



**COUNCIL MEETING – 27 September 2012**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 1**

From: Councillor Evans

To: The Portfolio Holder for New Homes Delivery

“Could the Portfolio Holder confirm that the Council is totally committed to the Council’s SPD Policy 3 which states that affordable housing should be well integrated with market housing, no groupings of more than 5 affordable dwellings and that the affordable housing should be pepperpotted?”

**QUESTION 2**

From: Councillor Scott

To: The Portfolio Holder for New Homes Delivery

“Could the Portfolio Holder confirm the policy requirements for “pepper potting” affordable housing into a new development and how does she think the Council should approach our own housing schemes if we are only ever going to propose 100% affordable rented property with no other tenure types being offered?”

**Reply**

“Pepper potting’ of new build properties is not a Council policy objective whether for mixed developments or for new Council housing schemes. The aim of both planning policy and the Housing Strategy in this area is the creation of successful thriving communities.

The Affordable Housing SPD is the Council’s adopted guidance on this matter, supplementing policy H.5 of the 2006 Local Plan and CP.3 of the emerging Local Plan Part 1. This policy seeks good integration and to avoid large groups of single tenure dwellings.

The reference to 5 units is part of the explanatory text of the SPD, which states: ‘as a guide, there should normally be no groupings of more than 5 affordable dwellings..’. Therefore, this reference should be viewed as a guide

and an element of judgment will always be appropriate, rather than applying the policy inflexibly or without regard to the nature of the scheme.

Importantly, the SPD acknowledges that it would be unwise to simply 'design by numbers', recognising that the creation of sustainable inclusive communities is far more complex than simply mixing tenures - which can be taken at times as a poor proxy. Relationships between dwellings at a street level, location on thoroughfares and opportunities created for informal interaction (e.g. through the use of well designed and located public spaces) are amongst the key ingredients in creating successful mixed communities and are addressed at detail design stage. Allocation policies and community lettings plans also have a role to play in creating successful communities.

In terms of the Council's own build programme, the Development Strategy states that the Council will primarily be building homes for rent. This Strategy does, however, sit within the context of the overarching Housing Strategy and its ambitions to create sustainable, inclusive communities. The Development Strategy states that 'where there is scope or a need to provide a mixture of tenures to ensure balanced communities the Council may work with partners so that each can concentrate on development which best suits their experience and expertise'."



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**QUESTION 3**

From: Councillor Hiscock

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

"Will the Portfolio Holder tell me how many new glass bring sites have been installed since 2010, how many more glass bring sites are now available for public use than before 2010, and how have they been publicised?"

**Reply**

"At the time that the depot services contract was put out to tender in April 2011, there were 83 recycling bring sites listed and during the last inventory in May 2012, the number was 80.

The number of bring sites regularly changes as they are either taken out of service at the request of the land owner because of a building or land sale or additional ones are requested. The City Council has little control over this process although the District is still well provided with a network of bring sites for public use in most locations. However, opportunities are always sought for additional sites where there is sufficient demand to justify collections.

Publicity for the bring sites is via the waste and recycling pages of the City Council's website which contains a full listing for the district as well as other recycling information."



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#### QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Warwick

To: The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture and Sport

“Following the success of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, what sporting legacy is the City Council planning?”

#### Reply

“At September’s Cabinet meeting, the Leader recorded his pleasure in the part Winchester played in these national celebrations. Though the efforts of our own staff, supported by many local organisations, businesses and volunteers, we rolled out a programme of initiatives which ensured that every club, every parish and every school in the Winchester District was given an opportunity to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime event.

There are three clear strands to the legacy work we are currently developing, in close consultation with the Winchester District Sports and Physical Activity Alliance. These are:

- 1) building on the community spirit and support for public events that the Olympics and Paralympics have inspired in local people;
- 2) supporting grassroots sport in clubs and societies across the District, helping them to nurture talent and provide opportunities for all; and
- 3) helping where we can to develop the facilities needed to encourage participation.

To this end, we have already sent out invitations to all sports clubs and organisations to attend a Legacy Conference on Monday 15 October at 7pm in Winchester Guildhall, to which fellow Members are warmly invited. As you know, we continue to explore options for the future of River Park Leisure Centre, with a further paper to be considered by Cabinet later this year. And next week sees the first meeting of a brand new disability sports forum, which will be represented on the SPAA and reflects the upsurge in interest in disability sports following the Paralympics.

As the 2012 Champion for the Council, I will ensure you are kept informed as these initiatives progress.”



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**QUESTION 5**

From: Councillor Clear

To: The Leader

“May I have the Leader's assurance that in future all Ward Councillors are informed of any City Council meetings being held in their ward, relating specifically to ward matters?”

