



COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Cooper

To: The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy and Tourism

"The endorsement by this Council of the advertisement and use of 'Fairtrade' products by the current Guildhall Management is commendable. Can the Leader inform me:

- a) What proportion (value) of the food, beverages and other consumables used by the current Guildhall Contractors comes directly from Winchester businesses?
- b) Does this Council offer any incentives and/or directives to maximise this benefit to local business and if not, why not?"

Reply

Fairtrade has been carefully defined by the charities which established the Fairtrade Foundation in 1992. It sets producer standards for growers in developing countries and trading standards for buyers in the developed world. A full definition can be found at www.fairtrade.org.uk/downloads/pdf/introducing_fairtrade.pdf All tea, coffee and sugar used in the Courtyard Café and The Bean is Fairtrade.

The trend for promoting the use of *local produce* is more complicated in that:

- a) not all local produce is necessarily good produce;
- b) there is no single definition of 'local', and
- c) local producers are often unable to provide regular or large-scale supplies (one order can, for example, wipe out a whole flock of chickens or herd of sheep).

The current Guildhall catering services contract requires the contractor to meet increasingly discerning customer expectations, and this includes the use of both Fairtrade and local produce. Fosters Event Catering are committed to this approach, as they are to the promotion of organic products, healthy eating options and sustainable business practices.

- a) During the tendering process, Fosters Event Catering worked with the local producers' network Hampshire Fare to identify potential business partners in the Winchester District and wider county. The public launch of the current catering contract last June took the form of a 'meet the producer' evening which gave these small businesses good exposure. Fosters continue to add to the list of local suppliers which includes Hill Farm Apple Juice in Swanmore, Judes Ice Cream in

Easton, Evans the Butcher in Alresford and Stoke Valley Watercress in Alresford. Just outside the district, they buy from Oven Door Bakery in Fair Oak, Fords the Butcher in Fleet, Bunch of Carrots in Southampton, Premier Fish in Downton and Hildon Water in Broughton. The exact line-up varies according to the season, the menus chosen by clients and the scale of supplies needed.

In the Courtyard Café and The Bean, all suppliers except two are local. This equates to a year-round figure of approximately 60% of sales.

Event catering is rather different because of the diverse market and requirements, including ethnic groups with very specific needs which cannot at present be met locally. As a result, the proportion of local produce used can vary between 10% and 60%.

In addition to food and drink supplies, Fosters source flowers, laundry services, equipment hire, print, design and maintenance services from local businesses.

b) The Council's main directive to maximize the use of Fairtrade and local produce is contained in the contract specification which formed a key part of the tendering process.

There is a balance to be struck, however, between the Council's need to optimize income from the catering contract and its wish to support ethical procurement practices. Fosters and the previous contractor Milburns have both emphasized that the use of Fairtrade and (good) local produce routinely result in premium pricing, and Guildhall customers are proven to be price-sensitive.

Because of this balance, and because of the difficulties referred to above in relation to the promotion of local produce, officers felt it unrealistic to set incentives or more specific directives in relation to its use in the current contract.

However, proactive work continues by officers to support local producers in a variety of other ways. These include:

- delivery of the economic action plan (eg South Hampshire Meet the Buyers event on 1st February)
- delivery of the tourism strategy (eg *The Winchester Watercress Tour* and *Gourmet Masterclass* short breaks).
- approval by Cabinet of a procurement strategy that states (section 5.4):
'The Council is committed to a socially responsible approach to its procurement activities. Provided that there is compliance with EU procurement rules and Best Value, the Council will endeavour to enhance the well-being of the community through support for local businesses, SMEs, ethnic minority businesses and businesses operating in the voluntary and community sector. It is also aware of its wider responsibilities and has given a commitment to promote the use of Fairtrade goods for Council meetings and functions and include Fairtrade as an issue as part of its approach to purchasing.'



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Lipscomb

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Safety

“Will the Portfolio Holder please detail what initiatives he has taken, since assuming office, to improve the street scene in Winchester, particularly in areas where improved maintenance (sometimes no more than a lick of paint) can make such a difference between a “shabby” environment and one which conveys and engenders civic pride?

