



COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Rutter

To: The Leader

“Following the Friarsgate Practice’s announcement that, despite fierce local opposition, they are proposing to close the Pound Road Surgery in Kings Worthy, will the Leader join me and the Parish Council in opposing this closure? Will he offer all support necessary as landlord to refurbish (and if necessary extend) the current premises to bring them up to modern standards, and to urge the Practice to ensure that a full time service is made available in Kings Worthy for patients - and offer the facility to other GP's if necessary - instead of running down the service as they have been doing in recent years?”

Reply

“Officers have been working closely with the Friarsgate Practice over the last 12 months to assist them in their review of the current Kings Worthy operation. The Council would be quite happy to continue renting the existing premises, but the Practice does not consider them to be a viable location for a surgery which must meet exacting clinical standards. Council officers have suggested various alternative options all of which have been tested and found not to be feasible for one reason or another. NHS funding does not appear to be available for the scale of capital investment needed to provide suitable facilities. Other GP practices have already been approached and have expressed no desire to offer services in this location. The Friarsgate Practice has therefore very reluctantly come to the conclusion that their surgery cannot continue.

If the Parish Council has ideas which can be examined further then we will happily do so but ultimately this is a decision for the NHS and the GPs.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Evans

To: The Leader

“In the light of the many comments from Claer Lloyd Jones in her report recommending that the Council would be better to opt for all – out council elections rather than those by thirds, could The Leader please inform me what steps he intends to take to progress this issue?”

Reply

“That is a matter for Council. When Members last considered that option in 2015, as part of their consideration of boundary changes, they rejected it. However, if Members wish to discuss once again we can do so.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Lipscomb

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“Will the Portfolio Holder comment on the amount of litter to be presently found on the rural highways in the District? Furthermore, will he tell Members of the scope and purpose of the Clean for the Queen initiative?”

Reply

“There are a number of hotspots currently around the District and arrangements are in hand to get these litter picked in the next few weeks. This work will be in addition to the litter picking of the Trunk Roads which is also scheduled to take place during March.

All roads across the district are litter picked at frequency based on need and location with the higher profiled areas litter picked more frequently. The Contract Management Team has been reviewing these frequencies and will ask the Joint Environmental Services Committee to consider a proposal to reconfigure services which will enable a change of frequency for certain routes. It will also establish a permanent litter hit squad in order to provide a more rapid response to deal with problems areas such as commuter routes where traffic flows are higher.

The Clean for the Queen Initiative is a National event taking place from 4-6 March aimed at encouraging community volunteers to litter pick their areas in support of the Queen’s 90th birthday. The City Council is supporting this event and members and Parish Councils have received information regarding the arrangements to obtain equipment and arrange collection of litter through the City Council’s contractor the Landscape Group Ltd.

I am pleased to confirm that there has been significant interest in this event and to date 24 separate groups have indicated they will be supporting litter picking activities that weekend.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Green

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“Can the portfolio holder tell me when the second stage of consultation will take place in the Valley area of Stanmore for parking permits, now that year has passed since the first informal consultation.

Could the portfolio holder also ensure me that Mildmay St and Wavell Way will be looked at as commuter parking in these roads is getting worse now that the TRO has been put in on Stanmore lane?”

Reply

“The Valley, Stanmore, is on the 2016/17 TRO Programme as a main scheme to be implemented during this year and formal consultation will take place in due course.

Mildmay Street, and the other areas of Upper Stanmore, have been included as a reserve scheme on the 2016/17 TRO Programme and will be progressed subject to completion of the schemes on the main list.

Every year, when the programme is put together, all requests for schemes are reviewed and the ones which are regarded as having the highest priority are incorporated in the main list for progression in that 12 month period. The request to look at Mildmay Street, and other areas of Upper Stanmore, will therefore be considered for inclusion in the 17/18 main programme. As part of this process we will assess and prioritise this scheme along side the other potential TROs. The schemes which are most urgent will then be included in the main programme for that year.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Warwick

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“Following the recent conviction of Stephen Humphrys for several offences at River Park Leisure Centre what measures will be put in place to protect children and adults using the changing rooms? Anyone can enter unchallenged in the reception area so how can we be assured he will not visit the centre in the future?”

