

Cabinet 6th February 2024 Public Questions and Answers

Name of person submitting	Questions
Paul Elstone	<p>Question 1: How much did this Council pay 3 Rivers to purchase Knowle Lane ?</p> <p>Response from Deputy Chief Executive (S151):</p> <p>The Council didn't pay 3Rivers anything to purchase Knowle Lane – it made lending available to them to acquire the site as agreed within an approved business plan. The current completion/transfer value paid by the Council on the 2/2/24 is still a commercially sensitive figure, therefore can't be disclosed.</p> <p>Question 2: Page 103 Appendix 7 of the Report Pack details the S151 Officer role responsibilities. Responsibilities including but not limited to</p> <p><i>“Ensuring that the capital strategy is prudent, sustainable affordable and prudent in the long term and provides value for money”.</i></p> <p>also</p> <p><i>“Ensuring that due diligence has been carried out on all treasury and non-financial investments”.</i></p> <p>Additionally, the Statutory Monitoring Officers position has related “Good Governance” role responsibilities.</p> <p>There has been massive financial loss incurred by this Council equivalent to circa £100 for every man woman and child in Mid Devon. A figure likely to rise significantly. This given the 3 Rivers</p>

debacle, the Post Hill site investment failure and losses still likely to be realised from and I quote ***“the pig in the poke”*** site at Bampton

Therefore, what caused both of these officers to fail so very badly in delivering on their role responsibilities?

Response from the Leader of the Council:

I suspect the questioner and I might have quite different views on who it was that failed ‘so very badly’ during the last administration as he alleges. Nevertheless, it is elected members who make decisions and it is right that they are held accountable.

Question 3: Given these serious roles and responsibilities failures.

How can the grossly excessive pay increases of circa £24,000 or 33 percent and by circa £18,000 or near 21 percent for these exact same officers be considered, and in any circumstances, a decision that would not stand up to any scrutiny in private business ?

Response from the Leader of the Council:

These changes represent a saving to the council of over £45,000 and I thank the officers in question for taking on these new roles and responsibilities, so that we can continue to ensure we are running the council in the most efficient way possible.

Question 4: I ask this question of the Council Leader and no one else.

Why did he knowingly allow one of these same Council Officers along with others to suppress evidence from being presented to the 3 Rivers Working Group including evidence from former Council Leaders. Evidence that would have called into full question these outrageous pay awards amongst many other things?

Response from the Leader of the Council:

No evidence was suppressed.

Question 5: Why would the former Council Leaders evidence - and I quote “*present an unbalanced view*” of the 3 Rivers failings?

Response from the Leader of the Council:

As I understand it, a range of views were heard and these were triangulated to allow for corroboration, precisely so as not to present any unbalanced view.