Will he also say what steps he will take to restore the vandalised display at the view point in St Giles Hill gardens, which gave pleasure and interest to many and will he undertake to at least continue the generally high standards of maintenance there and in other similar locations across the District?”

Reply

I am pleased to report that there has been significant progress in tackling streetscene issues, including significant performance improvements in key areas such as grounds maintenance and floral displays across the City, which have built upon existing high levels of performance for street cleansing and litter removal.

The service has also developed partnerships with other providers such as the Probation Service, in order to provide more cost efficient ways of delivering improvements. Plans are also well underway to provide other improvements such as the refurbishment of the Abbey Gardens Public Conveniences, subject to budgetary approval.

The Environment Scrutiny Panel has spent the last few months reviewing all streetscene services through an Informal Scrutiny Group and its report is due shortly. It is expected to say that City Council performance on these services remains at a high level but can be improved overall by progress in a number of areas such as street lighting and pavement maintenance many of which are the responsibility of other agencies. I will ensure that those recommendations are acted upon in order to maintain the progress which has been made to date.

The vandalised display at St Giles' Hill was removed before Christmas and funding was identified early in the new year for a replacement interpretation panel. The tourism service has now begun work on the project, although it is not considered a high priority at the present time. As it will be a ‘made to order’ commission, the project is likely to take at least three or four months from start to completion.



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Bennetts

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities

“What plans does the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities have to increase the availability of CCTV in the Winchester Town area?”

Reply

The CCTV system in the Winchester Town area has been operational since 1997 and is fast approaching the end of its natural life. Ageing analogue equipment is in urgent need of replacement with new digital technology which has a much larger capacity and the flexibility to offer a wide range of service enhancements. The current Control Room is also due to be demolished as part of the redevelopment of Silver Hill.

Aided by professional consultants, officers are currently working on a comprehensive project to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the existing CCTV system, and to develop detailed specifications, including costings, for the new technology and accommodation requirements. This will include an assessment of the need to consider extending the coverage of the system, both within the Winchester Town area and beyond, subject of course to the appropriate financial resources being available at the time.

A report on the evaluation of the benefits of the CCTV system is due to be considered by Cabinet on 17 January 2007.



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Spender

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

“Will the Portfolio Holder arrange for the use of appropriate wording in the Planning Conditions applied to future successful planning applications in order to reduce and control the proliferation of unnecessary and unsightly developers signs across the District advertising or directing people to these developments?”

Reply

There are Department for Transport guidelines covering the provision of directional signs to new developments. The Guidelines require that signs can only be erected in relation to developments providing a minimum of 30 bedrooms. Signs may be erected when work starts and should be taken down within 3 months of the sale of more than 80% of the properties.

Unfortunately, these guidelines are not always complied with and developers do erect signing without the necessary authorization from the City Council. Signs (whether authorized or not) are not always removed after the developments have been completed. Hampshire County Council highway (rather than the City Council) is responsible for removal of unauthorised signs.

An ‘informative’ could be issued as part of the planning approval process giving applicants information about the approval process required for such signs and informing them that non-compliance could result in signs being removed and the cost of doing so being reclaimed from them. Hampshire County Council is currently checking the legal position on this.



COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Cooper

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Safety

"In November a dozen or more residential properties in Trampers Lane, North Boarhunt suffered extensive damage as the result of an unprecedented localised typhoon. Notwithstanding an immediate and fulsome response from the local Constabulary and Hampshire Fire and Rescue:

- a) Was any assistance offered by/requested from this Authority?
- b) Can I be assured that this Authority has in place both the planning and immediate response organisation to support local communities in the event of a similar type of natural disaster or any other emergency?

Reply

a) The City Council and the County Council did not receive a request for assistance from the Emergency Services and consequently did not provide a response. Officers became aware of the incident from reports in the local media, but this was after the immediate response from the Emergency Services had taken place. The damage did not make anyone long term homeless or need any further immediate intervention by the City Council, such as the services of Building Control to inspect dangerous structures. A full response was provided by the Emergency Services at the immediate scene.

