



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Power

To: The Leader

“Would the Leader agree that the value of meetings would be best judged were an estimate of the costs, including preparation, attendance and documentation, appended to the minutes?”

Reply

“No. I judge meeting by whether they make a useful contribution to making life better for our communities, and by the quality of the contributions made by my fellow Councillors. If a meeting is well managed and those attending have thought beforehand about what they wish to say, then the costs Cllr Power refers to are simply the necessary costs of the democratic process.

To try and assess a meeting according to costs rather than the difference it makes seems to me to suggest a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of a democratic body such as the Council.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Weir

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing

“Could the Leader tell us whether the number of households in the Winchester district suffering fuel poverty on the standard (DECC) definition has increased or decreased since 2010?

What is the City Council doing to help those living in Winchester who are suffering fuel poverty?”

Reply

“The latest figures for households in fuel poverty are from 2010 when it was estimated that there were 5,212 households affected which represents 11.2% of the Winchester District. This compares to a national average of 16.4% and 11.5% in the South East Region for the same period.

The City Council actively engages in projects to address fuel poverty, wherever possible linking these to other priorities such as the climate change and economic prosperity agendas. A significant number of privately owned properties as well as Council stock have benefited from improved insulation as a result of various national and local energy funding initiatives, including “Heatseekers”, “Insulate Hampshire” and the Government’s current renewable energy programmes.

The City Council is now building on this work as part of ‘Switch Hampshire’ a project run in conjunction with Hampshire County Council to provide a simple mechanism for households to collectively switch to cheaper and greener energy tariffs.

Projects are also underway to maximise the impact of the recently launched Government Green Deal scheme including participation in a project across the PUSH area and a joint project with WinACC which secured £136,000 of government funding to promote the scheme and target Winnall as a priority estate and mobile homes in Colden Common which are known to have insulation challenges.

Finally, the City Council works closely with the Hampshire Credit Union on the delivery of services which help households pay their priority bills such as energy services as part of the management of their personal finances.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Gottlieb

To: The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Economic Development

“The Inspector’s finding that the Local Plan Part 1 can be adopted is obviously very good news and puts Winchester City Council far more in control of its own destiny. Could the Portfolio Holder, though, kindly provide a brief indication of when the plan will actually be adopted and the key events subsequently?”

Reply

“I too very much welcome the fact that the Inspector’s recommendations will enable the Council to adopt the Local Plan within the ‘transition period’ set by Government. In view of the urgency of getting new policies in place I hope that the Cabinet meeting on 13 March will recommend adoption of the Plan to a special meeting of the full Council to be held on 20 March. Once the decision to adopt the Plan is made and publicised the Plan becomes statutory and will replace a raft of policies from the 2006 Local Plan which the Council wants to update.

I therefore expect the Local Plan Part 1 to be statutorily adopted in March at which point it will provide the strategic planning framework for Local Plan Part 2 and Neighborhood Plans. Work is now underway on Local Plan Part 2, to the programme set out in the Council’s Local Development Scheme. Adoption of Local Plan Part 1 will also enable the Council to progress its Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule and to get this in place before strict limitations on the use of S106 obligations come into place in April 2014.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Collin

To: The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Economic Development

“Is the Portfolio Holder aware that the old Guildhall clock on Lloyds Bank is not working again? Are there any plans to ensure that it's fixed and can the Portfolio Holder predict how long that will take?”

Reply

“Lloyds Bank recently undertook an extensive refurbishment of the clock to restore it to working order. Following a report that the clock was not working again, the Head of Estates wrote to Lloyds on 12 February requesting that the clock be restored to working order. Members will be pleased to hear that Contractors have been engaged by the Bank to repair the clock and are awaiting the delivery of a part for the mechanism. It is anticipated that the replacement part will be installed early in March.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Wright

To: The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Economic Development

“Can the Portfolio Holder update me on the decision made by members and officers at the Cabinet (Local Development Framework) Committee held on 17 December 2012, to make available to all members, Planning Inspectors and (Legal) Court decisions on wind farms and wind turbines?”

Reply

“The Cabinet (Local Development Framework) Committee held on 17 December 2012 made the following resolutions:

1. That after taking into consideration Councillor Wright’s Notice of Motion, it be agreed that a Supplementary Planning Document to provide additional guidance on renewable energy developments in Winchester District is not needed.
2. That the officers report to the Committee if any issues raised by the consideration of a future application for wind farm development at Bullington Cross might suggest the need for further consideration.

The Committee did not, therefore, resolve to make available immediately appeal decisions and case law on wind farms and wind turbines to all Members. The minutes of the meeting note that the information contained within the Report would be a useful reminder for those Members serving on the Planning Development Control Committee and that the contents of the Report should be brought to their attention. There was also discussion of the need for reports on any future planning applications to refer to relevant appeal decisions, case law, etc. Accordingly, any actions arising from discussion at the Cabinet (LDF) Committee will be picked up when reporting on relevant applications in the future to Planning Development Control Committee.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Hutchison

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“Is the Portfolio Holder satisfied that everything possible is being done to minimise the leakage of methane into the atmosphere from landfill sites in Winchester District, and will he explore with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Economic Development the potential for turning landfill gas into an economically viable energy source?”

