



ORDINARY COUNCIL

13TH DECEMBER 2023

REPORT TITLE:	Public Questions
REPORT OF:	Claire Mayhew – Director – People & Governance & Monitoring Officer

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, a member of the public resident within the Borough may ask a maximum of two questions relating to the business of the Council providing notice has been received by 10.00am two clear working days before the relevant meeting.

Every question asked pursuant to rule 11.2 of the Constitution shall be put and answered without discussion but the Member to whom the question has been put may decline to answer. An answer may take the form of a direct oral answer at the Council meeting or where there has been insufficient time to research an answer, a written answer will be sent to the questioner. Time for all questions from members of the public shall be restricted to 15 minutes in total. At the expiration of that period of time, any questions which have not been asked shall be answered in writing and the answer placed with the minutes.

Mrs Pat Smith has submitted two questions:

- 1. What has happened to the La Plata badgers?*
- 2. How can it happen that when independent organisations such as Citizen's Advice or Peabody (both operating from the Council reception area, and presumably approved of by the Council) try to help support a local vulnerable disabled resident to the Housing Department, to clarify or uphold their rights, or sort out a situation objectively, they are completely ignored / stonewalled?*

Mrs Gearon Simm has submitted two questions:

- 1. In Switzerland, taxes paid to the local cantons (countries) are not taken away by the Swiss federal government. Cantons do not have to rely on the grace and favour of their federal government for grants.*

In England, local authorities central funding was squeezed post 2010 to the degree that spending power fell by 17.5% in a decade.

In 2015, the Audit Commission, which used to oversee local authorities audits, were no longer required and this seems to have been a key moment in the emerging financial disaster of property speculation by local authorities.

Did Brentwood Borough Council (BBC) engage in purchasing property for speculation in the “free market” without voters referenced in this matter? If BBC still owns property for fund-raising purposes, is this thoroughly audited?

- 2. The Joseph Rountree Foundation, has been monitoring the scale of destitution in our country since 2015.*

Destitution is the state of living without sufficient means to have the basics for sustaining life.

Margaret Thatcher said “Bring back Victorian values”. Slums, workhouses, poor laws, child prostitution were part of the Victorian era.

Does Brentwood Borough Council know of any destitute people who are living in Brentwood?