

## COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14

### QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

**Councillor Butcher** asked:

Can the portfolio holder with responsibility for the dog warden service please provide an update on the status of the contract process for the service? Has this gone to market yet, if not is there an opportunity to review the target deliverables & SLAs?

**Councillor Kinnell** responded:

In light of decisions reached by Cabinet, Hart's 'Stray dog collection, kennelling, and rehoming' service will be offered for tender on the 2nd December.

The scope of the tender, and any deliverables, will be determined in consultation with the service's portfolio holder. All procurement will be undertaken in line with Hart's procurement policies.

**Cllr Butcher** asked a supplementary question:

The savings that were identified as part of a reduced service included the expenditure on the dog warden van. When do we expect to realise the savings and is there a reason why the dog warden van remains outside the Council offices?

**Councillor Kinnell** responded:

A written response would be provided.

The written response received was as follows:

*The future of the van depends very much on the outcome of the tendering of the Dog Warden service. It still has a MoT, it is insured, and it remains in a serviceable condition. In the meantime, the van has been started, checked over, and driven to a temporary storage location.*

**Councillor Kinnell** left the meeting at this point, at 7.46pm

**Councillor Butcher** asked:

Can the cabinet member responsible for Parking please clarify what the income that is raised from Fleet Town Council for the market is used to fund? Is it linked to regeneration or some other purpose?

**Councillor Delaney** left meeting at this point, at 7.49pm.

**Councillor Oliver** responded:

This is a really good question because it allows me to highlight the support that the Council is currently giving to Fleet town centre and other local communities across the district.

At the outset I must stress that all income that is received is used to support the delivery of Council services. Often, such as with the market on Gurkha Square, the income received is used to offset what would otherwise be funding lost from parking income.

It is of course possible to redirect funds to specific ringfenced projects, but it would mean a change made in our approach to the Council's structural budget. That means that Members will first need to specifically identify from where that funding is being taken from.

Having said that, let's look more positively at what we are currently doing to support Fleet Town Centre and regeneration generally. As a Council we actively support local activities not just in Fleet but also elsewhere in the district. To support the Fleet market, we made the immediate decision at the start of the pandemic to waive any rent from the market. No income has been received from Fleet Town Council since they took over running the Market in March 2020, so the question of where this has been invested is redundant. Last night not only did we support Fleet Festivities by offering sponsorship, but we went further and deployed staff resources on the ground as well as issuing 60 parking passes. Elsewhere we are currently working with Hartley Wintney Parish Council to support the Christmas Market, and I know we will be doing things with Hook where the Cracker is taking place, and for the whole District we will again be supporting Small Business Saturday in two weeks' time by making use of all our car parks free!

**Cllr Butcher** asked a supplementary question:

There is a lot of work going on in the background with myself and members from Fleet Town Council, Fleet BID, Hampshire County Council and other external bodies regarding the regeneration of the market. Our aim is to get the market thriving again and we would like to see a relaunch of a refreshed market for early next year.

As part of this will the cabinet member support an initiative where Gurkha Square is made available to Fleet Town Council at no cost for at least 12-months?

This would be based on the assumption that the town council passes this benefit to the traders. As a suggestion, this could be funded from the COVID recovery grant.

**Councillor Oliver** responded:

I have been discussing this with Fleet Town Council and Cabinet colleagues about how to support the regeneration of the market and focus it upon supporting local businesses and traders. The use of Covid Recovery grants in this process is being discussed with Officers in respect to whether the grants are possible for that purpose. Discussions are also ongoing around whether Gurkha Square is the appropriate focus for the market as greater shopper footfall is focussed on the other end of Fleet High Street.