**Reply**

“We already endeavour to ensure that all Ward Members are made aware of public meetings organised by the City Council within their ward.

It is neither practical nor appropriate to advise colleagues of all visits by Portfolio Holders in the course of undertaking their responsibilities.”



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**QUESTION 6**

From: Councillor McLean

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“Is the Portfolio Holder able to clarify the link between the grass cutting contract and the management of shrubbery and verges on council owned land, especially our tenanted properties?”

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm that the contract allows for the maintenance of said Items?”

**Reply**

“All sites within the grounds maintenance contract are covered by the wording within the contract documents and also the information contained within the Council’s Geographical Information System (GIS). The contract documents specify the work to be carried out to different categories of land and vegetation the details of which are displayed on the GIS system.

It is not unusual for sites to be subject to both grass cutting and shrub maintenance regimes although the work may be carried out at different times of the year. However the programme of work should be such that neither activity should interfere with the other.

Where problems are experienced due to poor programming or incompleteness of works by the contractor then the rectification and default procedures can be used to address performance issues.

Any City Councillor with specific problems of this type in their ward should initially contact the contract monitoring team on 01962 848 540 who will be able to clarify the works expected for an individual site and carry out inspections to ensure that it is being satisfactorily completed. Members of the public should be advised to report problems using the main contact number which is 0300 300 0013.”



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**QUESTION 7**

From: Councillor Cook

To: The Leader

“Having regard to the reduction in staff numbers during the period of this administration, would the Leader review the Council’s published objectives with a view to making them more realistic in the current economic climate?”

**Reply**

“The Annual Corporate Planning process takes full account of the financial and staffing resources available, and the Administration is careful to ensure we can deliver what is planned.”



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**QUESTION 8**

From: Councillor Gottlieb

To: The Portfolio Holder for New Homes Delivery

“Could the Portfolio Holder please advise me of the progress of the Council’s New Homes Delivery Programme, and in particular what opportunities there are to provide additional affordable homes in the Itchen Valley?”

**Reply**

“I am pleased to be able to say that the new Council housing scheme at Station Hill, Itchen Abbas for 5 family homes will be submitted for planning approval in the week commencing the 1 October 2012. If consent is granted then a start on site will be made in February or March depending on the tendering process and the availability of contractors.

If Councillor Gottlieb is aware of other sites in the Itchen Valley which have a suitable planning status and where there is support for the delivery of new Council homes then I would be delighted to discuss these with him.

With regard to the overall Council new build programme a full update will be provided at the Cabinet (Housing Delivery) Committee at its next meeting on the 22 October 2012. However, in summary I can report that, Dever Close (Micheldever) will start on site on the 22 October, Bourne Close (Otterbourne) was submitted for planning approval on the 20 September and the community consultation on with the residents of Abbots Barton is scheduled to begin in early October.

Overall these schemes will provide approximately 70 new Council owned homes in the next 2 years.”





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#### QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Pines

To: The Portfolio Holder for New Homes Delivery

“In view of the proposed £300,000 Estate Improvement fund recently agreed for Stanmore, could the Portfolio Holder:

- a) list what bids have been granted for the other major estates
- b) list what further proposals are in line for those estates
- c) indicate whether Estate Improvement funding comes only from the Housing Revenue Account, or whether there is contribution from the General Rate Fund
- d) provide the general criteria which are used to assess the value of different competing bids?”

#### Reply

“The base programme for Estate Improvements totals £250,000 and is directly funded from the Housing Revenue Account, as is the additional provision for Stanmore.

In response to a) and b) above, schemes that have either been completed, approved or are subject to feasibility in the current year include:

Winnall –	Additional Parking at the flats	£50,000
	Play area in grounds of the flats	£50,000
Highcliffe -	Improved/replacement fencing	£50,000
	Dropped kerbs in Gordon Ave	£10,000
Weeke -	Door Entry to Trussell Crescent	£20,000
	Parking for Stoney Lane Bungalows	£30,000

Provision has also been made for a number of parking improvements on housing land across the district. Full details of all schemes will be reported to the November meeting of the Cabinet Housing Committee.

Proposals for the programme far outweighed available resources this year, largely due to the number received from councillors, staff and residents in relation to parking and communal housing areas in Stanmore. The additional resources approved has meant that all areas can benefit from the scheme and a backlog of work has been avoided.

Additional proposals for the 2013/14 programme for all areas are welcomed and all stakeholders will be reminded of the bidding process in the near future.

The general criteria for schemes was set out in CAB2267(HSG) dated 6 December 2011.