Whilst the tornado in the morning of the 25 November 2006 received national news coverage, the damage was confined to a small area. It was reported in the Portsmouth News that an elderly couple living in a bungalow lost some tiles from their roof and also their power supply. The local Fire and Rescue services helped them out with tarpaulin to cover the roof and neighbours looked after them until power was restored. There was also structural damage to a brick built garage.

b) Where there is a requirement to do so, which is normally in the event of a major incident threatening life or welfare of the community/individuals or the infrastructure, the City Council has an Emergency Plan in place which identifies roles and responsibilities and a management structure. The nature of the Plan is such that it enables the Council to respond whatever the emergency.

This is normally activated in response to a request for support from the emergency services at the time, but there is nothing to prevent self-activation by the City Council.

The Council will work with other Category One responders to co-operate and share information to both respond to the incident and to bring about recovery as quickly as possible.

The Plan is currently under review and once agreed it will be exercised in the near future, most probably using a scenario based on extreme weather conditions.



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Worrall

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

"Many Winchester residents have commented favourably about the new Administration's response to planning applications relating to back garden and infill development.

Would the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport update Members on the Council's current policies on back garden and infill development please? "

Reply

Back garden and in-fill sites are generally within development boundaries and therefore development will usually be acceptable in principle except where there are other material considerations. Government policies and our Local Plan seek a density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare on suitable sites to make the best possible use of such sites and to reduce pressure on green field land. The recently published PPS3 restates 30 dwellings per hectare as the starting point for policies on the density of new development. It will allow local authorities to develop density standards, which we will do through the LDF, but there will need to be strong justification for going below 30dph.

PPS3 also encourages is proper regard for the character of an area. Where there has been perceived to be particular pressure for development which might threaten the character of an area we have produced Local Area design Statements (LADS) (for Chilbolton Ave, Springvale Rd, Compton Down and Sleepers Hill). Village and Neighbourhood design Statements are also being produced by local communities, often in response to concerns about this type of development.

PPS3 says that more intensive development is not always appropriate, but also that the density of existing development should not dictate that of new housing. It emphasizes the importance of good design and it is on the issues of character and quality of design that I have asked officers to be very alert in discussions on particular applications. Our aim should be to achieve the highest density commensurate with good design and consideration of local character.



COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Cooper

To: The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport

"Prior to the closure of HMS Dryad in 2005, sportsmen in the south of the Winchester District enjoyed access to sports facilities, most notably weekend and evening use of high quality soccer, cricket and hockey pitches at the MOD Sports Ground in Southwick. Since the Royal Navy departure, despite new military landlords arriving at MOD Southwick Park, this privilege has not been forthcoming and exceptional sports facilities are being wasted.

Is this Council actively pursuing a new agreement which will renew this essential local partnership for the benefit of local youth and the community in general? If not can I be assured that this will be a 2007 urgent priority for WCC officers tasked with the provision of area recreational facilities and that the Portfolio Holder will take a personal interest in this debate?"

Reply

The Council met with the company who were to oversee the future management of the sports facilities on behalf of Defence Estates at HMS Dryad in October 2004. At that time the MOD hoped that a commercial operator would manage the facilities in the future and that this would provide community access.

Since that time there seem to have been various changes in the management and approach of the Defence Estates and, as Cllr Cooper says, no community use has materialised.

The Sport and Recreation team have been trying to make contact with the management company to identify their intention for the sports facilities but with no success to date. The Sport and Recreation team will continue to pursue this contact with a view to securing community access.



COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Learney

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

“What are the key points that have come out of the consultation with Parish Councils over the budget?”

Reply

The consultation held on Tuesday evening was very successful with nearly half of the parishes sending representatives. There was much interest in and comment on the budget. The particular matters to note were:

The consultation was very welcome and the opportunity was taken to express a number of views and to make both specific and general comments on both the Council’s budget and other matters.

There was a very open attitude to working in partnership with the Council, and with others, to considering what services could be delegated to Parishes (alongside appropriate financial support) and to developing Parish hubs so that services could be delivered more locally.

It was felt that more financial information should have been given as part of the consultation so that the context in which the Council was operating could be better understood and that, although the focus was on the growth and savings proposals, it would have been good to consider base budget matters as well.

More clarity was requested about what the Council was required to do in providing new mandatory services.

