



**COUNCIL MEETING – 16 April 2008**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 1**

From: Councillor Clear

To: The Leader

“As Wickham was designated as a Key Hub in the recent Issues and Options Paper, could the Leader please inform me as to why the sufficient authority was not provided for the establishment of an Local Access Points (LAP) in Wickham and could Wickham now be considered as a priority?”

**Reply**

“The decision was made based on the following factors:-

- Budgetary constraints: In the face of a difficult financial situation it was not felt that more than 3 LAPs should be developed in 08/09.
- Learning from what works: The 3 LAPs which we decided to progress will provide important learning for us which will inform future initiatives.
- Availability of premises: In Wickham no suitable venue was available in the short term (the Community Centre option has been explored but premises in the Square are felt more likely to be successful in terms of profile and footfall).

Notwithstanding this decision, Cabinet asked officers to continue to investigate premises in Wickham during this financial year and to report back on options and costs in due course. There is ongoing liaison with the Wickham Parish Clerk and likely premises are being assessed as they arise. Officers will be bringing a further paper to Cabinet seeking an agreement in principle so that, if the right premises come up, we can act quickly to secure them.”



Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Wagner

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities

“Could the Portfolio Holder please tell us what provision is made for security and health and safety for the Council's tenants in bungalows, bearing in mind allocations to those properties are only to over 60's?”

Reply

“I can confirm the following Council services relating specifically to security and health and safety are available to tenants living in the 867 bungalows currently in Council ownership throughout the Winchester District: -

- All bungalows that are part of a sheltered scheme have an alarm link to the Council's Central Control, so any matters of urgency can be reported and help summoned at any time. Bungalows that are not part of sheltered schemes may have links to Central Control depending on individual tenants needs.
- Where resident Scheme Managers are not in place, Mobile Wardens carry out weekly external checks in the vicinity of Sheltered Schemes to enable any emerging problems to be addressed e.g. pathways, lighting, gates, locks etc.
- The majority of front doors to bungalows are fitted with the Rainer lock and chain system for added security. In Sheltered Schemes this allows access to Central Control Staff in an emergency. Bungalows that are not part of Sheltered Schemes but have links to Central Control make their own emergency arrangements to enable Mobile Wardens to gain access.
- Bungalows fitted with PVCu windows have lockable cockspurs on side opening windows and fan lights generally provided to enhance ventilation. Where any tenants are concerned about security the Crime Prevention Officer will attend on tenant request to ascertain risk and make recommendations to the Council accordingly.
- Support Plans are in place for tenants living as part of a Sheltered Scheme or if they are signed up to the Central Control Scheme. These are reviewed with tenants every 6 months. The review includes an element for security and/or health and safety, giving an opportunity for any concerns to be raised, considered and actioned on an individual basis.
- If tenants living in bungalows wish to install enhanced security features to their homes, works can be facilitated via the Council's Tenants Home Improvement Scheme.
- Any other general enquiries tenants may have relating to security and/or health and safety matters can be raised directly with their Area Housing Manager or Area Property Surveyor.

The Council therefore considers that its policies and procedures towards persons living in bungalows are designed to give a fair degree of support, reassurance and choice in relation to matters of security and health and safety.”



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#### QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Sutton

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Safety

"According to a World Wildlife Fund report 'Ecological Footprint of British City Residents', Winchester consumes its share of the Earth's resources for the entire year in just four months, coming top of the 61 cities whose residents had their footprint calculated in the report.

What initiatives will the City Council be promoting to address this dubious accolade?"

#### Reply

"An individual's Ecological Footprint is calculated by adding up the hectares it takes to grow our food and farm the animals we eat; the hectares our house stands on; the hectares that oil refineries and other energy infrastructure we depend on take up; the hectares of forest that would be needed to absorb the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted by our fuels; a share of the hectares taken up by our roads; and everything else we do that has an impact on the planet's ecosystems. The Footprint counts all the impacts of personal spending as well as the business and government expenditure made on our behalf.

