

<b>Question on Notice in accordance with 9.2 and 9.3 of the Council Procedure Rules</b>			
	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b>PFH Response to question</b>
1.	Cllr Ben Ingham	Why was the recent green wedge report allowed to be published without any vetting by the Executive Leadership Team?	Leader of Council: Due to an oversight the report did not come into ELT as it should have. Officers have been reminded of the need to report strategic issues such as these into ELT for consideration, before they are presented to members.
2.	Cllr Mike Goodman	<p>According to the EU's climate service, for the first-time global warming has exceeded 1.5C across an entire year, Climate change matters to our residents.</p> <p>Can this Council make the development of their climate change strategy a priority and complete this by late summer much earlier than currently planned?</p>	<p>PFH Climate Action &amp; Emergency 1). With regard to global warming exceeding 1.5C across an entire year, according to an article on BBC News, 'this first year-long breach does not break the landmark Paris agreement, but it does bring the world closer to so doing in the long term.'</p> <p>The 8th February 2024 article further states: 'Regrettably both the UK's main parties have scaled back the type of pledges that many climate scientists say are needed globally if the worst impacts of warming are to be avoided.'</p> <p>2). Turning to EDDC's climate change strategy, this was adopted for the period 2020-2025 at Cabinet on 5th Feb 2020.</p> <p>Although the strategy has another year to run, officers have been working with our partners at SWEEG over the past 6 months and have a target of bringing a revised strategy forward in the summer of 2024. There will also be an 'annual' 24/25 action plan that draws together the climate actions that services are delivering next year.</p> <p>In partnership with officers and my Portfolio holder colleagues, some fantastic results have already been achieved, as reported at Scrutiny in February and November 2023. There will be more to report later this year.</p>
3.	Cllr Mike Goodman	This council have one of the most proactive and leading poverty strategy in the UK. This was highlighted during the	Leader of Council: The Benefits and Financial Resilience Manager and Assistant Director are working with our VCSE (Devon Communities Together) specifically around the issue of hidden and rural

		<p>poverty section of the peer review.</p> <p>What more can the council and Councillors do to communicate this work to residents and those in need?</p>	<p>poverty. The aim of this work is to raise awareness of how we can help and support residents who are financially struggling but aren't accessing support. For example, we are looking at which areas in the District don't have a good voluntary support network already in place and how we can provide that provision or work with the local community to raise awareness. This will help reach residents who are digitally excluded.</p> <p>We are continuing to link up with voluntary sector groups across the District to promote the work of the Financial Resilience team, attending community events and when required a face to face service out in the community; such as locating an officer in a Foodbank. We periodically will look at press releases and contact key organisations to help reach residents and are currently working on a pensioner take up campaign for welfare benefits.</p> <p>As part of the 2023/ 24 annual report we will be providing more data including outcomes including the work of the Financial Resilience Team. This report will be submitted to the Poverty panel later this year and allows all Members to be aware of the work the Council is doing as part of our Poverty Strategy in turn helping to spread the message.</p>
4.	Cllr Mike Goodman	<p>The Council said some time ago they were employing an officer to develop a tree strategy, can the portfolio holder update council on the progress made.</p>	<p>PFH Coast, Country &amp; Environment:</p> <p>I am delighted to report that progress is now being made with the development of a Tree Strategy for EDDC. The delay has been down to awaiting the production of Devon's Tree &amp; Woodland Strategy which we have now just received as a final draft. East Devon DC contributed funding, along with the other Devon LAs, towards the production of the Devon Strategy. This will provide the county-wide and higher level framework for East Devon DC's Tree Strategy. The plan was always to ensure that both these documents would synergise on key aims and objectives around tree planting, nature recovery and climate change actions and that East Devon's document would through</p>

			<p>consultation and discussion add in the key “local issues/challenges” to cover off in its Strategy. These will likely cover the areas on TPO’s and enforcement issues as well as tree planting targets. The workscope for the EDDC Tree Strategy will be discussed at the 21 March meeting of Overview Committee and then a brief will be prepared for work to develop the Strategy. A budget has been secured for this work.</p>
5.	Cllr Mike Goodman	<p>In 2020/21 it was decided by without consultation with the public to re wild the cemeteries in East Devon. Was this the right decision? What lessons were learnt?</p>	<p>PFH Finance &amp; Assets and Coast, Country &amp; Environment:  Managing our spaces for wildlife is not a new approach and we have been doing this across sites maintained by StreetScene since 2010. The approach to manage more sites for wildlife with meadow grass and wildflower was expanded through our service plan in 2020 until now, and indeed this area is being reviewed by Scrutiny in the spring, with StreetScene Officers preparing a report for this currently. I might suggest therefore that this issue is dealt with through this planned work.</p> <p>Sections of Sidmouth Cemetery have had meadow grass cut regimes (Old cemetery area) since 2010. Managing cemeteries as spaces for wildlife is not new and many church parochial councils require the management to be encouraging this approach with the CPRE providing encouragement and awards each year. There is guidance available online from this charity called ‘Managing God’s Acre’ - <a href="https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/">https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/</a></p> <p>The approach has worked reasonably well, and sites managed for wildlife across our spaces were increased in 2020 as part of planned works that were documented in our service plans. Things worked reasonably well, with some wonderful wildflowers encouraged across the newer part of the cemetery in 2021. We then experienced issues with our own team in the 22/23 season not adhering to our plan, which is where the real dissatisfaction has stemmed from. During this same period (growing season 23) our Operations</p>

			<p>manager left, it took until November last year before our new Operations Manager joined, who is now dealing with the issue and complaints. She has met with Sidmouth Town Council and local community groups to agree a re-focussed plan to manage the site balancing different views.</p>
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