It was felt that the Budget was City focused and some concerns were raised about whether there was an equitable split of costs between the District and Parish elements of the Council Tax.

Some concerns were expressed over whether the Council was realistic in its savings proposals.

The Director of Finance undertook to respond to some of the detailed comments and questions that were raised and this will be shared with City Council Members.



COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Cook

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities

“Will the Portfolio Holder please state if there is:

a) a waiting list for Council House accommodation in Alresford and if so the current situation,

and

b) is there any demand for the rented houses owned and managed by a Housing Association in Watercress Meadows in Alresford?”.

Reply

- A) There is a waiting list for accommodation in Alresford, as at 8 January 2007 there were;
- 321 households for 1 bed accommodation (a further 16 on the transfer list)
 - 38 households for 2 bed accommodation (a further 36 on the transfer list)
 - 28 households for 3 bed accommodation (a further 30 on the transfer list)
- B) The homes at Watercress Meadow are managed by A2 Winchester and were developed as an “Exception Scheme”, therefore they are only available for households with a strong local connection to New Alresford. Officers have not been requested to provide a nomination to this scheme for some time. Therefore, without detailed investigations into the households on the waiting list (detailed in the first part of the question) it is difficult to give a definitive answer to the question. I think it would be safe to assume however that a significant proportion of those on the waiting list for Alresford would have a local connection and would therefore be eligible to be considered.



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Beveridge

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

“The Protocol on Planning Matters is becoming seriously out of date. It has been intended to revise and update it for a long time. Can the Portfolio Holder confirm that action will now be taken to expedite this matter?”

Reply

The Review of the Planning Protocol was postponed pending the Government's review of the Model Code of Conduct. The revised Model Code has been delayed by the Government and has yet to be issued. In view of the continued delay, officers have met to consider possible further interim changes to the Planning Protocol. It is planned to put these before the Planning Development Control Committee for any comments it may have, before referring the Protocol back to the Standards Committee before the revisions are adopted by Council.

Any further changes necessary as a result of any revision of the Model Code of Conduct would also have to be considered by both Committees and adopted by Council. It is understood that the changes are likely to clarify and simplify the Code, and therefore further resultant changes to the Protocol should be relatively easy to accommodate.

It is planned that the Planning Development Control Committee considers the revised Planning Protocol at its meeting of 21 February 2007.



COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Cook

To: The Portfolio Holder for Performance and Communications

“(a) When will the Council receive the findings of the public consultation survey 'Listening to your views' sent to residents in September last year by an independent Consultant?

(b) What was the cost of this survey and why was it necessary to appoint a consultant based in Devon to carry out this work?

(c) Who authorised the expenditure on this survey and agreed the questions that were asked?

(d) How many questionnaires were sent out and what was the percentage of the returns received by the closure date of 17th November?”

Reply

The 'Listening to your Views' consultation is a survey that all local authorities are required to undertake once every three years by the Government to provide key 'Best Value' Performance Indicators. As well as the 'General' survey, authorities are also required to conduct satisfaction surveys with customers of Planning, Benefits (2 rounds of questionnaires) and Council House Tenants.

- (a) The initial results of the general survey have been received by the Council. However these are subject to checks by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and may change slightly as a result of weighting. The deadline for all Councils to have submitted their General survey results is the 28th February 2007. The final results are expected shortly after this date.

- (b) The cost to the City Council of employing Marketing Means for the General Survey was £7,437.75p. Marketing Means were engaged as a result of a joint tendering exercise by a consortium of eight councils across Hampshire. Local Hampshire companies were invited to tender. Although the survey for each authority was carried out independently, the use of one consultant to oversee the consultations led to a saving of approximately £10,000 across all eight authorities.
- (c) Cabinet approved £6,000 to be carried forward from managed savings made in 2005/06 to meet the majority of the cost of this survey (report CAB 1267 Appendix 6 refers). The remainder of the expenditure for the survey is drawn from the consultation budget agreed by the Council. The questions included in the survey are those prescribed by the Government.
- (d) DCLG supplied 6,000 addresses from the Postal Address File (PAF). 2,500 of these were randomly selected and sent the questionnaire. 23 of these were returned by the post office as empty properties leaving an actual sample of 2,477.

