



COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Evans

To: The Leader

“As I am sure the Leader is aware the recent exhibition of Roger Brown's model of Victorian Winchester at the Great Hall was so popular that it had to be extended. Could the Portfolio Holder please confirm that she will continue to work with partners to try and ensure a permanent display location for Roger's model which contributes much to Winchester's historical background?”

Reply

“Roger Brown's model is held in great affection locally, and its impressive attention to detail has meant that it often informs the work of architects, historians and other professionals as well as inspiring residents and visitors alike.

Unfortunately, the size of the fully assembled model does present a real challenge in terms of long term accommodation, despite the best efforts of Members, officers and private individuals over many years.

The most manageable option appears to be a programme of temporary appearances, as has been the case at The Great Hall and INTECH before that, although I recognise that takes its toll on the model.

I can reassure Members that I will continue to look for opportunities, and would encourage any of you with practical and affordable suggestions to contact me.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Hutchison

To: The Leader

“When will a Framework with Action Plan for the Winchester Station area be commissioned to set overall objectives for the area and to give guidance to potential developers?”

Reply

“It is of course important that any proposals for development in the Station area are set in the broader context of how the Council sees its future, and how that development can contribute.

We will, I hope adopt the Local Plan Part 1 later at this meeting, and already has a revised Vision for Winchester. Those are important documents in setting the context for the area which will need to be articulated in Local Plan Part 2.

I have asked officers to draw together all the work done to date so that we can give a clear statement of the opportunities development in the wider station area offers Winchester and its residents, and also the constraints we would wish to place on the site. I anticipate that will achieve exactly what Cllr Hutchison seeks.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Warwick

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Administration

“Could the Portfolio Holder outline the proposal for Winchester City Council to pay all of its staff at least the living wage”?

Reply

“In my budget speech at Council in February 2013, as Portfolio Holder for Finance and Administration I announced the Council’s commitment to becoming an employer that pays its staff the “Living Wage” and above.

I am pleased to tell you that Personnel Committee agreed to apply the ‘Living Wage’ to direct employees and casual staff (excluding Apprentices and Canvassers).

From 1 April 2013 the ‘Living Wage’ which is £7.45 per hour will apply to the small number of people currently paid below that rate. The increased element of the hourly pay rate will be based initially on a discretionary supplement. This will be covered within the existing employee budget through vacancy management.

This will be reviewed, as part of the annual budget process in the light of the annual uplift to the Living Wage rate. It will also take into account national Local Authority pay negotiations.

It was agreed to consider the case for including the ‘Living Wage’ in the Council’s procurement policies by April 2014 and, developing an action plan with key milestones identified to achieve this for contracts commencing after a specified date.

The Council will be among one of the first to apply for accreditation as a ‘Living Wage’ employer in Hampshire and in Local Government outside London.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Learney

To: The Leader

“What meetings between Cabinet Members & developers or their representatives have taken place in the last year? For each meeting, what were the subjects under discussion, where were the meetings held, which if any officers attended and what records were taken?”

Reply

“My colleagues and I meet from time to time with a number of such organisations, including Hendersons – our partners in the Silver Hill development – and Cala Homes who have permission to develop at Barton Farm. Other developers working on local sites may occasionally request to meet with a Cabinet Member. It is not practical to give an exhaustive list of topics discussed, but these meetings are generally either to advise of progress with development or raise specific matters of concern on a particular site.

I and colleagues also receive occasional requests from developers to be able to present to us what are usually speculative proposals for development on local sites. We will normally take officer advice, and when we agree to such meetings they are clearly held on a ‘without prejudice’ basis. In such cases we are asked to respect the commercial confidentiality of their approach, and it would therefore be inappropriate to give details.

Meetings are generally held with officers present. In most cases formal records are not kept. Where actions are agreed they will normally be confirmed by an exchange of letters.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Green

To: The Leader

“In light of the recent press coverage in the Hampshire Chronicle referring to the Stanmore Planning Framework and the related pending Council purchase of the New Queens Head, could the Leader outline how he envisages matters being taken forward and also what the priorities are for the area?”

