

Appendix B

Question from Councillor Dr Anne Crampton

A recent newspaper article highlighted that this Council has a £5 million investment in Qatar. Although it matured on 15th November this year, would it now be appropriate to implement a responsible investment policy for Hart District Council?

Reply from Councillor James Radley

Hart's Treasury Strategy is approved by full council each February, following a review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Qatar bank is listed in the Treasury Strategy as an allowable counterparty and the Hart's cash deposit was listed in the report to O&S in December 2021 and Cabinet in September 2022. You are correct that this deposit has now reached the end of its fixed term and has been repaid to the Council. Overview and Scrutiny will be reviewing the Strategy in January ahead of Cabinet and Council and this is the opportunity for members to discuss their views on ethical investments.

Given that the British Government recently accepted a £10bn investment from Qatar and as Cllr. Crampton is known to have contacts within government can she reassure those of us who share her concerns that she will also be taking the matter up with the Conservative administration in Westminster?

Supplementary Question from Councillor Dr Anne Crampton

I have already brought it up with colleagues in Westminster.

The Qatar regime, as you know, has abused human rights and is known to be against LGBTQ+ as well as not being very green, would it be possible to remove it now, before we review the Responsible Investment Policy.

Reply from Councillor James Radley

I do not wish to prejudge the views of O&S or the views of Cabinet, but I believe that should O&S decide to remove Qatar, or any other regime they viewed as unethical, this would fall on sympathetic ears when the recommendation came to Cabinet; and if O&S didn't feel that they wished to do that, I as a member of Cabinet would certainly be raising that point.