

Cabinet

28 September 2016

Written Questions from Councillors (Agenda Item No 6)

The following written questions have been submitted by Councillor Ient which he wishes to ask of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Smith:

Question 1

The Coast to Capital LEP covers most if not all of the Lewes District Council area but we have no representative on the board of the organisation. Public authority representation includes West Sussex County, Surrey County, Croydon, Epsom and Ewell Borough and Brighton and Hove City councils. LEPs are responsible for making decisions on major tranches of government monies. For example, in just one area, the Coast to Capital LEP is managing £202 million over six years, starting with investment of £38m of new funding in 2015/16 (Growth Fund).

I believe Lewes District Council needs to be more closely connected with the decision-making on the funds available as well as making sure a fair proportion of the monies are spent in the Lewes District. To this end I believe that our Council should have direct representation on the board of the LEP. My question is:

Would the Leader of the Council agree to write to the responsible minister in either or both the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and ask for representation on the Coast to Capital LEP?

Question 2

The Coast to Capital and South East LEPs are the channel by which the government funnels much of its local funding. However, we know very little about how they arrive at their decisions or how they carry out consultation. I know of no reports coming to our Council or of enquiries being made of our Council as to how government and EU funds should be spent. Accordingly, I think it would be sensible if those two LEPs had a closer relationship with our Council and to commence this relationship I suggest that they be invited to give a presentation on proposed funding in the current and next financial year.

Would the Leader of the Council agree to invite these two LEP's to present their programs to the members?

Question 3 (Ward question)

I have been in correspondence with both the Coast to Capital LEP and the East Sussex County Council asking questions as to whether they had submitted applications for government funding in accordance with the government cycling and walking strategy published earlier this year. My understanding is that the government called for applications for capital projects to be submitted by the end of July and for revenue projects to be submitted by 9 September. Unfortunately, both of these organisations have been evasive and not stated whether or not they had applied for funding and what that funding was for. I had previously asked them to apply for funding to improve the situation for pedestrians, walkers and cyclists along the route of the C7 from Lewes to Newhaven.

Without applying for the capital and revenue funding there would be no chance of our area benefiting from the government allocations. No application would simply mean that other councils would stand a better chance of getting their application through.

Would the Leader of the Council asked the appropriate officer in Lewes District Council to write to the two organisations and ask for a specific answer as to whether or not funds had been applied for covering the C7 route?