



COUNCIL MEETING – 15 July 2015

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Izard

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services

“It came as a surprise to read on the ‘Footsteps’ website that we were undertaking a project with a company called Footsteps in Otterbourne to provide a form of equity housing for sale and that the Council were enabling this by selling its land for the project to proceed subject to planning. Surely the priority for land owned by the Council should be for rented accommodation.

Could the Portfolio Holder please confirm whether she agrees with this priority and whether details on the website were premature before the proposition had been discussed and agreed by Cabinet (Housing) and Full Council?”

Reply

“Officers have been working with Footsteps Living to investigate the possibility of providing low cost housing for local first time buyers. A potential suitable site has been identified at Otterbourne, local Members, the Parish Council and residents have been given the opportunity to comment on the principle.

I would like to stress that this project is at an early stage and Officers from the Legal, Estates and the New Homes Team are still investigating the concept and how it might work in practice, which is why no recommendations have been brought to Members of Cabinet (or full Council).

In a strategic context the Council has a role in meeting the housing needs of the District, a proportion of those in need will be households seeking low cost home ownership options such as shared ownership, equity share or low cost sale. The Footsteps proposal is a variation on low cost sale where a cap is placed on the value of the property which also applies to future sale values.

I am keen to investigate any options that increase the supply of affordable housing, be that from Registered Providers, the Council or private Companies and with low cost ownership options seek to ensure that the accommodation remains affordable.”



Winchester
City Council

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QUESTION 2

From: Councillor J Berry

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“Does the Council have any plans to support the expansion of youth engagement in Winchester?”

Reply

“The Council has a track record of working with young people to understand their needs – present and future – and develop plans and projects which provide for these. Over the years, there have been polling stations put up for children to vote on designs for play areas and skate parks; ‘planning for real’-style sessions in schools to inform nearby developments, and a group of unemployed young people addressing delegates at a conference on ‘NEETS’ back in 2012.

For some years, there was a formal ‘Youth Council’ made up of representatives from across the District, but this was phased out in favour of a more mainstreamed approach to youth engagement for corporate projects and initiatives. For example, Winnall Primary School ran a competition as part of the front-loading consultation for the Winnall Planning Framework in January this year. Young people have led the design process for the proposed Cycle Café and children from two primary schools shaped the designs for the series of interpretation panels on the Viaduct Way.

Last week there was a visit to Guildhall Winchester by 40 year 5 and 6 children from three primary schools across the District as part of The Great Waste campaign. The young people toured the Guildhall and learnt about the democratic process, and then held a debate in the Conference Chamber about reducing waste. The visit was proposed at a Member Briefing, and those Members who helped with the event felt that more engagement with young people of this kind would be beneficial.

There is scope to develop this work, given time and resources, and the aspiration is certainly one shared by my fellow Members and officers. I will do all I can to support it.”



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QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Wright

To: The Leader

“Please clarify where it was said/implied in the Local Government Act, that PART 2 QUALIFICATIONS: ENGLAND, 9 of Schedule 12A the Local Government Act 1972 only applies to planning committees (current practice in Council). This is not clear to me as PART 2 QUALIFICATIONS: ENGLAND, 9 of Schedule 12A says – 9, Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.

Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972) applies to All public meetings of this council.

For information - Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992

(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1992/1492/regulation/3/made>) has been clarified as saying –

3. Applications for planning permission

Subject to regulation 4, an application for planning permission by an interested planning authority to develop any land of that authority, or for development of any land by an interested planning authority or by an interested planning authority jointly with any other person, shall be determined by the authority concerned, unless the application is referred to the Secretary of State under section 77 of the 1990 Act for determination by him.

4. (1) Regulation 3 does not apply in the case of an application for planning permission to develop land of an interested planning authority where-

- (a) the authority do not intend to develop the land themselves or jointly with any person, and
- (b) if it were not such land the application would fall to be determined by another body.

(2) In the case of an application to which paragraph (1) applies the application shall be determined by that other body unless the application is referred to the Secretary of State under section 77 of the 1990 Act for determination by him.”

Reply

“Paragraph 9 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 provides that information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.

It therefore relates to the situation where development is proposed, and the Council (as local planning authority) is the applicant for planning permission for the proposed development.