Reply

“The City Council is looking at the potential of a number of renewable technologies within the District as part of its Climate Change Programme including the option to harvest methane gas from old landfill sites as this is known to be an aggressive greenhouse gas. Any gas collected can be used to fuel engines on site in order to generate electricity or locally flared with a significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions within the District.

The implementation of such solutions will require a cross agency approach and support by Government particularly where landowners are difficult to trace or engage in developing solutions. Each site will also have to be considered on a case by case basis using expertise from various services across the City Council.

The role of such technology will be among the options considered within a proposed low carbon route map for the district commissioned by the City Council and included the involvement of the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Economic Development within the selection process.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Scott

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

“Could the Portfolio Holder advise me whose responsibility it is to maintain the speed humps in Stanmore Lane which are in a poor state of repair, and is she aware of any major repairs planned for this route?”

Reply

“The responsibility for these works lies with the County Council as highway authority. I am aware that Cllr Scott, Cllr Green and Cllr Tait approached the County Council to examine the state of the speed humps and that the Executive Member and County officers did do so.

As a result the resurfacing of the speed humps has been included in the highway works programme for 2013/14 although there is no definitive timetable as yet.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Cook

To: The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture and Sport

“What Consultancy was appointed to carry out the Study on the Future of the River Park Leisure Centre?”

What specific qualifications and experience had the appointed Consultancy in the specialist area of Leisure and Sports Centre development?

In the brief for this Consultancy work, was any preference indicated for a new major multi sport facility sited at Bar End over the refurbishment/or re-build of the River Park Leisure Centre?”

Reply

“Continuum Sport and Leisure consultancy has been appointed to carry out the work set out in the brief approved by Cabinet. Full details of the consultants’ experience can be obtained from their website www.continuumleisure.co.uk

The brief does not require a direct judgement to be made about the future of River Park. It requires the preparation of a business case for a new facility which can then be tested against the alternative courses of action, including refurbishment of River Park. A detailed condition survey of River Park is underway and will be completed shortly.

The consultants have been briefed to proceed on the basis that the location of any new facility would be in the Winchester urban area but beyond that not to make any assumptions about location.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Gemmell

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Administration

"Could the Portfolio Holder tell us what other surrounding Councils have announced by way of change to the Council Tax?"

Reply

"Most Council's have not yet set their Council Tax but the best information that I currently have is that out of the 14 Local Authorities in Hampshire most are proposing to freeze their Council tax, 4 are proposing to increase the tax and 1 is proposing a slight reduction (15p pa on a band D equivalent)."



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Achwal

To: The Leader

“Why did the Leader make an announcement in public at the Cabinet meeting held on 13 February about the extra 500 houses planned for North Whiteley before the Ward Councillors were informed?”

Reply

“I announced at Cabinet that the Council had received the final Inspector’s Report on the Local Plan Part 1, and was pleased to note he had endorsed work done by the Council in finding us ‘sound’. The Inspector’s recommendations are, of course, binding.

There is no question of any Member being kept in the dark, we are bound to publish the report as soon as reasonably practicable after receipt and this we did.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Southgate

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

"The opening of the Hockley Viaduct Cycle Way is most welcome but could the Portfolio Holder update the Council on progress with the provision of a signal controlled pedestrian and cycle crossing at the Bushfield Roundabout?"

Reply

"I have been in correspondence with Cllr Kendall at the County Council regarding the crossing at the Bushfield roundabout. The County Council is satisfied that the existing arrangement is safe for the expected level of usage, and a Safety Audit has been completed.

However, Cllr Kendall has also agreed that a survey will be conducted in Autumn 2013 to determine whether the level of usage is greater than expected and if so whether this justifies the implementation of a controlled crossing. If it does then a suitable location will have to be determined and funding obtained.

I think this is a helpful position and we look forward to working with the County Council to ensure the success of the new route."



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 12

From: Councillor J Berry

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Administration

“How is Winchester City Council engaging with Hampshire County Council and other partners to develop, manage and promote the new localised welfare provision which replaces the Community Care grant and Crisis Loan elements of the discretionary Social Fund after April 2013?”

Reply

“The County Council is responsible for responding to this change. Officers have been involved in fact finding discussions with colleagues from the County and will be attending a Local Welfare Provision (LWP) Workshop on 1 March which should clarify the Council’s role once the new provisions commence on 1 April.

Currently the County Council does not propose to offer a direct replacement for the Social Fund, and will not therefore process applications for money or goods. Instead it intends to put a range of sustainable support measures in place utilising existing statutory and voluntary sector services. The proposed measures include placing funds with relevant organisations in each district (including WCC Housing department); establishing a voucher system to allow local organisations to target spending effectively; providing development support for food banks and furniture projects and offering a staffed telephone helpline to give advice to people in need.

