

COUNCIL MEETING – 24 SEPTEMBER 2020

QUESTIONS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 10

2-20 TO COUNCILLOR NAZIR, CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY FROM COUNCILLOR STRUTTON (RECEIVED 07.07.20)

In regards to the monitoring of the Osborne contract, why did we not have the details or access to monitor the logging and processing of repairs, voids and caretaker cleaning of Council properties until recently? Even prior to the Covid-19 pandemic it was clear we had concerns and a high backlog of jobs?

Reply

As you have been informed Slough Borough Council has had access to the Osborne Accuserve database since the start of the Osborne Contract. We have used the data from the Osborne Accuserve database to produce the KPI reports that have been used to monitor the Osborne contract since the start of the Osborne contract. We have now used the Osborne Accuserve database to create a ring-fenced “Lock-down” package of work which will be used to monitor the clearing of the backlog. Separately standard KPIs and contract monitoring will be resumed for work from 1 July 2020.

3-20 TO COUNCILLOR AKRAM, CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR STRUTTON (RECEIVED 08.09.20)

What action are you taking in regards to governance and councillor behaviour during meetings including appropriate dress, to ensure the rules are implemented fairly regardless of political alignment? Will you be writing to members regarding the recent language (“deranged”) used at the last full council meeting, as you have previously written to councillors about similar language which may affect people with mental health issues

Reply

Thank you for your question.

The current Council Procedure Rules in Part 4.1 of the Constitution continue to apply to remote meetings as they would to meetings held in person, except in so far as they might conflict with the provisions of the Local Authorities and Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the remote meetings regulations”). The remote meetings regulations permit councils to make other standing orders and any other rules of the council governing the meeting about remote attendance at meetings of the Council which may include provision about voting, member and public access to documents and remote access for press and public. The Council have agreed a protocol for remote meetings which was accepted by full council at the AGM on 21 May 2020. The only rule concerning dress is Rule 26 of the Council Procedure Rules which simply says that Council robes may be worn by members at the AGM or at other special civic occasions as the Mayor may request. There is no

other provision in the Council Procedure Rules concerning dress. This rule also prohibits smoking, eating and drinking (except water, tea, coffee and soft drinks) at meetings. It also prohibits mobile phones at meetings but this would now conflict with the remote meetings regulations as phones may be necessary now to connect to meetings. Paragraph 13 of the Remote Meetings Protocol asks Members to be “mindful of their appearance. Rule 23 of the Council Procedure Rules deal with Members’ Conduct but this rule just relates to how debate is conducted, nothing else. Paragraph 13 of the remote meetings protocol sets out some rules of etiquette for Members to follow at remote meetings dealing with such matters as joining meetings a little early to check connections are working, muting microphones except when speaking, having “slogan free” backgrounds, not being distracted and not allowing confidential papers to be visible. The Members Bulletin which went out to Members Friday before last reminded Members to follow the etiquette in the remote meetings protocol. This was done at my request to the Monitoring Officer. The Council Procedure Rules and the remote meetings protocol do not have “in-built” enforcement or “policing” systems for any provisions relating to etiquette. The etiquette rules are something which Members have agreed upon and should follow out of good conscience and as best practice and which Chairs of meetings should remind Members about from time to time and call up anybody if they breach these rules.