The WWF report on 'Ecological Debt Day' lists the top ten ways to reduce your ecological footprint. City Council actions are contributing to many of these (listed under each below)

1. **'Don't drive when there is an alternative – use public transport, cycle or walk'**
  - Development of Winchester Access Plan
  - Development of the new park and ride scheme for South of Winchester
  - Implementing the new Transport Contributions methodology
  - Ensuring continued operation of the Bikeabout bicycle loan scheme
  - Transport will also be a key priority in the emerging Community Strategy review
2. **'Grow vegetables and don't waste food'**
  - Bringing disused allotments back into use (e.g. Stanmore – Princes Place)
3. **'If you need a car, make it a small one and reduce the mileage'**
  - Forthcoming launch of the Car Club in Winchester
  - Amending the Council's lease car scheme for essential users by limiting engine CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

**4. 'Make your home energy efficient – install insulation and double glazing'**

- Improving energy efficiency of the Council's Housing stock, including installation of double glazing, insulation and upgrading heating systems
- Promotion of energy efficiency in Private sector housing
- Local Development Framework policies will look at the whole range of sustainability measures for new buildings and the creation of sustainable communities.

**6. 'Buy locally produced organic food'**

- Support for the Winchester Farmer's Market

**7. 'Recycle everything'**

- Kerbside recycling system
- Trial of recycling bins in Winchester High Street
- Work with schools waste minimisation education programme

Four of the WWF tips are not within the council's control:

**8. 'Instead of flying, take holidays in the UK or travel to Europe by train'**

**5. 'Turn the thermostat down'**

**9. 'Instead of buying new things, buy second-hand or borrow'**

**10. 'Vegetarian diet'**

However, the Council is also supporting Winchester Action on Climate Change, which is promoting a wide range of actions to households and businesses, in order to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions, which will also reduce our ecological footprints.

The City Council is implementing a number of measures on climate change, to reduce its own CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and provide an example to others. These include moving from physical servers to Virtual servers; installing Multi Functional Printers instead of individual printers; upgrades to heating and lighting systems within the offices; a feasibility study for a hydro-electric turbine in Abbey Mill; and moving to flexible working systems to reduce travel.

Finally, we are supporting community groups who are looking at their impact on sustainability and how they can reduce it, through our community planning work and the Community Chest grants scheme."



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#### QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Learney

To: The Portfolio Holder for Performance and Communications

“How much did it cost to produce, print and distribute the Spring 2008 issue of Perspectives?”

#### Reply

“The costs for 47,500 copies of the Spring 2008 edition of Perspectives are detailed below:-

	<u>£</u>	
Design	1,037	(internal recharge from Design & Print)
Print	3,858	(an increase of £80 this time for 100% recycled paper)
Distribution	6,816.16	
Advert	-500	(HCC advert)
Advert	-500	(Warm Front advert)
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,711.16</b>	

The ‘What’s On’ element of Perspectives is paid for by the Tourism Marketing Team. Costs for print and design are detailed below but distribution costs are covered by Corporate Communications and are included in the figure above.

	<u>£</u>
Design	760
Print	2,572
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,332</b>



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**QUESTION 5**

From: Councillor Lipscomb

To: The Leader

"Will the Leader of the Council join me in warmly welcoming the decision of the Housing Minister on 2 April to reject Zurich Eagle Star's wholly inappropriate and ill-founded proposal to build 12,500 homes on prime agricultural land at Micheldever Station in response to the Government's Eco Towns prospectus?

Will he also accept from me, as their representative, the sincere thanks of the people of Micheldever, in particular, for the key part which he played in this matter by writing to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in opposition to the proposal, a move which I am sure will at least have influenced the favourable outcome now achieved?

Finally, will he ask the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport to ensure that future planning policies for this area will be at least as robust as they are now, to send a clear adverse message to any aspirant developer who may wish to concrete over swathes of our countryside for profit, in complete contravention of our policies designed to protect our precious rural environment?"

**Reply**

"It was very pleasing to obtain the support of the Secretary of State in the strong case the Council made in rejecting the Eco-Town proposal for Micheldever.

It was very clear that the Council needed to maintain the position it had taken on previous, equally inappropriate development proposals and the support of the community to this stance is very gratifying.

I can reassure Councillor Lipscomb that the work on the Local Development Framework, that will succeed the Local Plan, will provide for as robust a set of policies as currently exist. Furthermore, because of the greater degree of guidance, consultation and public involvement in general, that is currently part of the process, together with the greater flexibility that will allow the Council to adapt to meeting and tackling future demands, I am convinced that we will indeed be in a better position in future to protect all that we value in the Winchester District."



