and did it include those at the Warren?

**ANSWER:**

I will provide a written response.

*Following the meeting, the following response was provided:*

*The most recent street homelessness count was completed in the district this month, on the night of 23 November (from the 11pm), into the early hours of 24th November (approximately until 2.30am). The Count covered all known sites in the district where people sleep rough, including the Warren area. Overall, the count found 8 people to be sleeping rough on that particular night. This is down from the 12 people identified in the 2020 count.*

*Going forward our Outreach Team will continue to work with these individuals to help them to access accommodation and the necessary support services that they require.*

**6. From Councillor Meade to Councillor Monk, Leader of the Council**

Given that the council has borrowed a very large sum of money to build/create the new garden town Otterpool, but as yet we are not in the position to break ground, could you please provide us with the total amount of expenditure since December 2015 by the District Council and Otterpool Park LLP to progress the development including all land/property purchases, consultant and legal fees paid, travel costs / expenses, and any other loans / expenditure including inter authority loans?

**ANSWER:**

Thank you for your question. The Council's direct expenditure on the Otterpool Park Garden Town development, which includes spend by Otterpool Park LLP, since December 2015 until 31 October 2021 is £51,302,862.

This is broken down into capital expenditure of £46,556,616 and revenue expenditure of £6,045,412.

During this period the Council has received £4,466,000 in government grant funding towards the costs incurred meaning the net cost to the Council is £46,836,862.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

What profit are we expecting from Otterpool for the residents who are paying all the interest charges going forward, and are we looking at buying any extra land?

**ANSWER:**

I welcome this question, because we have to find space to put all the houses that the government demands of us. Don't believe Michael Gove's algorithm means anything positive. As far as I've managed to ascertain, it means that the numbers will go up in most areas, including ours. With conservative figures, as we stand at the moment, repaying all that we have spent so far, we will come out with about £193m on top.

**7. From Councillor Keen to Councillor Field, Cabinet Member for Transport and Digital Transformation**

With more people visiting the harbour area of Folkestone once again we have issues with car parking and residents are once again struggling to find space on Marine Parade and the Stade. Local hotels and Air B&B are advising visitors to park in the road as parking charges are suspended from 6pm. So consequently if visitors park at 1pm and pay for 5 hours parking they can stay in the space until the next day. Residents are being forced to park further afield and this is causing a great deal of anger. It is evident with more and more CPZ parking that we require more car parking in the area in order to encourage people to visit and spend in our local economy. People will not come to Folkestone if there is not adequate parking (one of the two private car parks are closed over the winter). What plans do we have as a council to provide parking for visitors?

**ANSWER:**

Thank you for your question Councillor Keen. We do recognise that there is significant pressure on parking at peak times in some parts of the district. As part of the Place Plan, we will be reviewing all car parking in the town centre and Folkestone harbour areas. A new parking strategy will consider how we can optimise spaces through better promotion of the facilities available for visitors, and make use of technology to improve the facilities.

We will also continue to have talks with the Folkestone Harbour Company to open their car parks during busy periods and consider proposals put forward by members of the public.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

Are you prepared to withdraw the suspension so that parking charges are the same as the summer, so the residents in that area can at least park near their homes on cold winter evenings?

**ANSWER:**

I will reflect on that and provide a response in writing.

*After the meeting, the following response was provided:*

*We've now had discussions with the developers. The suspensions are required until the end of June 2022. However, if works are not being carried out over the weekends and Christmas, the barriers protecting 10 of the 26 spaces will be removed to allow residents to park. We hope this will assist in alleviating the parking difficulties some of the residents are experiencing in the area. We will be reviewing the suspensions again in March.*

**8. From Councillor Keen to Councillor Field, Cabinet Member for Transport and Digital Transformation**

The newly Introduced CPZ G1 has caused a lot of issues for residents in Radnor Bridge Road and East Cliff Gardens and this is apparently soon to be reviewed. Can I ask when this review is likely to take place? The entire zone with the exception of Dyke Road has no provision for short term visitors and it is causing problems for trades people attending the properties to give quotes for maintenance work. All the residents who live in G1 should be given the same ability to allow visitor's a one hour free parking slot when this is available to most other residents in CPZ area of Folkestone.

**ANSWER:**

Thanks again for your question Councillor Keen. As you may have seen on the published report on the analysis of the public consultation for this scheme, the vast majority of residents had indicated they would prefer 'permit holders only' parking, hence the decision to implement these restrictions. However, we will soon be proposing an extension of the zone to include further roads in a draft amendment traffic regulation order. In view of the recent comments received, officers will also seek in this amendment to introduce limited waiting bays in some of the roads in G1. The statutory consultation on this will start on the 3rd December 2021.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

None.

**9. From Councillor Keen to Councillor Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Housing and Special Projects**

A number of residents who own properties in Rossendale Court have bought issues to me that they have had with EKH and now with FHDC regarding leasehold/shared ownership properties in Folkestone. Could you please explain how maintenance charges are applied, what is included, and how work is quoted for?

**ANSWER:**

Thank you Councillor Keen for your question.

The repairing responsibilities are contained within the leases for the leasehold properties. The leases also set out how costs are apportioned. There are two parts of the lease which identify the lessors and lessees responsibilities. The reserved parts of the building/estate, are those parts retained by the freeholder (FHDC), and the demised parts, which are the parts the leaseholder is solely responsible for. Not all leases are the same, therefore, I cannot provide a definitive answer regarding all the leasehold properties at Rossendale Court or other leasehold/shared ownership properties.