Reply

“It is important to ensure that vulnerable users are protected from inappropriate behaviour whilst at the same time balancing customers’ wishes to take photos of their own family and friends. A procedure is in place to allow photography of a customer’s family and friends, provided that customer can produce satisfactory ID. If satisfactory ID could not be produced, the customer is asked to stop taking photographs. These procedures are in accordance with industry guidelines.

Places for People Leisure staff at River Park Leisure Centre have been trained and continue to be trained to be vigilant. The staff training programme at the centre is on-going and includes updated safeguarding training to enable staff to spot potential signs of inappropriate activity involving children and vulnerable adults. It is difficult to supervise all areas of the Leisure Centre where people have phones and other devices capable of taking photographs.

CCTV cameras are located around the leisure centre, leading to changing room areas. This was used very effectively to assist the Police to identify Mr Humphrys which has ultimately led to a successful prosecution.

Places for People staff were in regular contact with the Police at the time and following this incident, they have not made any recommendations to change the existing systems and procedures at the Centre.

It is noted from the press reports that the judge banned Mr Humphrys from River Park Leisure Centre. If he does try to enter the building, staff will immediately call the Police.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Laming

To: The Leader

“Can the leader please let me know the following figures:-

The total cost of

1. Consultants for each of the last 5 Years. Can the cost in each of these years be shown for Silver Hill and River Park Leisure centre projects.
2. The external legal costs for each of last 5 years. Again can these also show the individual yearly costs for Silver Hill and River Park Leisure Centre?
3. What are the projected legal costs for Silver Hill in this coming year?
4. In the case of River Park the projected costs for both Consultants and external legal cost for the next year.”

Reply

“The costs of “Professional services and Consultancy” for the last 5 years is provided in the table below. This is taken directly from the financial general ledger and includes expenditure on a complex range of items which are coded to these detail codes and a more detailed analysis can be provided by officers if required

£'000	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
Silver Hill	482,077	377,256	47,102	31,700	130,957
RPLC	14,000	46,613	50,479	0	0
Other	537,695	1,232,854	984,785	638,490	613,119
Total	1,033,773	1,656,723	1,082,365	670,190	744,076

The total expenditure the Council has incurred in legal and external consultants fees in relation to Silver Hill is approximately £1.07m of which approximately £620,000 relates to items which the Council believes are covered by the provisions of the Development Agreement/Indemnity Agreement. This leaves a balance which represents the Council's costs over the last five years. These arise from advice provided directly to the Council in the context of its decision making processes, such as the need to appoint

more than one external consultant to provide advice on viability and for legal advice regarding the Council's contractual position. These were authorised by Cabinet.

The Council's external legal costs of progressing the CPO and other work which is chargeable to the Silver Hill Development Account have been met directly by SW1 against billing from the Council's external lawyers. This arrangement has reduced the Council's administration costs and exposure to risk throughout this period.

The projected costs of defending the Council's position against the legal action now threatened by SW1 have not yet been quantified although the Council's external lawyers have previously advised Members that if the action developed into a full blown court case the costs could be between £500,000 and £1,000,000, only part of which could be recovered even if the Council wins the case.

For River Park Leisure Centre the overall cost to the Council for consultants to provide business case advice, investigate site options and undertake technical work is approximately £111,000 to date. There has been no expenditure on external legal fees.

There is no current budget allocation for a new leisure centre or for legal and design related consultants in the 2016/17. If and when it is decided that proposals for a new facility should be progressed then substantial expenditure will be required in line with the normal expectations for what will be a very large capital project. These will include fees for legal, architectural, planning, transport, quantity surveyors and environmental advisors and for the appointment of specialist external project management services. A full report on the RPLC project is planned for Cabinet in March."



COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Thacker

To: The Portfolio Holder for Local Economy

“The first round of LEADER funding was up in January. Does the Portfolio Holder have an update on what funds were available, the uptake on these and the success rate of the programme for the rural businesses/communities in the Winchester District and would the Portfolio Holder like to comment on how he sees benefit of the programme going forwards?”

Reply

“The Fieldfare Local Action Group secured £1.67m to deliver a programme of rural projects across Winchester, Eastleigh, East Hampshire and Havant. The first call for applications was announced in October 2015, with a broad focus on job creation and business growth and included opportunities for all of the eligible applicants. 5 outline applications have been received and 2 full applications to date. That call is still open for projects to apply and a further calls are being announced at the end of March 2016.

The first applications are being processed and in line with the rural Payments Agency guidelines, no decisions will be made until late March 2016. Applications are made to an overall funding pot of £1.67 million over the life of the programme.

