



**Winchester**  
City Council

**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 1**

From: Councillor Clear

To: The Leader

“Could the Leader, as Winchester City Council’s representative on Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) Joint Committee assure me that Winchester’s position on the future Fareham Strategic Development Area (SDA) of up to 10,000 houses, is that it should all be built within the Fareham Borough Council area, including the green infrastructure. If it is not possible to fit 10,000 houses plus the green infrastructure within the Borough’s boundaries, will Winchester be encouraging an SDA of an appropriate size that can fit?”

**Reply**

“Winchester’s position is that the whole of the SDA should be developed within Fareham Borough and this view was communicated through the City Council’s response to Fareham Borough Council’s Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation earlier this year.

However, our primary concern is to permanently protect the gaps between the SDA, Wickham and Knowle. If an option were put forward by Fareham which achieved this by utilising land in Winchester as green infrastructure associated with the SDA then we would need to look closely at the implications.

No decisions have been made on this as yet and we await Fareham’s ‘Preferred Options’ consultation which will make its position clearer (expected Spring 2009). Should any proposals for the green infrastructure for the SDA to be developed in Winchester be brought forward, that will be considered. Any such proposal would need to provide for that infrastructure to be appropriately sited and used to strengthen gaps, helping to achieve the separation between settlements that the South East Plan seeks, not to undermine it.”



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 2**

From: Councillor Jackson

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Access

"What did the Portfolio Holder do to promote the WhizzGo car club and what more could have been done to promote this excellent green transport initiative which has now been axed, after only 6 months, for lack of uptake?"

**Reply**

"The Council is most disappointed with the news of Whizzgo's cessation of services in Winchester.

The Whizzgo Car Club in Winchester was well publicised by both Whizzgo and the Council through various media publications and articles, and leaflets distributed to all businesses and residential properties within the area covered by the car club vehicles.

When the four major car club providers in the UK were asked for expressions of interest in running a car club in Winchester, only Whizzgo UK limited were prepared to do so without being financially supported by the Council.

Inevitably ventures such as a car club will have a 'lag time' during which time membership builds up and people adapt their travel habits, before the operation can provide a financial return. However, in August this year Whizzgo UK limited went into administration and were ultimately taken over by a new company, Whizzgo Europe Limited.

In the current financial climate the new company is simply seeking to limit its operation to those areas which are actually covering their costs/making money. This approach is somewhat disappointing as early feedback from Whizzgo indicated that the residential patronage in Winchester was building up in line with their business model, however they were hoping for a considerably higher corporate and business take up. Further discussion with new directors at Whizzgo have highlighted that they are in the process of removing operations from a number of other locations around the country.

The financial costs to the City Council were limited to the lining and signing and free use of four parking bays (two of which were newly created, therefore, no loss of income)."



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**QUESTION 3**

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing

“Does the Portfolio Holder share my belief that a cost effective way of increasing the Council's stock of 3, 4 and 5 bedroom properties is to convert lofts into additional rooms and does the Portfolio Holder ever envisage the Council being in a position to undertake any loft conversions?”

**Reply**

“Provisional allowance was originally made within the Indicative Supplementary Major Repairs and Renewals Programme in the 2007/08 and 2008/09 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plans to develop a small programme of loft conversion where appropriate that would allow growing families to stay in their homes.

However, higher priority works to enable Decent Homes Standard to be maintained over the period 2008/10 would mean that an additional funding resource would need to be identified to fund these works.

To date, no such funding source has yet been identified and notwithstanding the Government's commitment to a fundamental review of the HRA financing regime in 2009, it is unlikely that funding would be available because of other identified higher priority investment needs towards its housing stock over the next 5 years.”



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 4**

From: Councillor Wright

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“In view of the recent Government and LGA campaigns to insulate 50% of housing considered to be below the energy efficiency standards and recent letters in the Hampshire Chronicle, can the Portfolio Holder inform members about the latest Government figures published on carbon dioxide emissions and explain the source of these figures? (I understand that DEFRA has issued new figures for 2006 and revised more accurate figures for 2005). Can the Portfolio Holder tell Council where Winchester sits in comparison with similar local authorities?”

**Reply**

“National Statistics of carbon dioxide emissions for local authority areas for 2006, and revised figures for 2005, have been produced on behalf of Defra by AEA and released on 18 September 2008. Improvements have been made in accuracy of the datasets and these figures are now classified as full National Statistics, superseding the previous experimental statistics.