Reply

“Members will know that Stanmore is one of the two priority neighbourhoods in the Winchester District Community Strategy. We have worked closely with community organisations over many years to help improve the quality of life for residents in the area, the most recent example of this being the joint working which led to the relocation of the library into The Carroll Centre, which has led to a rapid upturn in library membership and book lending locally.

The Stanmore Planning Framework grew out of these discussions with the community, and will take the form of a 10 year action plan designed to address many of the issues and opportunities which are expressed in the Community Action Plan. It has four main aims, based on local feedback, which are:

- improving local open spaces;
- improving community facilities;
- improving connections, pathways and parking, and
- providing new homes.

Following a period of evidence-gathering, a team from consultancy Broadway Malyan – working with officers and community representatives – has identified a series of options which can help to achieve these aims. These options will form the basis of a period of public consultation which begins at Town Forum this Thursday, and continues on to 26 April. (Members can find out more on the Stanmore Combined web page dedicated to the Planning Framework.)

In order to keep these options open, the Council took the step of buying the disused site of the New Queen's Head pub while consultation is underway. We have now provisionally agreed terms with Enterprise Inns for the purchase and it is anticipated that the purchase will be completed at the beginning of April.

There is no one plan for the site, which could variously be used for new housing, for new community facilities or for commercial premises – or indeed any combination of these. Once we have the results of the consultation, Cabinet will be in a position to determine which options will form part of the final Planning Framework document, not just for the New Queen's Head, but for other parts of the neighbourhood too. Obviously, Cabinet's decisions will also be subject to considerations such as funding, deliverability and other Council commitments.

This is a good news story: the Framework is a catalyst for change, and has the potential to bring real benefits for Stanmore people now and in the future.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 6

From: Councillor J Berry

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Administration

“In view of the fact that the ‘bedroom tax’ will hit some of Winchester’s most vulnerable residents and increase pressure on local housing services, is Winchester City Council considering calling on the Government to drop the Government’s proposed measure to reduce housing benefit according to social sector size criteria?”

Reply

“The Council will take every opportunity to inform the Government of the impact of changing policies on Winchester residents.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Miller

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Administration

“Some officers and Councillors attended the European Conference on Banking (ECOBATE) in March at Winchester Guildhall. What does the Portfolio Holder think were the most important matters for the Council to take from this event?”

Reply

“This high-level academic conference was staged by the University of Southampton, but supported by Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council in recognition of the section of the agenda dedicated to an exploration of local or community banking.

The concept of community banking is popular in Germany, where locally-based banks deliver everything from mortgages to long term loans for low carbon business developments. Bank staff know their customers by name, and build their relationship with them over the course of their lifetime. The banks are not run for shareholders, so profits can be reinvested in the community. Consequently, they are able to take financing decisions which are less focused on short term returns, as well as being informed by a detailed personal knowledge of the business or individual.

The community banking seminar included a speaker from Bournemouth Borough Council, which is in the process of setting up a community bank. This is primarily intended to help those with lower incomes – such as young couples seeking a mortgage for their first house. Other speakers emphasised recent changes which made it easier to establish community banks, which could in turn support the Government’s objective of increasing lending to businesses to stimulate economic growth.

I attended the community banking seminar, along with two Cabinet colleagues: we left feeling that in the interests of the economy and the wellbeing of our more hard-pressed residents, we would like to explore with the organisers of the event the notion of community banking in Hampshire as one of a range of possible measures to deliver the best outcomes for people in our District at this difficult time.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Byrnes

To: The Leader

“Can the Leader provide statistics relating to the number of reported incidents of violence/abuse toward Winchester City Council’s frontline staff during the last 10 years?”

Reply

“The Council takes very seriously any incidents of violence or abuse towards Council Officers and contractors delivering services on our behalf.

Managers and staff are asked to report all incidents which are dealt with accordingly by using a risk register. We write directly to the perpetrators warning them about their behaviour, taking legal action where appropriate and telling them that they are included on the register which recommends they are not visited by lone officers.

Frontline staff are also given specific training to help them deal with violent or abusive customers and sensitive incidents.

The number of reported incidents of violence/abuse toward Winchester City Council’s staff during the last 10 years.”