The budget is specifically for projects on housing land which will address the following community issues:

- Community safety – for example, lighting, door entry systems
- Car parking
- Environmental – for example, bin areas, fencing, landscaping

Other proposals have been, and will continue to be considered, but priority is given to the above.

Submitted proposals are considered by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Head of Housing Services, taking into account:

- Cost of proposal
- The scope for any match/joint funding from other sources
- The scope for the proposal to be funded from another source
- Number of tenants benefiting from the proposal
- Severity of issue
- Other projects that have been undertaken or are currently in progress in the location.”



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**QUESTION 10**

From: Councillor Tod

To: The Portfolio Holder for New Homes Delivery

“Can the Portfolio Holder outline what concrete improvements have been made since the last meeting to bring the way that the programme is communicated to the public under tighter control?”

**Reply**

“At the Cabinet (Housing Delivery) Committee on 18 September 2012 Members approved the Council’s Development Strategy, Chapter 10 of this document clearly sets out the Council’s position on Communication and Tenant Involvement. Elsewhere on the Agenda at this meeting a further report on Additional Development Opportunities outlined the potential new housing opportunities at Stanmore and Abbots Barton and how the particular communities were going to be being consulted. The Appendix to the report sets out the Member approval process for new housing schemes and at what stage both Members and the local communities will be consulted and informed.

I believe that both the Development Strategy and the scheme approval and communication process clearly demonstrates my commitment, and the importance I attach to communicating with the public what the Council’s new build ambitions are and how these will be delivered. Tenants and Members of all parties have had the opportunity to view and comment on these proposals and where appropriate these have been incorporated.”



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**QUESTION 11**

From: Councillor Southgate

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

“How many car parks in the Winchester District have now achieved The Park Mark Safer Parking Award?”

**Reply**

“With the recent award made to our Crowder Terrace (season ticket holders only) car park, we now have a total of nineteen car parks which have achieved the ParkMark Safer Parking Award.

Winchester City Council has the highest number of ParkMark awards in Hampshire demonstrating our commitment to providing safe parking environments for our customers.

**Car parks with awards**

Alresford Station, Alresford  
Basingwell Street, Bishops Waltham  
Chesil Street (Surface), Winchester  
Chesil Multi-Storey, Winchester  
Colebrook Street, Winchester  
Cossack Lane, Winchester  
Crowder Terrace, Winchester  
Durngate, Winchester  
East Winchester Park and Ride (Barfield)  
East Winchester Park and Ride (St Catherines)  
Gladstone Street, Winchester  
Jewry Street, Winchester  
Lower Lane, Bishops Waltham  
Middle Brook Street, Winchester  
River Park Leisure Centre, Winchester  
St Peters, Winchester  
South Winchester Park and Ride  
The Brooks Centre, Winchester  
Tower Street, Winchester”



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**QUESTION 12**

From: Councillor J Berry

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Administration

“Would the Council be able to accommodate the Hampshire Savers Credit Union in the City offices in such a way that it could provide a cash handling facility?”

**Reply**

“The Credit Union used to operate out of the former parking office in Middle Brook Street. When this facility was no longer available, the Council sought to assist the Credit Union by making space available to them in the City Offices reception area. However, due to the fact that cash transactions were to be undertaken the Council's insurers advised that this activity should not be undertaken in an open environment. The Credit Union do, however, use the reception area once a week to give advice and to sign up new members.

At present, it is not possible to identify a workable way for the Credit Union to provide a cash handling facility, but this situation will be kept under review.”



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**QUESTION 13**

From: Councillor Bodtger

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Administration

"Could the Portfolio Holder confirm if actual General Fund spending and the income during this financial year are in line with the forecast in the budget agreed by this Council in February 2012?"

**Reply**

"Since the Budget was approved by the Council in February there have been changes in respect of supplementary estimate approvals (£77k) and brought forward expenditure from 2011/12 (totaling £417k), which was approved by the Council in July.

The results of a review of actual income and expenditure in the year to July was reported to the Cabinet in September (CAB2377) and proposed no changes to the Budget. As is usual with a budget of this size there are some variations that are being monitored which were identified in the report."



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**QUESTION 14**

From: Councillor Cook

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Administration

“Has a comparison been done of the cost of operating the current committee and ISG system, against the traditional committee system it replaced?”

**Reply**

“No such assessment has been done. The Council was required by statute to move to the system of cabinet governance, so we did not have a choice. We do, however, keep that system under regular review to ensure it is effective.

Recent changes to our arrangements for overview and scrutiny to make greater use of Informal Scrutiny Groups represent a different way of using our resources. Whilst there are no significant savings resulting from those changes, they do provide better opportunities for more in-depth, productive consideration of important topics.”