By way of example, in the case of Silver Hill, the planning application for the Scheme was submitted by the developer, not the Council. This is not therefore a situation where Regulation 3 applies, which only relates to development where a planning application has been made, or is to be made, by the Council.

As the Council will not be granting itself planning permission under Regulation 3, paragraph 9 does not apply, and therefore it is permissible to deal with consideration of submissions in relation to the development in exempt session.”



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QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Power

To: The Leader

“Explain the apparent conflict between the statement in his forward to the Budget Book - ‘Trading activities in the Guildhall continue to perform better’ and the figures on Page 18 which show a significant and increasing loss?

Agree with me that in future the costs of financing capital works should be attributed to the cost of the services or facility the council provides?

Commit to report in future costs and benefits of our capital investment program in the interests of informing decision making by members and allowing the public to evaluate the quality of the decisions we make?”

Reply

“There is not a conflict between the statement and the figures; the budget line shown on page 18 represents the net deficit – ‘bottom line’ which is improved between 2014/15 and 2015/16, although I accept only marginally. The 2013/14 outturn benefited from a one off exceptional item of income.

The underlying detail of these figures shows that the Gross Surplus in 2014/15 outturned at £818,000, and after direct costs the Guildhall trading account made a net contribution of £126,000. The deficit is after charging for indirect costs or overheads, which include premises, depreciation, and support services. This conforms with the accounting principles of full cost allocation. In relation to financing / cost of capital these would not materially affect the figures reported and are considered when the capital expenditure decisions are taken.

I have asked officers to consider the provision of further analysis of the Guildhall Trading account in the Budget Book for next year.

All capital expenditure decisions require approval in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 6.4 before any expenditure is committed, which is intended to ensure that the full financial implications of decisions are considered.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 15 July 2015

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QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Burns

To: The Leader

“Can the Leader provide an unequivocal assurance that if the Silver Hill development goes ahead, the St Clement’s Surgery will be relocated in a fashion and on terms that are entirely satisfactory to the doctors who practise there, and that their thousands of patients, many of whom live in my ward, will experience no inconvenience or loss of service whatsoever?”

Reply

“The Council has obtained a planning consent for a new surgery for the St Clements practice which would provide facilities which far exceed in quality those of the existing surgery building. This planning consent may have to be reapplied for given the delays to the project caused by external factors, but assuming it is not opposed for reasons unrelated to the provision of medical facilities then the granting of a new consent should be straightforward.

The GPs have been fully consulted on design and are extremely excited by the prospect of new premises for their patients. It should be remembered that GPs are independent private contractors and that financial dealings with them and with the NHS have to take this into account. The Council intends to procure and deliver the new surgery itself and this requires a detailed business case to be presented but the Head of Estates expects that such a case can be made, if needs be taking into account the benefits of new primary health care facilities to the well being of the community. The procurement and construction of the new surgery is on the critical path for delivery of the overall development and the developer is well aware of the requirements for healthcare provision to be provided without disruption or delay.

On the other hand, if the Silver Hill development does not go ahead, the Council may have to make difficult decisions regarding the acquisition of property and the payment of relocation costs at public expense and on the basis of an alternative business case.”



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QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Weir

To: The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment

“Noting that across Winchester District there is now in the region of 80MW of renewable energy generation capacity, what were the Winchester City Council receipts from planning fees, developer contributions and business rates on renewable energy installations in 2014/15 and what is the forecast for 2015/16?”

Reply

“In relation to renewable energy schemes we received planning fees of £51,266.00 for the period 2014/15 and to date for 2015/16 we have received £48,228.00. It is difficult to forecast planning income for the remainder of this year because the fees will depend upon the scale of the development and we only receive the income at the point a formal planning application is made. The decision relating to if and when to submit an application rests with the applicant. We have not received any planning obligation contributions in relation to these types of developments.

In 2014/15 the Council raised £85,000 in business rates from renewable energy projects. The estimated income for 2015/16 is £296,000.”



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QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Warwick

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“The Hat Fair has been reported as a well-attended, successful event. Was the post Hat Fair clear up equally successful?”

Reply

“With good weather and an exciting programme of events devised by its new Artistic Director, Hat Fair brought large crowds to Winchester throughout the first weekend in July.