Two sets of statistics are available. Of greatest relevance to the council is the set reporting on National Indicator 186: ‘Per capita reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the Local Authority area’. 2005 is the baseline year for this indicator and Winchester District’s emissions are given as 8.7 tonnes per capita, with a reduction in 2006 to 8.5 tonnes per capita (a 2.3% reduction).

The indicator relies on centrally produced statistics to measure end user CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the Local Area from:

- Industry and Commercial - including public sector and excluding installations in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.
- Domestic Housing.
- Road Transport – excluding emissions from motorways.

This dataset excludes emissions from railways, land use and land use change, aviation and shipping. The exclusions were deemed to be emissions that LAs can be least expected to be responsible for and the scope of the indicator was chosen to be fair in terms of authority actions actually effecting change in the indicator, and where real change at the local level will be captured<sup>1</sup>.

The Defra guidance is quite clear that this data is not intended for use in making comparisons between Authorities as each will have its own circumstances, for example, some areas have heavy industry which could have very large emissions, while many have little heavy industry at all. Similarly some authorities will have more through traffic than others or will have more dispersed populations, so transport emissions may be higher for these reasons. Domestic emissions are less variable from place to place, but there are still many influencing factors that may need to be taken into account such as the fuel types used locally, the type and condition of the housing (including its insulation), the average temperature (and urban areas can be much warmer and therefore easier to heat than rural areas), average household size, type of household and the income and preferences of the occupiers.

NI 186 CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Estimates for Winchester District

Year	Industry and Commercial	Domestic	Road Transport	Total (kt CO <sub>2</sub> )	Population (mid-year estimate) (,000s)	Per capita emissions (t)
2005	347	306	294	948	109.5	8.7
2006	330	314	287	931	110	8.5

N.B. The second dataset has a slightly broader scope and are used in national reporting. This dataset includes emissions from motorways, installations in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and land use, but excludes emissions from aviation and shipping.

Full details of the results and methodology are available in the AEA research report and accompanying spreadsheet on the Defra Website <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A note on the methodology used can be found at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/globalatmos/download/regionalrpt/local-regionalco2-methodsumm06.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localgovindicators/ni186.htm>



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**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008**

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**QUESTION 5**

From: Councillor Lipscomb

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Access

“Will the Portfolio Holder note the positive response from users of Friarsgate Car Park to the recent programme of refurbishment? Will he confirm that the significant improvements were achieved within existing maintenance budgets and say when the car park was previously spruced up to this extent?”

**Reply**

“I can confirm that the improvements were financed from within existing car park maintenance budgets. An under-spend from 2007/08 was identified for this purpose and carried forward to 2008/09 to enable the works to take place.

Works of this nature have not taken place in Friarsgate car park for many years, at least 10. The recent works will provide a better environment for customers until the Silver Hill redevelopment takes place.”



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**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008**

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**QUESTION 6**

From: Councillor Mason

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“In view of more and more heavy rain occurring, is any extra effort being put in regarding leaf clearing, thus keeping drains clear and avoiding flooding?”

**Reply**

“In order to reduce the potential for flooding in high risk areas it is important that not only is leaf fall cleared effectively but also that the rainwater gullies are properly maintained to ensure they work properly when required.

The City Council plays its part through the annual leaf clearance programme which takes place each November and December based on a list of priority areas. These receive more frequent sweeping due to the risk of people slipping, particularly for the elderly and also the potential for localised flooding. Priority is also given to major thoroughfares in line with the Litter Code of Practice.

Environment Team staff work with Hampshire County Council who are responsible for ensuring that rainwater gullies operate effectively and for practical reasons the grids to gullies will be cleared by the City Council contractors during routine leaf clearance. Where problems are identified these are referred to the County Council’s Highway staff who have sole responsibility for ensuring that they are maintained in a fully working condition.

It is considered that the attention paid to the priority areas as well as the routine 8 weekly road sweeping programme meets the requirements of the City Council and it is for County Council to ensure that gulley maintenance is satisfactorily completed. The priority of this work was re-emphasised during the recent periods of particularly inclement weather.”



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**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008**

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**QUESTION 7**

From: Councillor Thompson

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Access

"What measures are being taken to combat ingress of water into the Tower Street car park?"