Year (April – March)	Number of reported incidents
2002/2003	6
2003/2004	25
2004/2005	13
2005/2006	12
2006/2007	2
2007/2008	10
2008/2009	11
2009/2010	10
2010/2011	4
2011/2012	4



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Ruffell

To: The Deputy Leader as Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Economic Development

"Recently you had a chance to speak to the Business Secretary Vince Cable, what questions were you able to ask him?"

Reply

"Dr Cable visited on 6 March to make the keynote speech at a European Banking Conference being staged by the University of Southampton at the Guildhall Winchester. He kindly agreed to a short meeting with the Leader and myself at Abbey House during the afternoon, hosted by the Mayor.

Our discussion focused on the delivery of co-ordinated business support programmes, which – with the demise of the former Business Link network - I believe to be disjointed and confusing, particularly for the small to medium enterprises which are the lifeblood of our economy. We emphasised the critical role of District Councils like Winchester in delivering practical support and guidance for businesses, and our commitment to being a friend to business and not a barrier.

Dr Cable said that Government currently worked through the new local enterprise partnerships and the Chamber of Commerce, but that he recognised the desire of Local Authorities to be able to work directly in partnership with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. He said that the Government had no model for this, at present, and challenged Winchester City Council to devise a mechanism for doing so.

During the meeting, Dr Cable complimented the Council on its approach to economic development, referring to us as an 'enterprising local authority' which 'used its own initiative'. When I spoke of the Council's aspiration to be a catalyst for the local economy, Dr Cable added, "What you say is music to my ears."

I am sure that you, like me, will see this is as further proof that Winchester City Council punches above its weight when it comes to the economy, and is being recognised increasingly as a friend to business in these difficult economic times."



COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Scott

To: The Portfolio Holder for New Homes Delivery

“Could the Portfolio Holder give details of how many new homes the Council’s New Build Programme has delivered so far, the number of properties the Council has planning permission for and when it is expected that these approved plans will move into the build phase and also what are the immediate prospects for further homes to be granted planning permission?”

Reply

“I can confirm that 4 properties have been completed to date with funding from the Council new build programme. A further 5 properties are on-site under construction and construction work will commence on 8 properties in May 2013. The sites for the 8 properties are currently being cleared ready for the contractors to start work, tenders for the build work will be returned on the 4 April.

The next batch of planning applications are being prepared by Officers consisting of 4 schemes totaling 60 new homes, these will be considered by Planning Committee during 2013. A further 2 schemes for approximately 65 homes are subject to initial feasibility work with a view, if appropriate, to submit for planning approval in early 2014.

Pre-application advice has been sought from the relevant Officers and agencies for the above schemes which are all positive at this stage.

I consider the Council new build programme is progressing in line with expectations and the funding that is available to support it.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 11

From: Councillor E Berry

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing

“In light of the approaches I am receiving from Council tenants in my Ward, could the Portfolio Holder update me on the progress of the Council’s Loft Conversion programmed and when it is expected that the first house will have its roof adapted?”

Reply

“In recent months, we have approached every tenant who is registered on Hampshire Home Choice and classed as being ‘overcrowded’ (lacking in at least one bedroom). We have now surveyed all 22 properties of those who expressed an interest for extending their properties.

Of these, only 5 properties are suitable for straightforward loft conversions without a major impact on existing bedrooms and work on these will be programmed to commence by June 2013. A further 5 have some potential for ground floor extensions. A report will be prepared for the June meeting of the Cabinet (Housing) Committee to determine how best to prioritise these works and to review the scope for increasing investment.

It is planned to repeat this exercise in April and approach all tenants who have registered since July 2012 and who have been determined as ‘overcrowded’. All suitable properties will then be surveyed and a phase 2 for the scheme will be prepared, subject to the outcome of the June report.

Any resident keen to be considered as part of this scheme should be encouraged to register on Hampshire Homechoice if they are not already, as this will be the initial determining factor of who should be considered for inclusion.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 12

From: Councillor Southgate

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

"I am sure everyone will agree that the official opening of the Hockley Viaduct and associated cycle and footpath route by Dani King and local school children was a great success. Could the Portfolio Holder give any information about any other cycling events the Council will be involved with and promoting this year?"