Under the umbrella of the Theatre Royal Winchester, Hat Fair has made significant improvements to all operational aspects of the event. One environmental health officer commented that Hat Fair has now succeeded in combining artistic excellence with public safety, and complimented the new management team.

The Hat Fair’s clear commitment to responsible waste management could not be missed, with large, eye-catching bins for separating rubbish sited at each major performance location. The festival is building on the relationship begun last year with More Bins, a contractor that manages the recycling points and litter picking, and delivers the Hat Fair’s waste management plan.

There was good liaison with the Council’s waste management team before the event, with an effective clear-up operation organized between Biffa, The Landscape Group, the Hat Fair volunteers, the Winchester Litter Pickers and the Cathedral. Consequently, the Council did not receive any complaints about litter.

Hat Fair is a partner in delivery of this year’s corporate ‘Great Waste’ campaign this year and is touring one of its installations (shown for the duration of the festival in Abbey Gardens) – made with recycled carrier bags – to four of our market towns this autumn to promote responsible waste management.”



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QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Achwal

To: The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment

“Can the Portfolio Holder assure me that all of the extra work that is currently being carried out on the Silver Hill scheme is not causing delays to the North Whiteley development?”

Reply

“Only one officer is involved at a senior level in both projects and I have been assured that this has not caused any delay to the North Whiteley development.”



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QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Gottlieb

To: The Leader

“In a few weeks’ time it is possible that the Secretary of State may decide not to ‘call in’ the 2014 Silver Hill applications, presently held up by an Article 25 Direction. At that point, the Council will be in a position to investigate whether the 2014 scheme can be progressed. Given the possibility that both schemes might be attainable, can the Leader please advise which of the two schemes would represent Best Consideration for the Council?”

Reply

“The Council agreed in August 2014 to vary the Development Agreement and permit the 2014 scheme to be brought forward. As a result of the judicial review proceedings brought by Cllr Gottlieb, that decision was quashed and no further work has been done on it as a result.

Best consideration in this context is to be assessed in accordance with Section 233 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, against the particular scheme in question. The 2009 scheme is different from the 2014 scheme, but it would be possible that both schemes would constitute best consideration under Section 233.”



Winchester
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QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Laming

To: The Leader

“Would the Leader please disclose his reason for not allowing the consultant’s report on RPLC being given to members after the briefing to the working group?”

Reply

“Having received the draft report, I need to confirm the information with our partners before publishing the report to avoid any errors of fact being included. A full briefing for Members has been organised for 27 July, when Members will have the benefit of the presentation by the consultants to inform their consideration of the report. I expect the report to be published well in advance of that meeting, once I have confirmation from our partners. I will then arrange for the report to be made public.”



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QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services

“In light of the Prime Minister’s commitment to addressing the chronic shortage of affordable housing across the Country can the Portfolio Holder update me on what steps Winchester is taking to resolve this issue and also whether he feels that we need a radical change in our approach if we are ever going to make a significant improvement to the level of supply of affordable housing?”

Reply

“The Government has recognised the acute shortage of housing nationally and have taken a series a measures to increase supply. It has been estimated that as nation we should be building 250,000 new homes a year whilst in reality we are building closer to 100,000.

The Council has increasing the supply of affordable housing as one of its key priorities and has been making strenuous efforts to build and enable more development locally. The Council has its own new build programme which is on target to deliver over 200 new homes in the next 3 years, Registered Providers are actively working with major developers on S106 sites (such as Barton Farm) and the Council is investigating the opportunities that can be realised through the establishment of a Housing Company.

Whilst the council has been proactive in its approach to providing more affordable housing we will continue to investigate new and innovative ways of providing more homes.”



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QUESTION 12

From: Councillor Tod

To: The Portfolio Holder for Local Economy

“What is the impact of the closure of Friarsgate Car Park on City Centre footfall?”

Reply

“Friarsgate car park closed on 30 March due to safety concerns. More information is available at www.winchester.gov.uk/news/2015/mar/friarsgate-car-park-close/

Winchester Business Improvement District (BID) measures footfall using a number of monitors sited across the City Centre. There is no monitor immediately outside Friarsgate car park.