**Reply**

"The problems of water ingress at Tower Street Multi-storey Car Park associated with the refurbishment project at Ashburton Court are the result of the removal of the surface treatment on the top deck. This surface had to be removed to enable building works to take place. In order to mitigate the effect of this the drainage system has been inspected and cleared and pumps deployed to remove water that has seeped through the unsealed structure onto the lower car park decks. Until the surface is re-laid the structure will remain susceptible to water ingress. It is planned that the new surfacing will be laid in the next 2 to 3 months but this is dependent upon progress made by the contractors.

Once the structure has been made water tight the improvement works planned for the car parking areas will commence."





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City Council

**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 8**

From: Councillor Berry

To: The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Safety

“Following recent press comments, can the Portfolio Holder bring us up to date regarding the King Alfred Youth Club?”

**Reply**

“The City Council and other key agencies are working together to try to find a way to preserve this much needed facility which is located in an area of identified need. However, in doing so it is vital to ensure that robust business and financial management processes are put in place to secure the long-term sustainability of the operation. I have therefore asked Council officers to provide any professional advice and support that may be required at this crucial time. Please be assured that I am doing everything in my power to resolve the situation.”



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City Council

**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 9**

From: Councillor Cook

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Access

“Is the Portfolio Holder now satisfied that the findings and recommendations of the Informal Scrutiny Group on Planning Enforcement have all been implemented and will enable the Council to operate an efficient enforcement service to the satisfaction of the general public?”

**Reply**

“At their meeting on 17 July 2008 the Environment Scrutiny Panel considered a report (EN63) which updated Councillors on the recommendations arising from the investigation of the Planning Enforcement Informal Scrutiny Group into the effectiveness and efficiency of the Planning Enforcement Service. At that meeting the Environment Scrutiny Panel resolved to note the actions contained in the Enforcement Action Plan.

The Action Plan contains a total of 13 Actions and progress on them is as follows:

Completed: 3

In Progress: 8

Not yet commenced: 2

Of the two that have not yet commenced, one is a review of the enforcement policy, which is not due until July 2009 and the other is the establishment of Service Level agreements with other Council Departments, which the Portfolio Holder is investigating further.”



**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 10**

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency

“Could the Portfolio Holder outline the procedures involved when the Council negotiates the renewal of a lease with an existing tenant of a Council owned commercial property. What are the legal options open to the Council and tenant should they not be able to agree a revised rental figure?”

**Reply**

“The procedures are all contained in and prescribed by legislation. In summary if the Council wishes to grant a new lease to a tenant rather than seek to terminate that lease and provided that the tenant has ‘security of tenure’ the Council serves a formal notice in a prescribed form on the tenant. That form includes an explanation of the notice and its implications and advice to seek professional assistance.

The Council’s notice terminates the existing lease but also confirms that the Council would not object to the grant of a new lease. The Council must set out proposals for the renewal: the property to be comprised in the new tenancy, the rent to be payable under the new tenancy and the other (outline) terms of the new tenancy.

At this stage the parties or their professional advisors normally negotiate the terms of the new lease.

If the tenant wishes to protect their right to renew they need to apply to the Court before the termination date in the Council’s notice or come to a written agreement with the Council to defer proceedings.

If the tenant has protected their rights to a new lease and the parties fail to agree any of the terms of the new lease it is open for either party to refer the matter to Court for determination. The parties can agree to the use of PACT Professional Arbitration on Court Terms, as an alternative, but this is not common.

If the tenant has not protected their rights to a new lease then they have a much reduced negotiating position and no right for the matter to be determined by the Court.”



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**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 11**

From: Councillor Lipscomb

To: The Portfolio Holder for Performance and Organisational Development

“Will the Portfolio Holder confirm that, under the new arrangements whereby Officers may work from home, there should be no difficulty in contacting them seamlessly by telephone or e-mail?”

**Reply**

“As flexible working is rolled out across the organisation, changes to the telephony capabilities will be introduced to ensure that phone calls can be made to officers either homeworking, on mobile phones or in the office using published extension numbers. Proof of concept areas have shown that this works in a seamless manner and greatly improves the service available. IT links are also put in place to improve ability to contact officers via e-mail and improve access into back office systems.”



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**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 12**

From: Councillor Barratt

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Access

“I note from recent Planning Development Control papers that Winchester City Council now recognises the pressure current housing development is putting on the availability of school places. Could the Portfolio Holder please inform me how the Local Development Framework process will recognise the importance of extra land provision for schools in the City in order to cope with the proposed future increase in housing?”