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**QUESTION 6**

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

“Could I be advised of the criteria which need to be met when looking to have a bus shelter erected and also what are the physical requirements in terms of space needed on the pavement?”

(Note - this relates to a request for a bus shelter in Ranelagh Road, Winchester)”

**Reply**

“When considering requests for new bus shelters the two main considerations are the visual impact on property near to potential sites and the availability of sufficient highway land, either verge or footway space, on which a shelter could be sited.

Where a new shelter uses footway space we look to maintain at least 1.8 metres footway width to allow for wheelchairs and children’s buggies. This can be a matter of judgment as some existing footways are already narrower than 1.8 metres. In such cases the existing footway width should be retained.

The availability of funding will also have to be considered. If within the Town Wards then this will fall to the Town Account to fund. If there are competing demands for limited funding then prioritisation would be undertaken based on the potential usage of shelters.”



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**QUESTION 7**

From: Councillor Jackson

To: The Leader

“Given the action apparently being taken by Test Valley Borough and East Hants District Councils in support of the post offices threatened with closure in their areas, how much revenue funding is Winchester City Council planning to make available to support its local post offices?”

**Reply**

“The Council responded robustly to the proposals of Post Office Ltd to close a number of post offices in the Winchester District. The only concession received in response to Council and particularly local community pressure, came at West Meon where an outreach service through the local shop was proposed and at Littleton where proposals for the community to run the Post Office resulted in a short delay in closure to allow negotiations to take place.

The Council has kept an interest in these negotiations but is not party to the detailed negotiations but understands that the indicative costs and charges initially put forward by the Post Office for Littleton have been withdrawn and fresh indications of cost (almost certainly to be increased) have yet to be published.

The Administration is committed to supporting our rural communities but given the current uncertainty over costs, it is difficult at this stage to have a clear understanding of financial implications of any support.

The County Council yesterday announced that it will be working with partners to launch a Village Community Grant Scheme to support rural businesses to increase use of village shops or create new ventures particularly in communities losing their post offices.

I and the other district council leaders will be meeting with the Leader of the County Council to discuss this project shortly. The outcome may well provide for a more strategic and sensible approach and I will report back to Council once that meeting has taken place.”





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**QUESTION 8**

From: Councillor Wagner

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

“Could the Portfolio Holder reassure the Council that given this Council signed up to the Enforcement Concordat some time ago, that relevant Officers in the Planning service understand and adhere to it?”

**Reply**

“The Enforcement Team are aware of the Concordat, which relates to enforcement on a wider basis than just Planning. Although they have not been specifically working to it, many of the principles set out in the Concordat, such as confirming advice in writing, discussing enforcement action prior to commencing it where appropriate and checking for consistency of approach, form part of the day to day working practices of the Officers.

As a result of the recent Informal Scrutiny process of the Enforcement Service, a new enforcement policy is being drawn up, which will take account of the contents of the Concordat where relevant to Planning.”



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**QUESTION 9**

From: Councillor Clear

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

“Could I be informed please of what steps are being taken to inform residents of Wickham Ward who have received the wrongly sent voting cards directing them to vote at the incorrect polling station? Several residents of Wickham are being asked to go to Knowle, which is completely wrong.”

**Reply**

“Within 24 hours of the mistake being drawn to the attention of the Electoral Services Unit, letters containing an apology and explanation were sent first class to the 109 properties concerned. This took place on 26 March 2008. On 7 April 2008, we were informed that an elector in Southwick Road, Wickham allegedly had not received notification of the correction. Therefore, for the avoidance of all doubt, we re-circulated all properties in that road. We have received no further queries from any of the electors concerned.

The electoral database will be amended to ensure that this error does not occur again.”



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**QUESTION 10**

From: Councillor Wagner

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Safety

“Could the Portfolio Holder please tell us what the District's household recycling rate was in April 2006 and what it is now?”

**Reply**

“The overall combined recycling and composting rate for 2005/06 was 20.19% as compared to the current rate of 36.7% although this figure is likely to increase further as the volumes of green waste increase over the summer months.

The significant improvement in performance is due to completion of the roll out of the Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC) methodology across the District which has been a success with no significant reductions in overall satisfaction with the refuse and recycling service.”