Most recent figures for the footfall monitor on the Lower High Street, the closest monitor to Friarsgate Car Park, showed a 3.1% increase in April, followed by a 6.4% decrease in May: this reflects a general trend of variability (up and down) across the whole City Centre. The figures will not only be influenced by the closure of the car park, but by other factors such as weather, City Centre promotions and school holidays.

The Winchester Area Committee of the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce has expressed concern about the impact of the car park closure. There has also been anecdotal feedback from Hampshire Farmers’ Market traders that the closure of the car park has been detrimental to trade.

However, BID officers are not reporting any feedback on the closure from other businesses in the City.

Measures are being introduced to offset the loss of spaces, particularly in the run-up to the all-important Christmas season. These include a range of additional Park and Ride services will come into effect, ranging from the new Pitt Manor service (200 spaces) to additional Sunday services from the South car park.”



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QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Wright

To: The Leader

“It was explained at The Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 21 May 2015 that the 2014 variance voted for by Council was not enacted into the Silver Hill Development Agreement/Contract (no affordable housing etc.), because the variance was being challenged in High Court. Please confirm who/when of the Council made the decision not to include the 2014 variances into the DA/Contract and was the High Court aware of this fact?”

Reply

“In August 2014, the Council agreed to further vary the Development Agreement, to allow changes to the approved scheme which were proposed by the developer. That decision was subsequently quashed by the High Court.

At the time of the High Court hearing, no formal documents had been signed between the Council and the developer to give effect to the August 2014 decision. The decision of the High Court removed any authority to proceed with this documentation, and Cabinet subsequently decided not to appeal against that decision. As a result, no further work on varying the Development Agreement was carried out.”



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QUESTION 14

From: Councillor Cutler

To: The Portfolio Holder for Service Delivery

"What action has been taken to review the arrangements for future election counts following the inadequate and interminable process during the 2015 election?"

Reply

"As Portfolio Holder I would much prefer that emphasis was put on accuracy and fairness, as accuracy rather than speed is what is needed to maintain public confidence in the electoral process. The management of the count process is for the Acting Returning Officer rather than members and officers always review the experience and issues to see if lessons can be learnt for the future."



COUNCIL MEETING – 15 July 2015

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QUESTION 15

From: Councillor Burns

To: The Leader

“Is the Leader aware of any material, whether by way of deed of contract, or variations/novations/extensions of contract, letters or emails, which are as yet undisclosed to members, that might bind the Council to clauses the breach of which could give rise to a claim in damages by the developer?”

Reply

“The Development Agreement was entered into in 2004, and subsequently varied in 2009, 2010 and January 2014. In addition, a series of side letters have been entered into, in accordance with appropriate Council resolutions, under which the Council and the developer agreed not to exercise their termination rights under the agreement before 1 June 2015.

The Council has specific obligations under the Development Agreement (as varied), including giving timely decisions on applications made by the developer under the Development Agreement, and deducing title to the Council’s land within the site. It is believed that all of these obligations have been met, but with a project of this scale, it is impossible to categorically state that this is the case. Were the Council to terminate the Development Agreement, the developer is likely to seek to recover significant damages from the Council as a consequence, which means that Members will need to take this risk fully into account in the decision-making process.”



Winchester
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QUESTION 16

From: Councillor J Berry

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services

“In response to a question to Council in October 2014, concerning the development of an empty homes strategy, it was stated that the need for such a strategy would be informed by two activities - the private sector housing stock condition survey, which was currently underway, and the completion of a new Private Sector Housing Strategy which would be completed by the end of the current year. Can the Portfolio Holder confirm what progress has now been made in these activities and in identifying the need for an empty homes strategy?”

Reply

“The draft stock condition survey has now been received and the full report is expected in the next two weeks. The final report will include but is not limited, to data on the amount of empty properties in the district, the types of disrepair and the vulnerability of households. This will then influence the completion of the new Private Sector Housing Strategy late this year, which will in turn identify the need for an empty property strategy.

However, even without a formal empty property strategy, it has been the policy within the Private Sector Housing Team to try and engage where possible with owners of empty properties in order to explore how they might bring their property back into use. It should be noted that even using formal enforcement powers available to Councils to take over or purchase empty homes, significant financial resources may be required to bring even a single home back into use, as often they are in need of repair and refurbishment.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 15 July 2015

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QUESTION 17

From: Councillor Warwick

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“The Great Waste initiative was launched in April and has commissioned several events to raise the profile of waste and recycling across the District. Have we seen any increase in the WCC textile bank or household recycling tonnages?”