**Reply**

“Hampshire County Council is a statutory consultee on the Core Strategy and has been involved in discussions about future education needs. A representative of the Adult Services Department attended most of the Core Strategy Stakeholder Meetings that were held during September and officers are continuing to liaise to ensure that the Core Strategy includes appropriate proposals and that these are deliverable. These are likely to include requirements for new schools in the case of large new development areas and requirements for contributions from developers of smaller schemes.

As the Core Strategy will take some time to complete and adopt, it is proposed that the City Council should adopt the County Council’s system of seeking developer contributions towards education provision. A report concerning this is due to be considered by Cabinet before Christmas.”



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**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 13**

From: Councillor Lipscomb

To: The Portfolio Holder for Performance and Organisational Development

“While recognising that some improvements have been made recently, does the Portfolio Holder accept that the Council's Intranet remains in significant need of overhaul of content and structure, in order for it to be a truly effective source of information for Members and staff alike?”

**Reply**

“The Intranet is in need of redevelopment and needs to be moved to a Content Management System, like the main website, to be a useful resource for members and staff. This would allow staff to update their own sections and not rely on the time of the Communications Team or the Web Development Officer to make changes.

The development of [www.winchester.gov.uk](http://www.winchester.gov.uk) has been viewed as a priority during the refresh of the design of this site and also the development of the new planning applications area. Increasingly however the Intranet will become a more important resource for communicating with staff as flexible working is rolled out across the organisation and people need an up to date relevant source of information available wherever they are working from.”



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 14**

From: Councillor Bell

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Access

“Given that policy encourages industrial use of redundant agricultural buildings and in view of a recent high profile appeal which has gone against the position of both the County and City Councils, would the Portfolio Holder agree it is now time to ensure that all such permissions have effective and unambiguous conditions which prevent our rural villages and farmyards from becoming 24 hour/365 day heavy industrial waste and haulage operations?”

**Reply**

“The Local Plan policies reflect the requirements of PPS7, Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, which encourages the facilitation and promotion of sustainable patterns of development and sustainable communities in rural areas through local planning policies. It advises that policies should be included to sustain, enhance and, where appropriate, revitalise country towns and villages (including through the provision of affordable housing) and for strong, diverse, economic activity, whilst maintaining local character and a high quality environment.”

This does not however give unrestricted licence for industrial use of redundant agricultural buildings, and as with other policies in the Local Plan there are certain criteria that must be met for an application to be acceptable. If those criteria are met and permission is granted, then consideration must be given to appropriate conditions, and as each site has different constraints and circumstances, it would not be reasonable to impose blanket conditions restricting hours and nature of operations being carried out. For example where a site is remote from neighbouring properties and has good access it is likely to be able to accommodate a more intensive and less restricted form of development than that with residential properties immediately adjacent to it.

In imposing conditions on planning permissions regard must always be had to Government Circular 11/95 – The use of conditions in planning permissions – which stresses that conditions should only be imposed where they are both

necessary and reasonable, as well as enforceable, precise and relevant both to planning and to the development to be permitted. In imposing a condition it should always be considered whether planning permission would have to be refused if the requirements of the condition were not imposed. If it would not, then the condition requires special and precise justification. The Circular also advises that inappropriate or unreasonable use of conditions damages public confidence in the planning system.

It should also be noted that when applications go to appeal, the Secretaries of State or Planning Inspectors fully examine reasoned suggestions from the parties concerned in relation to conditions, and will not impose those they consider to be invalid or unacceptable on policy grounds.”





## COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008

### Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

#### QUESTION 15

From: Councillor Lipscomb

To: The Portfolio Holder for Performance and Organisational Development

“Will the Portfolio Holder set out in his reply the Council's published service standards for handling correspondence (including electronic) and telephone calls and say what proportion of correspondence and (separately) telephone calls is presently being dealt with in accordance with those standards, on a Division by Division basis?”

#### Reply

“The standards are as follows:-

#### **Letters, faxes, SMS text messages and e-mails**

We aim to respond to letters, faxes, SMS texts messages and e-mails within 10 working days, or give you an explanation for any delay and an indication of when you may hear from us. We will use language that is easy to read and understand and explain any complex or technical terms. We will be clear and concise and give a named contact and telephone number.

Achievement of this target for written correspondence is not at present recorded centrally, the table below shows where data are collated by divisions – our priority has been monitoring by customer facing teams. We are at present implementing an electronic system, as part of Project Retriever, which will allow all correspondence to be monitored against our target.

We do not record performance in answering e-mails save within the Customer Service Centre, but are considering how best that can be done in future.