1,305 surveys were received, a response rate of 52%. A requirement of this survey is that a minimum of 1,100 valid responses are received, 1,237 of the responses were eligible therefore meeting this target.



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 12

From: Councillor Spender

To: The Portfolio Holder for Performance and Communications

“The Portfolio Holder will be aware that preliminary results from the Citizens' Panel Spring 2006 Questionnaire have only become available to officers in the last few days. In the light of the public consultation requirements of the Local Development Plan and of the Council's commitment to improving project management, what action does the Portfolio Holder intend taking to ensure that these results are available in the future in a timely manner?”

Reply

The Citizens' Panel survey results currently being analysed are from the survey that was dispatched in October. From the date of dispatch to the first analysed responses being reported usually takes between 8 to 10 weeks. The current results are approximately 2 weeks behind schedule.

The October survey was dispatched later than anticipated and some questions for inclusion in the questionnaire were asked for early in the year. The lead in to the current Citizens' Panel survey took longer than usual due to several other calls on the Research & Consultation Officer's time over the summer period which led to the survey being delayed several times.



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Cooper

To: The Leader

“I congratulate all those acknowledged in the recent New Year Honour's list. As the recipient of such an honour I am acutely aware that recognition of contributions above and beyond the call of duty are only forthcoming as a result of the hard work of others.

Does this Authority have in place a process and organisation to initiate, coordinate and endorse nominations which will ensure that the exceptional contributions of all Winchester residents in both the public, private and voluntary sectors of our community have the best possible chance of the recognition that their efforts so often merit?

If there is a will to establish a 'Winchester Honours Committee', as someone familiar with the protocols and administrative requirements that must be met to ensure those worthy have a real chance of recognition, I am committed to serving a formal process?”

Reply

At present requests for nominations from the Cabinet Office Honours Secretariat are received through the Local Government Association. This notification is circulated to all Group Leaders. The Council does not have a tradition of submitting nominations on behalf of local people, and indeed it could become a time consuming process were we to aim to establish such a mechanism.

Councillor Pines, the Deputy Mayor, has made proposals for a locally-run scheme to recognize the efforts of volunteers in our community.



COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 14

From: Councillor Maynard

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Safety

"As the Portfolio Holder is aware, the AEZ has apparently been successful in reducing problems of drink related antisocial behaviour in central Winchester, but has possibly exacerbated the problems elsewhere, most noticeably in North Walls and Hyde. Following the residents meetings last Summer in St Bartholomew's Ward, kindly chaired by the Portfolio Holder (and acknowledging the complex nature of the issue whereby it was appropriate that input be sought from the several other interested parties), when does he consider it appropriate for Councillors to finally scrutinise the AEZ and when will Councillors have the opportunity to consider and debate extending the AEZ?"

Reply

It has been clearly recognised that, although successful, the implementation of the AEZ has caused some displacement of drinkers and associated anti-social behaviour. This was particularly noticeable last summer in the North Walls and Hyde areas. As a result the multi-agency AEZ Group, which helped to develop the original scheme, was reconvened to consider how best to respond to this issue. The Group produced some recommendations, informed by an outreach research project carried out by Trinity Winchester, as follows:

- To employ specialist Alcohol Outreach Workers to work with those who have alcohol dependency and related issues
- To extend the existing AEZ making it city wide (subject to legislative guidelines)

The Community Safety Partnership has supported in-principle the creation and funding of two Alcohol Outreach Worker posts, although final consideration of this will take place in March when the budget expenditure for 2007/08 is approved. A request for funding of a third post will be considered by the Council as part of its budget-setting exercise in February.

It is hoped that a report seeking authority to begin a public consultation exercise on the extension of the AEZ will be considered by the Licensing and Regulation Committee in March.



COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 15

From: Councillor Lipscomb

To: The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy and Tourism

“Will the Leader confirm his administration’s absolute support for the District’s rural communities and their economy and will he say what steps he has taken since assuming office to implement that?”

Will he recognise the particular problems posed for rural businessmen and their employees by planning policies which have perhaps not kept pace with the changing needs of rural areas and will he work with the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Transport to ensure that the implementation of those policies is characterised by a sympathetic and innovative approach to diversification?