Reply

“*The Great Waste* is the Council’s district-wide corporate campaign for 2015/16. It seeks both to reduce the amount of waste we generate and improve recycling levels through behavior change. It is an important delivery mechanism for the Waste Minimisation Plan which the Council shares with East Hampshire District Council.

This year’s programme ranges from a ‘Trash to Treasure’ exhibition at Winchester Discovery Centre to local ‘Swap & Swish’ exchanges, and from a ‘Leftover Lunch’ event at River Cottage Canteen to children’s workshops. 40 primary school children visited Guildhall Winchester last week for a debate in the Conference Chamber on waste, and a tour of the Hat Fair’s carrier bag ‘yarn bombing’ installation will take place across the market towns this autumn. Council teams will be promoting shops that sell upcycled and recycled goods, as well as shops that specialize in repairs. Interactive information on recycling facilities is being improved on the Council’s website.

A set of strategic aims has been drawn up for the campaign as follows:

Performance measures	Baseline 2013-2014	Target 2015-2016 and 2016-2017
1. Increased textile recycling via WCC textile banks	182 tonnes	3% (5 ¹ / ₄ tonnes) a year

2. Increased plastics recycling via kerbside recycling collections)	3,700 tonnes	1% (37tonnes) a year
3. Increased WEEE recycling (via bulky waste collections)	16 tonnes	1% (0.16 tonnes) a year
4. Decreased residual waste per household (via kerbside collections)	25,800 tonnes	1% (258 tonnes) a year

After just one quarter, it is early to look for results to a behavior change campaign. However, public engagement is evident from social media activity and participation levels at events.

I would urge all Members to consider what part they can play in making this a successful campaign. I commend my colleague Cllr Rutter for her plans to hold a 'Swap & Swish' event this September in Kingsworthy, and ask you to follow her lead by organising a *Great Waste* event in your own Ward this year."



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QUESTION 18

From: Councillor Thompson

To: The Portfolio Holder for Service Delivery

“Could the Leader confirm how many Freedom of Information requests has the Council received over the past 5 years? How many of them were dealt with within the time limit? How many were challenged by the applicant, and how many remain outstanding?”

Reply

The number of Freedom of Information requests over the past 5 years is:

Financial Year	No. of FOI requests	No dealt within time (20 working days)	Percentage within time	Notes
2010/11	208	147	70.71%	Data refers to the period 1 Oct 2010 to 31 March 2011.
2011/12	447	320	71.59%	
2012/13	423	313	74.00%	
2013/14	521	426	87.77%	
2014/15	511	357	69.86%	
2015/16	96	82	85.42%	Part year – 1 April 2015 to date

The figures for the number/percentage dealt with within time is, in reality, higher than shown in the table as staff do not always complete the database showing the date on which the response is sent.

Currently 23 requests are overdue or outstanding – this figure may be overstated if staff have not completed the database.

In total, since 2005 when the Freedom of Information Act came into full effect, there have been four complaints/appeals to the Information Commissioner. In one case, the Commissioner agreed that the Council had been right to withhold the information. In a second the Commissioner decided that some of the information was correctly withheld but that other information should have been disclosed. The remaining two are currently with the Commissioner for decision.”



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QUESTION 19

From: Councillor Gottlieb

To: The Leader

“Can the Leader please provide details of how it is proposed the new bus station, which needs to be operational before any other units within Silver Hill open, will be managed, maintained and paid for?”

Reply

“The Silver Hill Development Agreement provides for the lease of a new bus station to be granted by the Council to Stagecoach at a peppercorn rent for 30 years. Stagecoach then have to meet the operating and maintenance costs. Given that it will be new, purpose designed and to the latest standards, it should be possible for Stagecoach to operate the facility on this basis.

Stagecoach will be required to grant access for other bus operators subject to the scheduling of services for which a charge may be made – presumably as it is now.

At the end of the 30 year period Stagecoach may be entitled to a renewal of their lease, but in any case it is highly unlikely that the Council would not be willing to agree suitable terms for a bus station to continue to operate.

