

Supplementary Question and Written Response Full Council – 18th July 2024

Supplementary Question to Councillor Anne Dorrian from Councillor Stephen Woodliffe

I detect a weariness among some of our key workers who nevertheless continue to deliver a first class service to our borough residents. There seems to be feeling that the partnership has ripped the heart out of Boston Borough Council that it works for those at the top but less so for those at the bottom. The message seems to indicate that benefits, if there are any, are not widely shared across the partnership. The report recognises the issue. Do you recognize it, and what are your solutions to resolve it?

Written Response from Councillor Anne Dorrian

Thank you, Councillor Woodliffe. I welcome your supplementary question.

There is no doubt that we have a first-class workforce supporting this Council. There is also no doubt that the Partnership is of huge value to this Council. Our recent Peer Challenge recognises that. I don't agree with your statement that the Partnership has ripped the heart out of the Council – in fact, far from it – the Partnership has given the Council the ability to be financially more resilient in the current economic climate. We also have a greater voice which allows us to influence others, in order to address the challenges our community faces. The work of the IDB Special Interest Group is a good example of this.

Our officers are busy. We have a busy agenda for the Borough with multi-million-pound projects being taken into delivery and with front-facing services dealing with increased demand from residents. Capacity is something we watch very carefully, and our teams have the ability to bid for additional resources if required.

You will be aware that in terms of direct employment benefits, we are on a journey to align terms and conditions of employment across the Partnership. This has already seen improvements in two particular areas of Ts&Cs that were important to staff. All BBC employees are now being paid from day 1 of sickness leave; and some BBC staff can have their professional subscriptions paid by the Council where these are legally / professionally required for their role. In May, Council agreed to align wider terms and conditions and colleagues across the Partnership are currently being consulted on the proposals. The changes proposed – as per the Council report – see colleagues moving to the 'best of' from across the Partnership. That same

report to Council also updated on proposals to introduce a pay structure for officers working for two or three Councils – this work is well underway.

The Partnership has opened up many career development opportunities for our workforce. Previously we had some officers in solo roles, many now work as part of a wider team offering greater support and resilience to them as individuals and the Council.