Finally, will he say what steps he has taken, as holder of the Local Economy portfolio, to work with local communities whose Post Offices (and often, in consequence, their village store) may be threatened with closure by the recent Government announcement that several thousand post offices will be closed nationwide?

In all this, will he ensure that local Members are enabled to play a full part in championing the needs of their communities?”

Reply

Rural communities have been high on the Council’s agenda since May, and there is a careful balance being struck between support for the city area and for the differing needs of the wider district which is explicitly stated in the economic action plan published earlier this year.

Preparation for the introduction of the new Local Development Framework is serving to increase the scope and effectiveness of local consultation, and will see the inclusion of eight settlements with market towns acting as ‘consultation hubs’. This should ensure that new policies do indeed meet the changing needs of our rural communities.

In the meantime, officers continue to provide direct support for the production of village design statements and parish plans which can, when formally adopted, serve to introduce local variations to wider council planning policy.

Recent months have seen a range of projects designed to strengthen the economies of our market towns and provide further, practical support for rural communities. These have included:

- the appointment of a Rural Towns Development Officer to provide practical support for Alresford, Bishop's Waltham, Denmead and Wickham in producing market towns health checks and associated action plans which can liberate SEEDA funding;
- an economic development grant to West Meon Community Shop which will, on completion, bring together local produce, post office services, a dry cleaning service, an internet café (with associated training), a tourist information point and a display of local heritage artefacts;
- the production of new visitor trails encouraging expenditure in local businesses in the Meon and Itchen Valleys;
- one-to-one discussions with the district's biggest rural businesses such as Sparsholt College and Marwell Zoological Park on whose success many smaller rural businesses depend;
- promotion of and partnership with local producers through tourism marketing initiatives and a new range of packaged short breaks;
- a new initiative to use empty shops in Denmead for displays of visual arts to enhance the town centre;
- work through the conservation and development control services to establish viable businesses in disused and potentially 'at risk' rural buildings, often with a tourism use which will benefit other local businesses;
- the opportunity to benefit from becoming - at no cost – one of the county-wide network of wireless 'hotspots' across the rural areas, via e-Hampshire;
- regular referrals of new and young businesses to the Rural Enterprise Gateway business support and advice service, and
- Inclusion of rural businesses on the Winchester Business Consortium, which forms an arm of the Local Strategic Partnership.

Members, particularly ward Members, are kept informed by a combination of early direct communications; the weekly Members' Briefing Bulletin on the intranet, and e-newsletters such as *Tourism Times* and *The Entrepreneur*. Initiatives are also reported regularly through the Local Economy Scrutiny Panel.

As business plans are currently being prepared for 2007/08, I would strongly encourage all ward Members who have concerns or suggestions relating to their rural communities to approach the relevant Heads of Division to discuss possible actions for the coming year which might be taken to address these.



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 10 January 2007

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14 (2) (a)

Minute 362 (Page 525) – Cabinet 13 December 2006

QUESTION 16

From: Councillor Sutton

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

"The history of allocating park and ride sites in the countryside on the periphery of Winchester has been controversial. In the light of this experience, when Hampshire County Council consulted Winchester City Council for its views on the site to be chosen for the South Winchester park and ride site, why was this matter not considered in public by Cabinet to enable all City Councillors to express their views instead of in private by officers in consultation only with one councillor, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport?"

Reply

The choice of which site to bring forward as the proposed location for the South of Winchester park and ride site is one for the County Council who will be responsible for its construction. The County Council conducted a well publicised and effective public consultation exercise which produced a preferred location on land in the County Council's ownership. All city councillors, along with parish councils, local organisations and members of the public had the opportunity to comment on the options.

The City Council will be consulted as the local planning authority on the planning application for the development. It would therefore have been impossible for **all** City Councilors to express their views formally since this would have pre-empted the discussion which must take place at Planning Development Control Committee. For this reason the extent of the response from the City Council as part of the consultation exercise was restricted to a comment from officers on the highway and transportation merits of the site which are a matter of professional judgment not requiring a Cabinet decision.

A full planning application will be made which will test the issues surrounding the site and it is through this process that the City Council will make known its view on the material planning considerations.