If the scheme does not go ahead there is no certainty about the future of the existing bus station. Stagecoach have previously indicated a frustration with the delays to the project and the impact on their service delivery.”



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QUESTION 20

From: Councillor Laming

To: The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment

"In view of the delays experienced of information being available on the City Council's Planning website, can the Portfolio Holder ensure that the Planning Department is given the correct resources to keep the website up to date?"

Reply

"It is important that documents relating to Planning Applications are available to be viewed on the website by consultees and interested parties. Recently we have experienced some delays with a limited number of applications. After investigation it was identified that this was due to different reasons in each case. Primarily it was found that there had been a delay in getting complete documents from agents in a size that could be uploaded to our website. It was also seen that documents had also not been published promptly following validation of some applications and this has been addressed by reviewing the process. The level of resources available is considered sufficient however, it has highlighted that improvements are needed in the validation process. Further work is underway to ensure that these changes are made.

We are currently reviewing the full lifecycle of planning applications from the customer's perspective with the assistance of a company called Vanguard. This method, which has proved successful in other local authorities, is helping us stream line the processes, make efficiencies and improve our customer experience."



Winchester
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QUESTION 21

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“The Portfolio Holder may be aware of my deep seated concerns over the matter of commercial refuse bins being permanently left (illegally) on the public highway and does he feel that this is acceptable. If he shares my view that these bins have a very detrimental effect on the character and ambience of central Winchester what does he intend to do about it?”

Irrespective of what the Portfolio Holder says I would however want to acknowledge that our officers are working very hard to mitigate the worst effects although I must wonder if they have enough support from members.”

Reply

“Anything which detracts from the environmental quality of the city centre is regrettable and I am aware that there is a particular issue with commercial waste storage. Unfortunately Winchester is typical of many town centres where not all premises have their own on-site bin storage.

However, via the Council’s Public Realm Group which means quarterly to look at city centre issues, our Neighbourhood Service Officers (NSOs) have been actively monitoring and tackling these problems where they are most acute. This has involved talking to the BID and directly to the managers’ of premises responsible for producing the waste and encouraging them to better manage bin storage and collection. This has resulted in real improvements in areas such as Zizzi’s restaurant in Hammonds Passage and God Begot House, to the rear of ASK restaurant, where a number of premises store their waste.

NSOs also liaise with our Estates Team regarding any issues with the market waste and the Council’s waste contractor assists with one-off collections where appropriate. These efforts are on-going and will hopefully continue to produce further improvements.”



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QUESTION 22

From: Councillor Burns

To: The Leader

“The Leader will know that Schedule I, Part I, of the S106 Agreement provides that prior to the commencement of works the developer must have secured the Council’s approval of: (a) An Archaeological Evaluation Strategy; (b) an Archaeological Research Framework; (c) a Foundations Design and Services Routing framework; (d) an Archaeological Mitigation Strategy; (e) an Archaeological Public Outreach Strategy, and (f) a Publication and Dissemination Strategy. Given the view that ‘The archaeological resources at the site, both known and predicted, are to be regarded as of major heritage value’ and that ‘In the absence of mitigation there would be permanent, major adverse effects during construction’ (Ove Arup Environmental Statement: non-technical summary [July 2014]), what has been done to initiate this process? Has it been costed? Has a timetable been worked out? Have the ensuing works been factored into the construction costs? Has the viability of each building block, given their individual sizes and weights and also their proximity to each other, been assessed in the light of the risks associated with the national guidance as to permitted percentage of destruction of archeological deposits/remains by lift pits, foundation trenches, service runs, piling, foundation beams, etc.?”

Reply

“The relationship between the development process and archaeological investigation will proceed exactly as required by the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Guidance and in accordance with the Outline Mitigation Strategy contained in the Section 106 agreement.

It is the same process that takes place in historic towns up and down the country, including London of course, when major development is carried out in or around potentially valuable archaeological sites. Winchester officers are very familiar with that process and can be supported by external specialists if required.

To summarise very briefly the process is one where archaeological investigation takes place the results of which inform and guide the detailed design and construction process. To ask for measurements, costing and detailed drawings before investigation has been carried out is to miss the point of carrying out the investigation.