#### **Telephones**

We aim to answer 80% of telephone calls within 20 seconds. We will state clearly the name of the service and give a name if asked. We will respond to answer phone messages by the end of the next working day. We will tell callers the name of the department or individual we are transferring them to and check that the person is available before putting the call through.

Telephone response data shown below cover the period from 1/4/08 – 31/10/08.

	1 <sup>st</sup> April – 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct 2008	Q2 2008/9
Division	Percentage of Telephone calls answered within 20 seconds	Percentage of correspondence answered within 10 working days during Q2 2008
Customer Services	80% Combination of switchboard and CSC contact centre	100% of emails received into <a href="mailto:customerservice@winchester.gov.uk">customerservice@winchester.gov.uk</a> answered within 10 working days.
Democratic Services	82%	100%
Environment	85%	Not monitored
Building Control	80%	Not monitored – the bulk of correspondence relates to cases, which are subject to statutory deadlines, where we achieve 100% compliance
Planning	69%	96.4% (sample)
Revenues	96%	Benefits – 95.68% Business Rates – 92.62% Council Tax – 83.50% Exchequer – 100%
Partnerships & Comms	78%	Not monitored
Strategic Planning	69%	Not monitored
Legal Services	92%	88.4%
Landlord Services	72%	Not available due to changeover from manual to Retriever system monitoring
Strategic Housing	83%	Not Monitored
Access & Infrastructure	74%	Report unavailable until 5 <sup>th</sup> Nov
Cultural Services	89%	97%
Estates	86%	Not monitored
Financial Services	85%	100%
IM&T	86%	To be confirmed
Organisational Development	tbc	Not monitored



## COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008

### Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

#### QUESTION 16

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Access

“Does the Portfolio Holder share my concern that it is now approaching 4 years since the Grange Road/Grange Close development (in St Michael’s Ward) was completed, yet the highways improvements which were part of the conditions of the planning permission are still outstanding? Could the Portfolio Holder update me on progress?”

#### Reply

“The development in question was granted permission in March 2003 (ref: 01/02440/FUL). It was subject to a number of conditions, and to legal agreements to secure, amongst other things, off site highway works as follows:

- Improvement to bus stop - HCC are going to take a contribution\*
- Footway on western side south of Grange Road) - HCC are going to take a contribution\*
- New S278 Agreement for improvements to first part of Grange Road and Grange Close (to include resurfacing and remedial works), visibility splays and tactile paving, and a dropped crossing to get from one side of the road to the other where the footway ends (on the south side).

\* these monies may be used for other works if works in 1 & 2 prove not feasible.

As this issue relates to highway matters, there has been no input required from City Council Officers, and in order to provide this response City Council officers contacted County Council Officers, who advise that they have been in protracted liaison with the developer on these matters and still are. They advise that the developer has the money and the intentions to carry out the works once they have been agreed. It appears that the works originally identified in the S106 proved virtually impossible to carry out because of ground levels and would have required retaining wall and removal of trees etc.

The works required have therefore now changed and will be subject to a new S278 Agreement and new S106 Agreement for the financial contributions which County officers are working towards.

There was a restriction that the properties should not be occupied before compliance with the S278 agreement, but as the works specified proved not to be feasible no enforcement action was taken by the County.”



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City Council

**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 November 2008**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 17**

From: Councillor Collin

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“Could the relevant Portfolio Holder please tell me if there are any plans for kerbside collection of glass? What is the status of investigations into the feasibility of this extension to the recycling service.

Could the relevant Portfolio Holder also tell me if there are any plans for this administration to introduce a weekly collection service for residual waste?”

**Reply**

“There are no plans to introduce a separate kerbside collection of glass in the foreseeable future. An initial scoping exercise estimated that the cost of providing such a service would be in the region of £250,000 and with an expected increase of only 2% in the amount of glass collected it was considered not to represent good value for money.

However, I recognise the need to continue to capture this important fraction of recyclables and we will therefore continue to run our comprehensive network of bring sites around the District which provide convenient locations for use by the public. It is also planned to run a promotional campaign on glass recycling shortly using the advertising panels recently installed on the fleet of refuse freighters for this purpose.

There are also no plans to reintroduce a weekly residual waste collection service. City Council residents currently recycle approximately 40% of their waste which is well in excess of the target of 30% set by Government. Options to collect food waste separately are not feasible at present due to the significant collection costs (in excess of £1 million revenue per annum), capital costs of purchasing and distributing storage bins/caddies to each household (£700-800k) and lack of disposal facilities within the County.”