

Report to: Council



Date of Meeting 4 December 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Questions on Notice

Report summary:

The constitution provides that members of Council may ask: the Chair, the Leader or a Portfolio Holder Member of the Cabinet; or the Chair of any Committee or Sub Committee a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the district.

A member may only ask a question if either: (a) they have given at least 3 working days' notice in writing of the question to the Chief Executive; or (b) the question relates to urgent matters, they have the consent of the Chair to whom the question is to be put and the content of the question is given to the Chief Executive by noon on the day of the meeting.

In response to a question on notice an answer may take the form of:

- (a) A direct oral answer;
- (b) Where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- (c) Where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

In accordance with the Constitution six questions on notice have been received and they are set out in the report with the responses.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

To note the responses to the questions on notice.

Reason for recommendation:

In accordance with the Council's Constitution Rules Part 4, 9.2 Questions on notice at full Council; 9.3 Notice of questions.

Officer: Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager (andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Question	Question from	Question	Response
1	Cllr Peter Faithfull	In your reply to me at the last full council meeting you stated that, in the last General Election, 'none of your election literature, published in your name, commended a target number.' Would you be willing to retract that statement?	Leader of Council to give an oral response.
2	Cllr Mike Goodman	In 2022/23 it was reported by Grant Thornton that the EDDC housing department were amongst the worse in the country for maladministration complaints at 87% as reported by the Ombudsman which focused on inspections and timeliness within damp and mould complaints. Can Councillor Dan Ledger explain why the Ombudsman's report 2023/24 shows there has been no improvement and what actions have been taken to improve the performance.	PFH Sustainable Homes & Communities response: In 2023/24, EDDC's maladministration rate was 89%. It should be noted, however, that this is relating to 89% of cases referred to the Housing Ombudsman for determination, not 89% of EDDC's total complaints. In 2023/24, 9 complaints were taken on by the Housing Ombudsman for determination, and 8 of those cases had a maladministration finding. Only one of these cases related to damp and mould. In the 2023/24 Landlord Performance Report for East Devon, published by the Housing Ombudsman, they state "The Landlord performed similarly when compared to similar landlords by size and type".
3	Cllr Mike Goodman	Could Councillor Jackson explain what progress has been made to develop an East Devon online petition as most councils have this in place and is valuable to our residents.	PFH Communications & Democracy response: The Overview Committee have requested a paper to set out the options for introducing an online petition for residents. The report is due to be reported to the committee on 23 January 2025.
4	Cllr Mike Goodman	Members were confidentially received the important long-awaited Stock condition survey, when is this report going to be made public.	PFH Sustainable Homes & Communities response: On November 7 th 2024, all members were invited to attend a briefing session held by Currie and Brown to hear the initial headline data from the stock condition survey,

			<p>not the full stock condition survey data. Aside from one preparatory meeting, this was also heard by Officers at the same time.</p> <p>This approach was taken to demonstrate the desire of Officers to work collaboratively and transparently with Members on the basis that further work would be needed to validate the data and complete internal quality assurance processes before moving forward.</p> <p>As has been explained, this validation and scrutiny will take time and the first stage of this is already underway and will be due to complete by the end of January. Until we are certain that the information we have been issued is a true reflection of our position and adopt it as such, we will not be able to publish a public report.</p>
5	Cllr Mike Goodman	The Grant Thornton internal report 2023/24 identifies a weakness in the Councils financial sustainability arrangements to fund the Housing stock. Can Councillor Hawkins outline what arrangements are being put in place.	<p>PFH Finance response:</p> <p>Council will be aware that a revised Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget was approved for 2024/25 (July 2024), close monitoring is in place with weekly meetings between Finance and the Service to ensure the budget is not exceeded. Members of Cabinet, Housing Review Board and the Audit & Governance Committee have received regular and timely financial monitoring reports giving the assurance of this position. In agreeing to the revised budget a sustainability plan was presented and approved, this outlined the implications for the 2025/26 budget and the longer term work required</p>

			<p>linked to the stock condition survey. To update and provide progress against this programme a HRA position statement was presented to the Housing Review Board on 7th November which covered the current financial position, the stock condition survey, CIPFA Health check, the HRA Sustainability Plan, the Business Plan and Options Appraisal work, the Asset management Strategy, and the Housing Investment & Delivery Plan.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that the financial sustainability of the HRA is a risk, but the Council has put in place the right mitigations as evidenced. I look forward to this being reflected in the 2024/25 outturn report.</p>
6	Cllr Mike Goodman	Having a place to call home is important to our residents could Councillor Ledger, confirm how many people are on the housing waiting list for each year from 2020 please.	<p>PFH Sustainable Homes & Communities response:</p> <p>At EDDC we hold a housing waiting list, this includes any persons who wish to register for social housing, not just those who have a housing need.</p> <p>It is important to note the key difference between an applicant assessed as being in housing need and those that are on a housing waiting list.</p>

Question 6:

As at	Total Housing Need	Housing Waiting List	Total	Housing Need %	No Housing Need %
1st April 2020	2214	2494	4708	47%	53%
1st April 2021	2652	2254	4906	54%	46%
1st April 2022	2221	2326	4547	49%	51%
1st April 2023	2588	2786	5374	48%	52%

1st April 2024	3065	3140	6205	49%	51%
1 st Nov 2024	2881	2884	5765	50%	50%
