

## Cabinet 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024 Public Questions and Answers

Name of person submitting	Questions
<p><b>Barry Warren</b></p>	<p>My first question relates to item 4 on the Agenda – Minute 103. My questions, which I had submitted in advance, start on page 9. All my questions are shown in the minutes correctly. With the exception of the answer to question 2, all of the answers shown in the minutes are verbatim, as can be heard on the audio recording of the meeting - including your political statement of some 139 words before question 7 was addressed.</p> <p>The answer shown in the minutes to question 2 is <b>“We are not aware of contraventions or discrepancies with the approved planning permission.”</b></p> <p>The answer given by the Cabinet member for Planning, which was repeated, can be heard on the recording of the meeting. He said: <b>“Yes they have been complied with. But if the former leader of this Council has material evidence to indicate that they have not, I would be pleased for him to write to me, so that I may investigate”</b>. This is completely different from the answer shown in the minutes.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.3 refers to a <b>‘Small working group of Council Officers and 3 Rivers Directors.’</b></p> <p><b>Question 2:</b> <b>Who are the Council Officers in the Group please?</b></p> <p><b>Cabinet Member for Finance:</b> This group is attended by a number of senior officers from; finance, legal, HR and property.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.4 refers to transfer of assets to a new external management company.</p> <p><b>Question 3:</b> <b>What is the name of this company so that, in the interests of openness and transparency, interested parties can be aware of Directors etc.?</b></p> <p><b>Cabinet Member for Finance</b> See the answer provided to Q3 of Mr Quinn’s request.</p>

	<p>Paragraph 3.1 makes reference to projected losses being funded by ‘<i>transferring some funds from previously agreed earmarked reserves.</i>’ In a recent press article by the Leader, and at the recent Council meeting, he was critical of the previous administration in using £600,000 from reserves to balance the budget - which he voted to approve.</p> <p><b>Question 4:</b> <b>The budget for 2024/25 has been approved which uses reserves to cover losses so what is different this year from last year?</b></p> <p><b>Cabinet Member for Finance</b> Nothing has been agreed to be taken from reserves to balance the 2024/25 budget.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.1 refers to a reduction of Directors to ONE to finalise any remaining transactions.</p> <p><b>Question 5:</b> <b>Who will that Director be and what procedures will be in place to ensure that the interests of the residents of Mid Devon are protected from any further losses?</b></p> <p><b>Cabinet Member for Finance:</b> This appointment is still to be determined.</p>
<p><b>Paul Elstone</b></p>	<p><b>Each of my questions relate to Agenda Item 8- 3 Rivers Soft Closure.</b></p> <p><b>Question 3:</b> The Bampton Haddon Heights site Viability Report went to the Planning Committee with a Land Value of £213,000 - 3 Rivers were expected to make a profit of JUST 10.6% on the development. But when 3 Rivers went to Cabinet for funding, they showed a payment £420,000 for the land and that 3 Rivers had reduced their construction costs estimates this in order to show an increased profit and in support of obtaining loan agreements,</p> <p>With the income from the 2 sold properties and the 2 sales still to be completed – will the Council have to set a very high cash equivalent figure, for the transfer of the 5 unsold properties, so they can say this development did not produce yet another financial loss?</p> <p><b>Cabinet Member for Finance:</b> It is currently anticipated that any remaining unsold properties will be acquired by the Council at a market value.</p>

**Question 4:**

The report, at paragraph 2.3, states that: “A small working group of Council Officers and 3 Rivers Directors who are working to ensure that everything is completed by 31st March 2024 and Officers have continued to secure external advice as required”.

On how many occasions have you contacted external advisors for advice?

Who were the organisations?

What external advice have you actually received?

**Cabinet Member of Finance:**

The Council has secured; legal, financial, governance and HR advice from a number of companies over the past few months. The details of this advice is currently commercially sensitive information.