Architects and structural engineers are well used to the need to adjust their detailed design to protect remains in situ if possible, and to reduce damage where it is not possible.”



Winchester
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QUESTION 23

From: Councillor Warwick

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“Can Council be updated on when we are expected to receive the results of the detailed air quality assessment for central Winchester commissioned in February this year?”

Reply

“The Consultants, Bureau Veritas UK, have assured officers that whilst they await the full traffic data sets from the County, they expect these by the end of July, after which they have estimated a 10 week period before the completed report can be provided. This would suggest that the report will be available in early October.”



Winchester
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QUESTION 24

From: Councillor Gottlieb

To: The Leader

“Members may be mistaken if they think that the 2009 Silver Hill scheme will be built out as consented. Has any indication been provided of what will happen to the floor space reserved for the surgery, the youth venue and the ROAB clubhouse, and is the Council aware of any other material variations proposed to be made to the consented scheme?”

Reply

“No indication has yet been made in respect of the floorspace referred to, nor have any other material variations been proposed.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 July 2015

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QUESTION 25

From: Councillor J Berry

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services

“Should the Council follow Greenwich Council’s plan to consider requiring developers who state that it is not viable to meet the affordable housing target to supply a fully public viability study?”

Reply

“The Council requires applicants to submit viability studies in circumstances where it is claimed by them the headline Local Plan 1 policy requirements cannot be met. These studies are carefully scrutinised by officers, often with support from external advisors.

While some of the information provided by applicants may be considered by them to be commercially confidential, the Council ensures that as much information as is possible is available to the public. Officers will examine the emerging approaches at the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the implications of the Tribunal decision on an appeal by that Council against a decision notice by the Information Commissioner concerning its handling of an information request relating to a development on the Greenwich Peninsula.

Further details about the approach the Council requires are to be published in a revision to its Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document and lessons learned from the Greenwich case can be incorporated into that.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 July 2015

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 26

From: Councillor Burns

To: The Leader

“The Ove Arup Environmental Statement: non-technical summary [July 2014] comments that ‘...there are two historic watercourses in the eastern part of the site that should also be regarded as integral components of the historic landscape’, and it is suspected that other Roman, Saxon or mediaeval aquifers may exist below the site. The Arup report also points out that the area is at a high risk of flooding, that the River Itchen is regarded to be of international importance (it is of course an SSSI and SAC) and that the soils underlying the site are classed by the Environment Agency as highly vulnerable. The alluvial deposits associated with the River Itchen flood plain are underlain by Chalk which are classified as a principal aquifer by the Environment Agency. There has been no Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the Winchester District since 2007. Can the Leader say what pre-commencement surveys and assessments are proposed to investigate these issues? Have they been costed? Has a timetable been worked out? Have the ensuing works been factored into the construction costs? Has the potential effect of pollution/contamination of the River Itchen been considered and have mitigation works been planned and costed?”

Reply

“The Environment Agency was fully consulted on the 2009 planning application and had no objection to the scheme. In addition to taking on board the comments of the Environment Agency as the scheme was drawn up, the 2009 planning consent contains conditions to provide reassurance on drainage and groundwater contamination.

Construction cost assessments provide for the consented scheme to be built and this takes into account the requirements of the planning consent.”



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QUESTION 27

From: Councillor Laming

To: The Leader with Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Policy

“Could the Portfolio Holder advise the Council of the following:-
The number of unoccupied houses (over 6 months) that continue to pay
Council Tax; The number that fail to pay; and the cost of collection?”

Reply

“The number of domestic properties which have been unoccupied for 6 months or more is 351. Information on the failure to pay unoccupied property debts (or any other property type) is not collated /profiled for Council Tax purposes. The cost of collection specific to this type of debt is also not known. The collection rate for Council Tax in 2014/15 was 98.62%.”



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QUESTION 28

From: Councillor Gottlieb

To: The Leader

“We have been given months and seasons when the 2009 Silver Hill scheme may have been viable or unviable, but can the Leader please advise as at what actual date the 2009 scheme last became viable, as we are being told it is today, and can he please advise as at what date after the CPO Inquiry it became unviable?”

Reply

“The Council does not hold information to the detail requested. The report in Exempt Appendix 17 to CAB2700 sets out information on the viability of the scheme at specific points during the period referred to.”