

# Full Council – 31 March 2022

## Questions from Councillors

### **1 Councillor Chris Vince to Councillor Russell Perrin (Leader of the Council):**

Following the last Cabinet meeting could I ask the leader to reflect on his comments made to Councillor Eugenie Harvey over her genuine and well-articulated concerns about how we can empower more women wanting to become more engaged in local politics at cabinet last week.

Would he agree with me that more training is needed for Cllrs about how we ensure this chamber is more inclusive and will he seek guidance and training from the LGA on this important matter?

### **Reply from Councillor Russell Perrin (Leader of the Council):**

I do agree that there is an under representation of women who hold elected office at all levels of government and that this under representation can be seen across the full political spectrum. I am happy for this administration to seek guidance and advice from all reputable sources, including the LGA, in order to address this imbalance.

### **2 Councillor Tony Edwards to Councillor Nicky Purse (Portfolio Holder for Environment):**

Could you please explain to the residents of Bishopsfield and Charters Cross why it has taken so long to get alley way lighting fixed?

Lighting which is a District Council responsibility.

### **Reply from Councillor Nicky Purse (Portfolio Holder for Environment):**

The Council has been aware that lighting around Charters Cross and Bishopsfield, including to the cycle path that runs past Charters Cross north of Bishopsfield to Partridge Road has not been working consistently since autumn 2021.

The lighting is the Council's responsibility: the power supply to this lighting is however the responsibility of UK Power Networks [UKPN].

It did take a long time for UKPN to resolve a fault in the power supply to the lighting. This was repaired in January 2022. The lights were briefly restored.

Unfortunately shortly afterwards the lights stopped working again. To eliminate the possibility that there is a fault in the lights themselves the Council must access a garage to examine supply equipment. The Council has been going through the necessary formal process to gain access. A site visit has been arranged for tomorrow between HTS and the Council's Electrical Officer. This should establish whether there is a fault in the Council's equipment, in which case repairs will be arranged; or a further fault in the UKPN supply, in which case the Council will work with UKPN. In either case the Council will ensure that any issues identified are resolved so that the lights again work properly and reliably.

The Council has very recently been made aware that the light fixed above the door of one address in Charters Cross has failed. This has been traced to a fault in UKPN's supply. This has been reported to UKPN. The Council will work with them to ensure that it is resolved.

**3 Councillor David Carter to Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):**

Many of Harlow's Estates are sadly run down and a bit tired now.

Apart from the welcome building of new homes, what are you going to do to regenerate Harlow's Estates?

**Reply from Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):**

Our Corporate Strategy and the subsequent Budget, both of which were of course voted against by the Labour Party, set the direction of travel for the once-in-a-generation programme of estate renewal that we are going to roll out.

A full announcement on the programme will be made after the election, but it will include:

- Individual neighbourhood renewal plans;
- A New House Building Programme;
- Our new Estate Renewal Fund;
- A new tiered estate regeneration programme;
- A new strategy to restore pride across all non-residential areas

I believe that this truly will answer the long-forgotten plea of left behind areas of our town, restoring pride in every one of Sir Freddie Gibberd's neighbourhoods

**4 Councillor David Carter to Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):**

Last week at Cabinet, a new town centre master plan was passed.

What is the next step for this? When will it happen, not more delay and promises but real action?

**Reply from Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):**

The historic masterplan we passed last week represents the passing of step one of our three-step plan to regeneration.

This is the first ever planning framework for Harlow town centre, meaning we have taken back control of our town.

The new three-step plan to regeneration sets out that:

Step 2 will be complete in Autumn this year. That means that our new town centre will be designed with new shops, bars, public realm, restaurants, cafes, live music and much more besides.

Step 3 will be complete in Spring next year. This means that we will have our development partner on board and construction work will be underway.

This is a one-way roadmap. Not another plan or promise, but a one-way roadmap upon which we will deliver the new town centre that for so long Harlow has needed.

**5 Councillor Matthew Siggers to Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):**

I would like to ask in a new era of using sustainable transport why is it that the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest retail area in Harlow in Mark Hall North this includes (Edinburgh way and Howards Way) has no direct route meaning many residents in Harlow who don't drive do not get a chance to use the area with many businesses losing out on key retail and social and forcing some to shop online.

Would it not make sense that we trial these services to review the level of traffic? After that, if it affordable, reliable, and well-advertised then the residents of Harlow will use it. This could lead to other businesses seeing that the town is now connected could think about moving into those already vacant units around that area and restore Harlow as a major retail and social hot spot while the wonderful regeneration work carries on in the main town centre over the coming years.

**Reply from Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):**

This is a very important question, and I am pleased that Cllr Saggars shares my love for buses.

I agree with all he says and we will raise this with Essex County Council who are responsible for the provision of bus services.