The LWP arrangements will be refined over the course of the next few months, and the Council will continue to work with the County Council to ensure that suitable provision is made for Winchester residents.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Miller

To: The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Economic Development

“At a recent economic conference business in 21st Century held at Intech and during this there was a video interview with Rt Hon George Osborne, The Chancellor of Exchequer, who seemed to be fully aware of the how successful the Winchester area was and hoped that the conference was a success.

Could the Portfolio Holder please tell us how many businesses attended?”

Reply

“Winchester City Council held its first economic conference, ‘Business in the 21st Century’ on Thursday 14 February 2013 at Intech, Winchester. 130 attendees were booked onto the event of which 68 people represented businesses from across the District. Other representatives were from local business networks e.g. Winchester BID and Southern Entrepreneurs, the voluntary sector, e.g. WACA, and organisations and teams from across Winchester City Council taking stands at the event.

The main part of the conference featured some exciting key note speakers including David Frost CBE, Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership network, and Chris Cooper from IBM speaking about the future of ‘smart’ business. There was also a short film of the Rt Honorable George Osborne MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer, congratulating Winchester on its forward looking business community.

The conference also featured a chance for delegates to network, not only with one another, but with Winchester City Council officers and selected partner organisations. It was an excellent opportunity for officers from Environmental Health, Licensing, Planning and other teams and commissioned organisations to show that the Council is open for business.

My thanks go to the Economy and Arts team – Eloise Appleby, Kate Cloud, Alison Woods and Flis Pitman – and all the other officers who helped to make this an excellent event.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 14

From: Councillor Byrnes

To: The Leader

“Can the Leader give the Council an indication of potential future topics for the Barton Farm Forum?”

Reply

“The Barton Farm Forum will cover a wide range of issues relevant to the successful development of the new community.

At its next meeting the main topic will be an explanation of the agreed parameters for transport and traffic. Future meetings will consider design codes, community infrastructure, landscape and open space and the implementation programme. It should be noted that the development process is a dynamic one and therefore the agenda of the Forum will have to be flexible to meet the requirements of an evolving timetable for decision making.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 15

From: Councillor Wright

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

“In light of the recent accident involving a child in the City Centre, can the Portfolio Holder supply all Members with the accident figures for the last 5 years, for both Winchester City and the District?”

Reply

“Cllr Wright will be aware that there are no definitive figures for the number of accidents on the highway as many are minor collisions which are not reported to the police or other authorities. However, with regard to the number of reported casualties from road traffic accidents, the figures for Winchester District as supplied by Hampshire County Council are as follows:

Cas	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Fatal	9	8	2	2	2	23
Serious	85	95	97	85	74	436
Slight	471	412	362	392	360	1997
Total	565	515	461	479	436	2456

The number of accidents which generate these casualties is slightly lower as regrettably some involve more than one casualty. It has not been possible to obtain a breakdown for the Winchester City area alone.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 16

From: Councillor Cook

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing

“What are the current procedures or systems for ensuring that Council Houses are occupied by the named tenant?”

Could he state if any Council Houses are either being rented out by absentee ‘landlords’ or are unused by the named tenant, but being retained in order to achieve the qualifying years to enable a purchase to be made in the future?”

Reply

“Tenancy Conditions are signed by all tenants when being issued the keys to their new home. Included in the Conditions is The Tenant’s Charter under the Housing Act 1985, which gives tenants certain rights and responsibilities and includes the following: *“You may sub-let part of the property, but only with the permission of the Head of Housing Services. You are not permitted to sub-let the whole of your property”*.

Winchester City Council will investigate all reported cases of sub-letting or if a property is being unoccupied and will assess the quality of evidence gathered and make recommendations for further action. The investigation would include regular visits to the property and discussion with neighbours and any relevant agencies.

If the tenant has not contacted the Council nor completed a termination form but is not living at the property, a Notice to Quit would be considered in order to take the necessary steps to gain possession of the property.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 17

From: Councillor Scott

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing

“Could the Portfolio Holder reassure me that appropriate measures are in place to deal with homelessness within this District especially in times of adverse weather conditions, and more specifically when it is very cold?”

Reply

“The Council has significantly increased its own stock of temporary accommodation to improve opportunities for those facing homelessness in the District and is working closely with voluntary sector partners to deliver a comprehensive package of measures to tackle homelessness. These include setting up ‘No Second Night Out’ arrangements for homeless people and piloting a personalised budget approach to assist entrenched rough sleepers. I also hosted a meeting on 15 February with voluntary sector providers, Supporting People Commissioners and officers to discuss initiatives to improve our service offer to homeless people.

Over the winter months, the Nightshelter offers up to five additional emergency bed spaces under Severe Weather Emergency Procedures, and these arrangements are activated during periods of severe cold. Further information is contained in the briefing note circulated to all Members on 24 January.

A report describing further details of the Council’s current approach to homelessness will be submitted to Cabinet (Housing) Committee in March 2013.”