

COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 15 QUESTIONS – QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Notice of the following questions has been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 15:

1. Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Kingsbury

At the last Council meeting in November, I raised concerns about the excessive fines issued to businesses by District Enforcement and highlighted that their officers are incentivised to issue fines as this was their means of income. Since then, further concerns have emerged about fines being issued to residents for minor issues, such as papers dropped during refuse collection or items removed from communal bins, with fines reportedly reaching up to £500. These practices appear disproportionate and have caused significant distress in the community. Notably, the local Labour MP has now also raised concerns about these fines. Does the Leader of the Council share the concerns of his party's MP, and will he take action to address these practices to ensure fairness for residents and businesses?

2. Question to the Executive Member (Planning) from Councillor Siewniak

As the second Garden City in the UK, a few years after marking our milestone birthday, what are the Council plans to enhance and develop further our cultural and heritage offer?

3. Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor H.Goldwater

Currently, there are 192,000 children with a parent in prison in England and Wales. There have been many instances where children have been discovered living on their own after their parent has been sent to prison. For example, a boy was found living on his own without any gas or electricity - he was going to school everyday without the school knowing that his mum had been sent to prison. Richard Holden MP is calling for an identification system to be introduced. This will enable these prisoner families to receive support, so these instances of neglect can be avoided in future. As Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council manage housing in the Borough, this is an issue that is relevant to this council.

I am calling on the Leader and Deputy Leader of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council to write a letter to The Parliamentary Under-secretary of State for Justice, Alex Davies-Jones asking his support in the implementation of this identification system.

4. Question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Hobbs

There are a number of ethical issues that council pension funds are contributing to, including the investment in companies involved in the arms trade and human rights abuses - such as those supplying weapons to regimes accused of war crimes, or where there are links to forced labour practices. I am particularly concerned that the pension contributions of Council staff could be, unbeknownst to them, being used to provide arms to conflicts around the world.

I believe that Hertfordshire County Council could demonstrate leadership in this area by aligning their investments with the values of our community, the values of the members of staff who pay into their pension, and with a strong commitment to human dignity and global peace.

Do the Leader and Deputy Leader agree with me? And will they commit to writing to Hertfordshire County Council to request that they review their pension fund investments, and begin the process of divesting council pension funds from all arms manufacturers and companies known to profit from human rights violations?