

Full Council 21st February Public Questions and Answers

Name of person submitting	Questions
<p>Mr Roger Davey</p> <p>Page 1</p>	<p>Question 1:</p> <p>Given the widespread criticism of the Scrutiny Committees report into the 3 Rivers debacle, widely seen as a whitewash, will the council consider instigating a public inquiry or at the very least a full and open public debate into the council and 3 Rivers failures or will it be left to members of the public to press for one ?</p> <p>Response from the Leader of the Council:</p> <p>The Council committed to a thorough and transparent review of 3Rivers some months ago. This task was performed by a working group formed and reporting back to the Scrutiny Committee. It came up with a number of key recommendations which were all accepted by the Committee. This report and its findings were all undertaken in public session. As has been confirmed previously it is not our intention to undertake additional investigations at further public expense. 3 Rivers has caused enough expensive for the Council and hence this administration is committed to close the business.</p> <p>Question 2:</p> <p>In the cabinet meeting of the 6th Feb at public question time, Mr Barry Warren asked the holder of the portfolio for housing if a full, independent, structural survey of St. Georges Court had been carried out and a report obtained.</p> <p>Is it not the case that structural issues with some of the properties will require remedial work in order to obtain building guarantees?</p> <p>Response from Cabinet Member for Housing & Property Services:</p> <p>I am not aware of any structural issues at this development. Obviously if Mr Davey has any evidence to refute this statement. Then please forward it to me so I can investigate the matter.</p>

<p>Page 2</p>	<p>Question 3:</p> <p>Mr Warren also asked if the portfolio holder had surveyed the properties in St. Georges Court and provided conservative estimates for the necessary extra expenditure on adaptations for this, Liberal Democrat controlled Councils scheme, for elderly person's social housing, and would these documents be made publicly available. The Council reply was that they would not release them.</p> <p>WHY what possible reason can there be for not releasing these documents- unless it is to spare the Council further embarrassment?</p> <p>Response from Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services:</p> <p>An estimate for these additional conversion works has been prepared by our Housing Operations Manager. The actual costs, once incurred, will be a matter of public record.</p>
<p>Mr Paul Elstone</p>	<p>Mr Paul Elstone</p> <p>Question 1:</p> <p>Having run the MDDC 2023 election numbers. The Lib Dem's received a total of 19,872 votes or 48% of the total ballot. The other Parties plus Independents received 21,485 votes or 52% of the total ballot.</p> <p>Yet the Lib Dems hold 100% of Cabinet. They hold 10 of the 12 seats on Scrutiny or 83% including the Chair. They hold 7 out of the 8 seats on Audit or 88% including the Chair.</p> <p>Where is there any sense of Proportional Representation in Mid Devon District Council under this Lib Dem Administration. The Mid Devon Lib Dem's need to put their own house in order first.</p> <p>It would be Hypocritical by any measure to vote motion 604 thru and without the full commitment and a pledge from the Lib Dem Council Leader to remedy the situation and promptly. Will the Council Leader provide this pledge?</p>

Response from the Leader of the Council:

It had been clearly stated where proportional representation was required, unfortunately we are not in that system and at Mid Devon District Council were in a First Past the Post (FPTP). I am sure you are aware in 2019 the Liberal Democrats group were supportive of a rainbow cabinet at that time and based on the election returns and was declined by one other group and much in favour and will be supporting the motion today. First Past the Post (FPTP) doesn't work everywhere and perhaps you have explained how it doesn't represent everybody.

Question 2:

My next question relates to the Capital Program and in particular with regard to the substantial investment in Category 1 modular homes and which ZED PODS are. Given this Councils Capital Project multimillion pound financial losses I consider it necessary to bring the following to your attention.

That a House of Lords Committee only last month completed an investigation into the various problems being experienced with Modular Homes. An investigation that identified that Category 1 modular homes are between 30 and 50% more expensive than conventional builds.

That a very big social housing provider with over 42,000 homes and building over 1,600 Homes a year could not make the modular home economics work and no longer offers modular home contracts.

All evidence shows the MDDC Council Taxpayers are once again getting very poor value for money.

Will this Council fully interrogate the findings of the House of Lords enquiry? Then fully debate, this before voting thru the Capital Program It would not be prudent to do otherwise?

Response:

Full Council agreed the capital programme during the meeting.

Question 3:

Recently the Government sponsored a report into Modular Construction Fire Safety. A report commissioned after a series of modular building rapid and total loss fires. One which could have resulted in a significant loss of life.

An email has the Housing Minister saying quote [he] “finds the report very worrying” also “he agrees the report should not be published until we have done field checks”.

It has been stated that the report findings are being withheld this in order not to destabilise the modular build industry.

Additionally, The National Fire Chiefs Council has raised repeat concerns over the lack of large scale fire research involving modular builds.

I would suggest there should be particular concerns about Shapland Place modules given they are built over car parking spaces.

Will this Council fully investigate then provide full and independent expert assurance as to the intrinsic fire safety of the modular homes currently in construction. This before allowing any occupancy?

Response from Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services:

The public questioner was invited to make any such relevant information available to the cabinet member in order that this might be considered.