

FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 8 MARCH 2017

AGENDA ITEM 3 – PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – ORDER IN WHICH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL WILL INVITE QUESTIONS BELOW RECEIVED IN WRITING IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

1. From Mrs Morrish to the Leader of the Council - Councillor Mrs Brown

THE FULL DETAIL OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IS DETAILED BELOW

NOTE: The Chairman will:

- invite questions from members of the public who have submitted in writing their questions in line with the Council's Constitution;
- explain that the questions received will be answered by the appropriate Members of the Cabinet or the Chairman of the Overview Select Committee
- confirm that Public Question Time allows Members of the public to ask one question at a time and that a maximum of one minute is allowed for each question.
- state that questions will be invited in the order in which they have been received and that if there is time remaining from the 15 minutes allowed for Public Question Time, questioners will be allowed to ask a supplementary question.

QUESTION ONE - From Mrs Morrish to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Brown

Question

The Government should not have cut Local Government Finance and should return it in full for all essential local community full-time public servants and capital funds for low rent homes owned by District Councils.

Can the Council please make a claim from the correct local government department for the return of Arun District Council's statutory finances as soon as possible?

Response

Thank you for your question Mrs Morrish.

Over the last few years there has been a huge change in the way that local government is funded by central government through the revenue support grant and that grant has been steadily reducing over the years.

However in 2020 there is an even greater change coming. Then the major source of funding from central government will be through the 100% retention of business rates and any increases will be dependent on growth in the District. Thankfully we are very successful in attracting businesses to the District and we will do our best to make sure that this continues.

Unfortunately it is not possible to calculate the level of cuts you refer to, to be returned. Therefore, such a claim would not be practical.

However, I believe that the move away from being dependent on any Government grant will be a benefit to the Arun District in the longer term. By not relying on government finances we can turn to our own resources, largely through the business rates we will be keeping in the future, but also through maximising efficiencies and sharing or redesigning services.

This Council has very sound financial management and this is why our rise in Council Tax this year equates to only 10p a week. I am confident that we can continue to deliver excellent value for money and an affordable level of investment for essential services.

Supplementary Question

Could the Leader not only back the Government ending Trusts with private profit where wealthy Finance Directors and NHS and Education Managers are overspending public money, but also seek confirmation of 100% continuation of uncut budgets promised for all present nurses and teachers with compulsory shared pension contributions and huge numbers of full time public servants such as cleaners, carers, teachers and classroom assistants as well as full-time workers in the fire and police services who are all essential to every local community with their low rent homes owned by the District Council.

We provided prefab for everyone after the last war and I have been paying income tax and insurance ever since! No more tax avoidance and private profit sharing please!

Supplementary Response

At the Full Council meeting, the Leader of the Council confirmed that a response would be sent in writing.

The response sent is set out below:

Thank you Mrs Morrish for your question.

Firstly, for clarification, any supplementary question at Full Council must be based on the initial question asked and yours wasn't which is why this has been dealt with separately, outside of Full Council.

With regard to the second question, these are all matters outside the remit of a District Council. I would therefore suggest that you ask one of our three MPs. The most relevant would probably be Nick Gibb MP, who can be contacted by writing to him at the House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA or by email to nicolas.gibb.mp@parliament.uk