

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.