

Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 12 January 2026

Question from: Richard Walsh

Question to: Councillor Durrans, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Services and Communities

QUESTION

FOI 53680 confirms that the Council holds **no equality impact assessment, no risk assessment, and no internal briefing** explaining why the option of retaining The Shay was excluded from the 2024 budget consultation, despite retention being the status quo and a materially different option from all three disposal routes presented. It also confirms that no analysis was undertaken to assess how this omission might affect consultees' ability to express their views.

On what documented reasoning did Cabinet base its decision to exclude retention from the consultation, and how did it assure itself that omitting the status-quo option did not predetermine or bias the outcome?

Response

The Council undertook a comprehensive consultation as part of its financial planning and budget-setting process. This included an online survey, Facebook Live Question & Answer, attendance at ward forums, youth council, and parish council liaison meetings, aiming to reach all stakeholder groups, especially local taxpayers and service users. The survey sought views on the principle of the proposed saving, not on the specific method of disposal, and provided opportunities for free-text comments on each Directorate section.

The consultation was conducted at a formative stage, with sufficient information provided to enable intelligent consideration, and adequate time for responses. All feedback was conscientiously considered, including both quantitative and qualitative data, in line with the Gunning Principles.