

Meeting of the Council

17 July 2014

Agenda Item No 9 - Written Questions from Councillors

Written questions received from Councillor Dean

Q1 What is the cost of renting either a flat or house in Lewes under the affordable house scheme?

Q2 Can someone on a 'Living Wage' afford to rent or buy an 'Affordable Property' in Lewes?

Q3(a) I submitted a Notice of Motion to the Council Meeting held on 17 October 2012 relating to car parking provision in Lewes, paragraph B of which read *“A review of the fees and consequent standardization of the fee structure could result in a higher return without increasing the overall cost to users and would go some way toward paying for the necessary improvements to local car parking facilities. In addition, clarification of the fee structure should include easier methods of payment, (currently the lack of change for meters has meant that local businesses are reluctant to part with change and even local banks have been known to refuse to provide change) such as a card.”*

Whilst I welcome the introduction of cashless parking and the refurbishment of the Maltings car park, I am concerned about the matter of ‘blind spots’ in Lewes with regard to the coverage of mobile phone signals which would make this form of charging difficult. Could I be reassured that the system of cashless parking will not be introduced unless this problem can be overcome? If it can’t be overcome, would the Council consider the provision of pay as you leave car parks instead?

Q3(b) There will be an additional fee paid by motorists for this service. By what per cent will this increase the cost of parking in Lewes?

Q4(a) With regard to my Notice of Motion on 17 October 2012, paragraph C related to the increase in parking space as recommended in 2010 by Mott MacDonald to 1,375 and read *“That provision for additional parking space be considered and specifically, the possibility of the council leasing the car park from the owner of the magistrates court currently for sale on a short/long term, in a similar manner to the arrangement that was made to lease the car park*

on the Aldi site, until another suitable long term site can be found and the off street parking be increased up to an extra 1,000 car parking spaces.”

I understand that the officers have analysed the usage data and parking habits using the receipt data for 2011-12 and that there appears to be 1,540 spaces in total within Lewes Town.

I understand the argument put forward that this exceeds the number recommended by Mott MacDonald, but that review was carried out over four years ago. There was a more recent analysis two years ago and another since then and, furthermore, there is now a proposal to develop the Phoenix site. The developers of that site undertook a survey to try to find out if parking provision in the town was satisfactory and said at one of their meetings that the general view was that people couldn't find the car parks in Lewes. They are planning to build houses with only limited car parking and the Magistrates court is another development taking place where the developer also has not made provision for parking.

Does the total number of car parking bays in Lewes in the officers survey include the car parking spaces at County Hall?

The Mott MacDonald survey included car parking on the Aldi site and at least fifty more car parking bays that have now been lost at the new Police station. Given that we haven't provided any more spaces, how can the officers analysis result in there being 165 more car parking bays than recommended by the Mott MacDonald survey after the apparent loss of about 200 spaces?

Q4(b) How can a town with 16,000 residents and over 75,000+ tourists in a good year be adequately served by a total number of 1,540 car parking bays? Could I please be provided with the figures from the officers analysis?

Q5 With regard to my Notice of Motion on 17 October 2012, paragraph H related to the use of fees and fines charged from car parking going toward local transport improvements and read *“That the percentage of the fees and fines charged from car parking that goes toward local transport improvements be clarified and that it is seen to be put to this use.”*

Could I please know what the surplus of money generated by off street parking amounts to and what it has been spent on?