

### FULL COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2017

#### **Written question from Christopher Quirk to Councillor Wayne Whittle, Executive Member for Tourism and Business Development (including public realm)**

Since Victorian times a Cliff Lift in Shanklin has linked the main Town to the Esplanade, and historically charges have made a significant revenue contribution to Council revenues. The last Conservative administration had budgeted for, and scheduled, major refurbishment of the Lift, however this programme was stopped by the Independent administration and the Cliff Lift subsequently failed a safety inspection and had to be closed.

Although refurbishment of the Cliff Lifts has taken place, the work on the bridge was not undertaken at the same time. For the past two summer seasons the Shanklin Cliff Lift has not opened at Easter, as had traditionally been the case; instead not opening until much later in the season – at the height of summer. This has caused significant disruption to those working in the local tourism industry and their guests, particularly as the tourism trading period is much longer than the summer school holidays.

The latest indications I have heard is that the Lift will not be open this year until “the main summer season” – which again gives rise to concern that it will be out of action for several crucial months before then.

So that hoteliers in the Shanklin tourism industry can advise prospective guests of its availability, can I urge the relevant Executive Member to do all he can to ensure the earliest possible opening for the Cliff Lift, but just as importantly to publish, ASAP, an exact intended opening date, so hoteliers can promote this accordingly? It is one of the first questions that guests ask when booking their holidays.

## ***Response***

Works to replace the temporary bridge link to the Shanklin cliff lift begin this week. The temporary bridge will then be removed, before a new structure is installed. Works will be dependent upon weather conditions, given the height of the bridge and wind impacts while working at the cliff edge. The council is continuing to work with local businesses to ensure that the best possible service is delivered during this period of works. The replacement of the bridge will complete the extensive upgrade project that has taken place to ensure that the Shanklin cliff lift provides an effective and efficient service for users. It is hoped that the lift will be open well before the start of the season.