The format of the Local Action Group has changed over the last month and set out at the Fieldfare AGM on 29 January, with the focus now being firmly on a set of more focused sub-groups dealing with the five themes of the LDS. These are ‘Land Based industries’ (farming, forestry and horticulture), ‘Local Food and Drink’, ‘Tourism, Culture and Heritage’, ‘Enterprise and Diversification’ and ‘Rural Communities’. The purpose of directing the volunteers who make up the LAG in this way is to offer the best customer service to applications, whilst ensuring the goals set out in the LDS are achieved.

Over the lifetime of the 2015-2021 Fieldfare LEADER programme, funds will be directed towards achieving the following targets:

- Support 155 projects
- Create 95 new jobs (sustain 166)
- Enable 6,000 additional overnight stays

I am confident that these targets are achievable over the course of the current LEADER programme because they have been developed by local people who are best placed to determine what local needs exist and how best to direct these towards the outcomes required .

Decisions about which project receive a grant offer are made by the Local Action Group and the funding is provided by the Rural Payments Agency.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Thompson

To: The Leader

"What has been the cost of the Claer Lloyd-Jones Report?"

Reply

"Ms Lloyd-Jones's fees to date have totaled £66,000. The cost of Officer and other time in contributing to the review has not been recorded."



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 9

From: Councillor McLean

To: The Portfolio Holder for Local Economy

“Can the portfolio holder outline the scope of the forthcoming parking review?”

Reply

“The basis of the work will be to look at a refresh of the Parking Strategy adopted by the Council in 2014. This will involve assessing how well it is performing in terms of meeting the District’s needs regarding the level and type of car parking available.

We also want to ensure that the document aligns with our Economic Strategy as the provision of appropriate parking is an important element underpinning our economy because access to parking helps to meet the needs of business as well as our residents. This is particularly relevant for Winchester where we have seen a number of changes in parking provision over the last 12 months and more may be in the pipeline. We will also of course take account of air quality issues in the city which will need to inform how we develop any options for revising the Strategy.

We will be undertaking surveys in the spring to see how much capacity exists in our car parks and will be asking the public and businesses for their views relating to the success of the existing Strategy. This will form the framework for taking the refresh forward and will help us to develop options for changing the strategy, as required, to better meet the needs of our economy and residents.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Tod

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“Now that the council’s recent air quality report has identified that the area outside the Casson Block continues to have some of the worst air quality in Hampshire, why have the cabinet taken money from a Winchester Access Plan fund designed to tackle traffic problems and thus improve air quality – and planned to spend it on an open air patio in the centre of the Air Quality Management area?”

Reply

“Improvements to this area have been mooted for many years, and have been long awaited by local businesses and town centre users. Improvements have been urged on the Council by the City of Winchester Trust and many individuals.

The redesign will improve lighting, planting and materials which will all represent an improvement. Nothing will make air quality worse.

The City Council is ready and willing to work with the County Council to bring forward positive proposals for improvements under the Town Access Plan, but has waited a long time for the County Council to commit resources to their review. The air quality management issues will be a spur to all of us, but it is simply wrong to make a connection between a small amount of capital spending and the measures we need to agree with the County Council – which is responsible for highways – to manage air quality in Winchester.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Humby

To: The Portfolio Holder for Local Economy

“What steps have been taken to accelerate economic development in our market towns over the next year?”

Reply

“The Market Towns Development Officer has been working in the four market towns across the District since 2013. Some of the highlights of the work to date have included high profile events such as the Taste of Wickham and Bishops Waltham’s Road to Agincourt weekend, alongside more behind-the-scenes infrastructure such as the establishment of a Denmead Business Forum and business directory, and more family orientated events such as the Alresford Ghost Hunt during October half term.

Partnership funding for this work has been established from the outset, with each town, led by the town or parish council, contributing to the post and the officer’s work, alongside other funding streams such as the George Hollingbery’s Town Team Partner funding, Hampshire County Council rural development funding and contributions from our own Local Economy budget.

