

Standards Committee 13th March 2024 Public Questions and Answers

Name of person submitting	Questions
<p>Barry Warren</p>	<p>Question 1: Is there not a pattern developing with this council of censorship and control of anything which may be seen as questioning or criticising advice given to members or proposed actions to be agreed by them?</p> <p>Response from the Leader: No.</p> <p>At 11.31 this morning an email was sent out on behalf of the Leader of the Council which contained an amended appendix 1.</p> <p>Question 2: Is that legal and can it be discussed tonight?</p> <p>Response from the Leader: Yes.</p> <p>Question 3: Does this not make a nonsense of having to submit questions 3 working days in advance as the 'goal posts' have been moved?</p> <p>Responses from the Leader: No – this was giving members of the public advance notice of amendments that could have been tabled during the meeting; precisely so as to maximise openness.</p>

Question 4:

Could this be construed as predetermining or directing the outcome from the meeting?

Response from the Leader:

No. Members are permitted to propose amendments during meetings.

No mention is made as to the recording of answers.

Question 5:

Will they be recorded verbatim in the minutes?

Response from the Leader:

No, minutes are not verbatim records.

Question 6:

It is noted that the sections have been removed in relation to Notices of Meetings and Publication of the Notice of Key Decisions.

Why has this been done and who made the decision?

Response from the Leader:

This question is no longer relevant as the proposed changes have been amended. It is proposed that the constitution is amended for these documents so that they are published both on the website and at Phoenix House.

**Paul
Elstone**

Question 1:

Over the last few years there have been many and various very poor even disastrous decisions taken by this Council and under various Administrations. Disastrous decisions that the residents of Mid Devon will pay for and for years to come.

Namely:

The full circumstances involving the formation of 3 Rivers Development

The massive financial losses incurred with St Georges Court – which the Council is having to buy back, using the Housing Revenue Account, this to help reduce the apparent loss to the General Fund.

The substantial financial losses involving the land purchase at Post Hill.

The substantial financial losses involving the land purchase at Knowle Lane Cullompton.

Paying nearly twice the amount for the land at Haddon Heights than the maximum land valuation stated.

A failure to conduct a proper due diligence on the modular housing supplier plus possible conflicts of interest.

A failure to get best value when awarding contracts for much needed social housing in Mid Devon.

A failure to fully interrogate modular home fire risk potentials ahead of awarding contracts.

I could mention others, but I will refrain given the nature of the content.

	<p>Given these failings the residents of Mid Devon have every right to ask questions of this Councils Officers and Elected Members. Also to ask questions in an attempt to prevent a reoccurrence. Instead, what is proposed by this change to the Constitution is nothing other than attempted suppression, of the General Public from asking the questions that are needed and censorship of those questions which are submitted.</p> <p>Will this majority Liberal Democrat Committee and the Council Leader in particular fully commit to honouring the Liberal Democrat Core Values in respect of Democracy.</p> <p><i>“That every citizen is empowered to make their voice heard” also “That no individual or organisation is deterred from speaking the truth”</i> This without suppression or censorship provided they are not offensive to individuals concerned?</p> <p>Response from the Leader of the Council: I do stick by the Liberal Democrat values and what you asked around democracy and a regular contributor to the Council meetings under democracy where the council consider your points raised exactly how you have at the meeting the evening.</p> <p><u>Supplementary Question:</u> The last sentence of my statement was to honour those Liberal Democrat commitments without suppression or censorship that what the public are looking to receive.</p>
<p>Andy Perris</p>	<p>The background of the report on item 9.</p> <p>Question 1: The council voted to change to a Committee system at the annual meeting of 2023 and seems to be airbrushed out of the report. Why?</p>

Response from the Leader:

This wasn't during the annual meeting, but the point being referred to was brought back to the council later in 2023 to consider options on how to proceed