Leaseholders are charged a proportion of the cost of works/maintenance/management of the reserved parts, which can include grounds maintenance, general repairs, specialist repairs (for example door entry), major works (term used for large ticket expenditure items like roof replacement), buildings insurance, and management. All contracts that we (FHDC) enter into are subject to S20 (S20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, as amended) consultation requirements. Some of those contracts would be for qualifying works (standalone one off works) and some would be qualifying long term agreements (contracts lasting over 12 months). The S20 process is undertaken through a few different stages, whereby leaseholders have the right to make observations. Leaseholders also have the right to nominate a contractor depending on the type of contract. Once a contractor is appointed, they will then undertake the works that they are contracted to undertake. However, if the cost of a particular piece of work undertaken under a qualifying long term agreement is over £250.00 (£250.00 per annum to any one leaseholder within the building), then a further S20 notice is served, which the leaseholder has the right to make observations towards. Currently, general repairs are undertaken by Mears.

The leasehold management senior specialist will be holding “getting to know your lease” training sessions, for both leaseholders and shared owners towards the middle of next year. The sessions are designed to increase the leaseholders understanding of their leases including the responsibilities contained therein. It is a complicated subject, and we are trying to help leaseholders understand it. If anyone needs help, they should approach us and we will help them.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

Would it be possible for me to attend those sessions please, so I can help residents in debt?

**ANSWER:**

Absolutely, I think I ought to go myself, it is a complicated subject.

**10. From Councillor Keen to Councillor Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Housing and Special Projects**

In respect of leasehold/shared ownership properties, a further issue that concerned me was the fact that none of the chimneys are capped which has led in the past to birds falling down the chimney which I then understand the tenants have to pay a proportion of the cost to have the bird removed. Why do we not cap or cage the chimneys?

**ANSWER:**

Thank you Councillor Keen for your question. Historically, it appears to have been EKH policy not to cap or fit cowls to chimneys presumably due to cost. We will carry out a review across the portfolio of blocks to confirm where FHDC have a responsibility for this work liaising with Leasehold Services. Where this is confirmed to be the responsibility of FHDC an assessment of the necessity will be made on an individual basis. However, consideration will be given to a programme of retrofitting cowls/capping as part of any future roofing works programme.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

None.

**11. From Councillor Davison to Councillor Prater, Cabinet Member for Revenues, Benefits, Anti-Fraud and Corruption**

Kent County Council has been allocated more than £11 million to support residents via the government's winter household support fund. County Councils are expected to work together with District Councils to provide support. Can you provide information on how people can access this funding in our district?

**ANSWER:**

Thank you Councillor Davison for your question.

You are of course right: Kent County Council has received additional funding of £11,065,000 in Household Support Fund.

The Household Support fund must be used by 31 March 2022 and is for the purpose of supporting households who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs or housing costs. Eligible spend includes food, energy and water payment support. It also includes essentials linked to energy and water such as sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair and purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc. It can also help support housing costs in essential cases of genuine emergency but only once other avenues such as Discretionary Housing Payments have been explored. The funding should also support the

administration of the scheme. At least 50% of the funding must be used for vulnerable households with children.

Your question was exceptionally well timed, because on Monday 22 November Kent County Council published their decision regarding the Household Support Grant. Elements of the funding have been committed to:

- £4.5m to support families that receive free school meals during the holidays in the periods up to 31 March 2022.
- £2.5m to support KCC services such as the Kent Support and Assistance Service (KSAS) to distribute the funds to households that need essentials.
- The remaining £4,065,000 is to be allocated for households that need support with energy and water and essentials.

Of this remaining £4.065m, this funding should be devolved to the District and Borough Councils but amounts have not been confirmed. KCC have announced that devolved funded would be based around the previously agreed methodology which allocated 50% according to population, 25% for deprivation and 25% for the prevalence of Covid. In breaking news, we have heard this afternoon from KCC that we will be notified next week what that methodology will lead our actual allocation of that funding will be.

Free School meals vouchers and KSAS are managed and operated by Kent County Council and information can be accessed from their website. When Folkestone & Hythe District Council have had our funding confirmed a decision will be made on how to allocate the money, its policies and administration. Details of that scheme will be shared as soon as possible, both to Councillors and residents.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

In terms of making those decisions on how money will be used locally, I would like information around how it will be distributed, and if via local organisations, what those organisations will be and what the distribution of funding will be?

#### **ANSWER:**

The scheme is not designed yet. You will know that there is a large amount of information available about financial support for local residents, and I would expect it to be there, and based on the individual's families and their needs, and to support the poorest who need the most support immediately. Until we get the full information, I can't provide this information I'm afraid.

#### **12. From Councillor Davison to Councillor Peall, Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Regulatory Services, Waste and Building Control**

What steps are being taken to ensure the Leas pavilion does not suffer further damage as a result of the impending winter weather?

#### **ANSWER:**

Thank you for your question. The responsibility for protecting the building from damage remains that of the owner.

The developer has, we understand, spent the last year surveying and recording the historic internal features of the building - in discussion with the Council's Conversation Consultant and Historic England - to plan for the buildings restoration as part of the project.

The developer has submitted applications for the discharge of pre-commencement conditions and officers are working proactively to see these discharged as expediently as possible. All parties are aiming to resolve this element before the end of the year.

The developer has confirmed that their tender process for a main contractor has now been completed and that they are in the process of selecting the final main contractor with the intention of an early 2022 commencement on site.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

Has there been any onsite monitoring by the council in terms of the progress made and protections in place?

**ANSWER:**

I will need to check this with officers and will provide a written response.

*Following the meeting, the following response was provided:*

*No there hasn't, but we are aware that the Council's Conservation consultant and Historic England have visited the site and are in close dialogue with the applicant regarding the buildings condition and the works required to restore.*

**Question 13 was rejected by the Chairman at the meeting, and was therefore not put or answered.**