

MDDC SCRUTINY MEETING 19TH JUNE 2023
QUESTIONS: PAUL ELSTONE (A local resident).

My questions fully relate to Item 9 – The Scrutiny Workplan 2023-2024

I have questions on the 3 Rivers Independent Authority review. Referenced in the table on page 9.

QUESTION 1:

It is clear from the Work Programme that your own 3 Rivers investigation is dependent on receiving the results of other investigations.

The urgent, but wide-ranging, Cabinet investigation into 3 Rivers was supposed to have reported by now.

What is the date when it is expected that this full and historic investigation into 3 Rivers, including the Council's handling of the commercial relationship and related reporting, will be completed?

It is currently envisaged that the forward looking options appraisal report commissioned by the previous Cabinet will be presented to a meeting of Cabinet at the end of August.

QUESTION 2:

Council Officers have only just announced and totally out of the blue a 3 Rivers bad debt of over £5.2 million.

In view of this, would Scrutiny Committee consider widening the scope of your Scrutiny investigation, in the Work Programme, so that it is not limited to the processing of the Business Plan ?

This Committee will wait and assess the findings of the 2 reports undertaken by Francis Clarke and Devon Audit Partnership before formalising its next actions.

QUESTION 3:

It is known beyond doubt that allegations have been raised relating to serious ethical and business conduct failings, including involving Council Officers and Members, in the whole matter of 3 Rivers.

In the light of this, why was it felt permissible to allow Council Executive Officers to “scope out” the terms of reference of any review, when their own actions, or the lack of, may very likely form a key part of any investigation?

The terms of reference for the options appraisal report were approved/agreed by the previous Cabinet prior to the commission being made.

QUESTION 4:

For full openness and transparency and which this new administration now strives for will all the Investigation Reports be published and made fully available to the public?

The DAP report is being presented to the Audit Committee and is in the part 1 public part of the agenda. Once the Francis Clarke report is received the Council will need to consider whether any of its finding/decisions have to be restricted on any legal grounds.