Reply

"Yes, Winchester City Council will be hosting other cycling events this summer as follows:

The Winchester Cycle Fair on Sunday 23 June from 12 noon to 4pm will celebrate the end of National Cycle Week and the Winchester Criterium Cycle Race and Family Cycle Day will take place on Sunday 11 August from 12 noon to 8pm.

These events will be formally launched at the Holiday Inn, Winchester on Wednesday 10 April at 10am. All members and media representatives will be invited when you can discover more about the exciting programme of activities planned for these dates."



COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Bodtger

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

“Could the Portfolio Holder detail how many planning applications have been approved in the Winchester District over the last five years for residential housing schemes for developments of between 15 and 25 properties where the trigger for affordable housing was for 15 or more properties and therefore how many affordable homes were secured through this route?”

Could I also be told over the same period how many applications for housing including affordable homes were approved outside of rural exception sites where the threshold for affordable housing was 5 or more properties?”

Reply

“The information requested requires a detailed analysis of planning applications which it has not been possible to undertake fully in the time available. Nevertheless, officers have provided the following table of information with regard to schemes of 15-25 dwellings, relating to schemes permitted from April 2007 to March 2012, which they believe is correct.

Year Permitted	Address	Number of market dwellings	Number and % of Affordable dwellings	Total dwellings permitted
2011 -2012	Land East Of New Farm Road, New Alresford	15	8 (35%)	23
2010-2011	Freeman's Yard, Cheriton	14	5 (26%)	19
2009 -2010	Milesdown Northbrook Avenue, Winchester	23	0 (Financial contribution equivalent to 40%)	23
2007-2008	122-128 Lovedon Lane	13	6 (32%)	19
2007-2008	Greenacres Special School, Winchester	11	8 (42%)	19

With regard to the second part of the question, there are a larger number of small site applications in settlements with a threshold of 5 dwellings. Officers have not been able to produce a table of these within the time available, but believe that in the period 2007-2012 there were 11 schemes permitted which provided a total of 68 affordable dwellings. This excludes schemes in the table above and in settlements with a 15 dwelling threshold (Winchester built-up area, Bishops Waltham, Colden Common, Denmead, Kings Worthy, New Alresford, Whiteley) or in Major Development Areas. Officers can provide the Councillor with further details if required.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 14

From: Councillor Mather

To: The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport

“Could you please give the first quarter usage figures for the night bus approved by the Town Forum last year?”

Reply

“Stagecoach Bus Company has now submitted feedback and passenger numbers using the Winchester Night Bus based on 17 weeks of operation from 20th September to 12th January 2013.

During this period a total of 1682 people have used the services, 1061 using Service 5/5A Badger Farm/Stanmore and 621 using Service 3 Harestock.

The services have been running well to the timetable. The majority of passengers are using the service for social reasons (80%) and the remainder for traveling to and from employment.

Fridays are the busiest days representing 40% of total usage, followed by Saturdays (33%) and Thursdays (27%).

The average passengers per journey during this period have been 4 for Service 3 Harestock and 7 for Service 5 Badger Farm/Stanmore.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 March 2013

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 15

From: Councillor J Berry

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“Does Winchester City Council intend to sign up to the Local Government Association’s Climate Local initiative on carbon reduction and climate resilience in local government?”

Reply

“I am currently considering the City Council’s approach to climate change in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Economic Development, following the recent receipt of a draft report on the commissioning of a Low Carbon Route Map for the Winchester District. The aim of the Route Map is to develop a clear programme of practical and genuinely deliverable carbon reduction initiatives which can also support the growth of the local economy.

Once the commissioned report is finalised by the contractors a more detailed report on the Route Map will be considered by Cabinet at its May meeting. This will include a series of recommended actions to the Council – and a number of its key partners – in delivering a programme for a low carbon economy.

I recognise the importance of the City Council demonstrating leadership in this area, something that is clearly flagged in the Route Map. We will therefore be thoroughly evaluating the option to sign up to the Local Government Association’s ‘Climate Local’ initiative as part of this wider work.”