

REPRESENTATIONS

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	COUNCIL	15 FEBRUARY 2021	5b
QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL			

PUBLIC ITEM

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

SUMMARY

A question has been received from a Member of the Council before the requisite deadline, as outlined in Procedural Standing Orders for Council and Committees of Part 4 of the Council’s Constitution, but after the statutory deadline for publication of the agenda.

The question received is reproduced below.

Any questions will be heard during the Council meeting on 15 February 2021 and a response will be given by the Leader of the Council or any other member nominated by her.

Question received from Councillor Matthew Lee (9 February 2021)

“Despite the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic, the Government has just confirmed that it intends to still hold local elections at the beginning of May.

Whilst I am encouraged by the current Covid vaccine rollout and grateful for the incredible work being undertaken by the NHS, I believe that there are far too many uncertainties to guarantee that this date in May will be safe.

We are currently in Lockdown, 6th May is only 11 weeks away and the entire electorate will be asked to leave their homes to either post their votes or, even worse, descend *en masse* to a local Polling Station. There is no better way to spread the virus than to make an entire community descend on a single central location on the same day. As such, this will deter many of the more vulnerable member of our community from voting at all.

Furthermore, all these votes will then need to be counted manually by members of our staff. This is not only an unacceptable health risk to those involved in the count but a massive increase in workload on a workforce which has already had to endure unprecedented disruption in the workplace. Even if the Pandemic ended today, it would be doubtful that this Council and its staff would be back to 100% efficiency and have all its backlogs cleared by May.

I would like to ask if this Council is confident that we can guarantee the health and safety of the electorate, our staff and volunteers if the voting goes ahead in May and if not, shouldn’t we make our concerns known to the Government?”