

REPRESENTATIONS

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	COUNCIL	18 DECEMBER 2023	6a

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

Two questions have been received from members of the council before the constitutional deadline for questions but after the statutory deadline for publication of the agenda.

Question received from Councillor Mike Withers on 11 December 2023:

“Three years ago Redcar and Cleveland Council suffered a catastrophic attack on its ITC systems, following which a ransom demand of several million pounds was received from the hackers. The Council’s leader, speaking at a national security strategy joint committee, said ‘no’ to the demand, with the Council not being able to afford the payment and fearing the potential impact on other councils.

Redcar and Cleveland’s IT systems were forced offline, the leader said ‘we lost everything, it was catastrophic, we could not take payments for rates or bills, we had no records or documents, we had no telephone service or emails and no functioning computers. It took us 8.5 months to put things back together’.

It was subsequently discovered that a virus had been hidden in an email on a council laptop. The authority had received a clean bill of health two months prior to the incident.

The cost to the council was £11.3 million, it was not insured.

This is not an isolated case, there are constant and relentless attacks by hackers, often based overseas, on local authorities the length and breadth of the country.

I am aware of the dangers of revealing in public sensitive information about the measures taken to protect our systems from these criminal activities and would not wish to jeopardise our security in any way.

I would like to ask the following question;

Has FBC suffered any breaches of its IT defences which have led to costs being incurred and insurance claims made in respect of ransom payments to hackers?”

Question received from Councillor Sue Fazackerley MBE on 12 December 2023:

“I understand that, at the recent Executive Committee meeting, there were comments made regarding lengthy waiting times for the arrangement of funerals at our Crematorium and, additionally, queries regarding future investment at this facility.

Therefore, could we please have some information on the current length of waiting times for the arrangement of cremations and an overview of any planned investment to improve facilities for service users and staff at the Crematorium?”