

## **COUNCIL – 5 SEPTEMBER 2023**

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION**

#### **QUESTION FROM MS DILLON TO COUNCILLOR R BLUNT**

“There are 650 MPs in the elected Parliamentary chamber, all there to scrutinise the plans set forth by the government. The formation of political parties is a relatively recent development within our Parliamentary system, in particular the Whipping system. It could be argued that the Party system has reduced the effect of those 650 voices – reducing democracy; power of the people, within Parliament.

The motion put forward implies that the Party allegiance of our MP is more important than the character of the MP, so I ask you to consider the following question in regards to the motion:

Should the MP of North West Leicestershire be a Party representative to the region, or should our MP be representing constituents interests whilst scrutinising government plans, policies and legislation?”

#### **REPOSENSE FROM COUNCILLOR R BLUNT TO MS DILLON**

“I would like to thank Siobhan for her interesting question which is timely in view of the motion which appears later on our agenda this evening.

I have used sources from the UK Parliament and BBC websites in putting together my response.

Historically, as I understand it, the House of Commons has acted on the principle that all Members of the House of Commons are individually elected, and voters put a “cross against the name of a candidate”. While decisions on candidates may be affected by their party labels, Members of Parliament (MPs) are free to develop their own arguments once elected, until it is time to face the voters in the next general election.

The role of an MP, as set out on the websites referred to above is to:

“Represent his/her constituents, including those who did not vote for them or did not vote at all.

MPs represent their constituents in areas where the UK Parliament takes decisions. MPs either debate or ask questions in the House of Commons or they work in smaller groups known as committees.

Other important roles of MPs in Parliament are to help make laws and to scrutinise (check-up on) the work of the government or investigate issues.

#### **The Parliamentary duties of an MP include:**

- writing to or organising meetings with relevant ministers
- speaking in Parliament during a debate
- asking questions during Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs)
- introducing Members Bills on topics of concern to their constituents
- lobbying other organisations (such as local councils, health boards) and individuals on behalf of their constituents

- raising the profile of an issue in the media
- involvement in committees which scrutinise new legislation or question the work of the government.

When they are not working in parliament, MPs work in their constituencies, communicating with their constituents by writing letters, emails and replying to phone messages. Often MPs will hold 'surgeries' where local people can meet with their MP and ask questions. Constituents usually meet with their MP to seek help with a problem or issue. Some MPs send out newsletters to their constituents and communicate via their own website or social media accounts”.

I would, therefore, take the view that MPs, are a representative of their constituents rather than a delegate of their political party, should they be a member of one.”