Officers are also exploring using other funding streams to supplement this work, as the demand for the Market Town Development Officer’s time far exceeds the time and resource available, currently, such is the success of the project. Plans for the forthcoming year include a mystery shopping and customer service awards programme, a full programme of events designed to bring in visitors and encourage locals into the four towns, welcome packs for new residents promoting local shops and organisations, and aesthetic village enhancements. Additional support is vital in order for the plans for each town over the coming year to be fully resourced, even with an increasing volunteer base to draw on, and a toolkit for managing local events soon to be published. Further information about this additional support will be available in the next few weeks.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 12

From: Councillor J Berry

To: The Leader

“How much has the Silver Hill scheme cost the Council so far in terms of money and officer time since 2003?”

Reply

“It is not possible to quantify the total amount of time spent on the project by officers (or Members) simply because it has featured in so many Council meetings, events and activities over the years, as well as those elements directly related to delivering the project, that retrospectively determining what proportion was spent on Silver Hill would be impossible. However, as one of the City Council’s major projects it is entirely proper that it has accounted for a considerable amount of time since its inception which was in fact in 1997/98.

In terms of money, the proper costs associated with the progress of the CPO and the Development Agreement are met by SW1 which is then able to charge these to the Development Account along with all of SW1’s other costs such as architects, planning agents and transport consultants. These are then a project cost and if there is no project then they stand as a loss to the developer not the Council. More detail on the Council’s expenditure is provided in the answer to Cllr Laming on a similar point.

The Council also has expenses relating to the Judicial Review part of which are payments to Cllr Gottlieb’s legal team (part of these costs are covered by SW1) as previously reported. It also has expenses relating to the provision of other external advice, such as valuation and surveyors costs, necessary to meet the Council’s requirements which were authorized by Cabinet at the time. The cost of the Claer Lloyd-Jones report is covered in the answer to another question.

The principle costs going forward will be the legal and officer costs of dealing with the legal action now threatened by SW1, the cost of retaining land within the Silver Hill area, the demolition and making good of the Friarsgate Car Park and whatever costs are incurred in producing a new strategy for the

redevelopment of the area. These will be substantial and will be considered further in a Cabinet report in March.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Mather

To: The Portfolio Holder for Local Economy

“How much progress has been made on implementing the Better Business For All Campaign?”

Reply

“Better Business for All’ is a national campaign designed to bring “together businesses and regulators to consider and change how local regulation is delivered and received”

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-regulation-better-business-for-all>).

Winchester City Council already takes a proactive approach to our regulatory duties. Amongst others, we provide training for licensed businesses, we have dedicated rural planning advisors to aid the first steps towards seeking planning consent, and we play a key role in a Safety Advisory Group which aims to help some of our fantastic events and festivals take place. We also have an Economic Development team whose role is to be the bridge between our business community and the Council. As you can see, we are already doing a great deal to help our businesses thrive.

However, we always aim to improve, and using the principles of the Better Business for All (BBfA) campaign, more is being done to bring our business-facing teams together to learn from one another. The Economy & Arts and Environmental Protection teams are currently planning a joint away day in May using workshops and presentations to gain a better understanding of each others work, and the role of partner organisations such as the Local Enterprise Partnerships. We are also recruiting for a Better Business for All project officer to play a leading role in bringing a BBfA partnership together, starting with Winchester, and potentially rolling this out to neighbouring authorities.

There is still plenty more to do, but I am satisfied that we are progressing towards our goal of a Council which aims to help businesses in every interaction they have with their Local Authority.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 14

From: Councillor Laming

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“Can Councillor Pearson please explain the actions he has taken to bring the public conveniences up to an acceptable level since our last discussion? After all this is a city that depends on tourists.”

Reply

“As Portfolio Holder I also recognise the vital importance of our public conveniences in terms of not only tourism but also as a vital facility for residents.

Members will be aware that there were problems with the performance of the previous public convenience cleaning contractor which resulted in the early termination of their contract and provision of a temporary contractor to provide the service until the contract re-letting process could be completed. This was achieved in the latter part of 2015 and the contract let to a new contractor who has been in place since last November. The contract re-letting process included increased emphasis on the importance of quality of service as well as cost. I am pleased to report that since the contract was let there has been a 50% drop in the number of complaints received with an average of less than 1 per week.

The Contract Management Team will continue to monitor performance closely for the remainder of the contract period and will deal with any issues that may arise in the future using the usual contract sanctions available if necessary.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 15

From: Councillor J Berry

To: The Portfolio Holder for Local Economy

“Is usage of the Chesil Street multi-storey car park being closely monitored now that the Chesil Street surface car park has closed?”

Reply

“Yes it is. The Parking team have been closely monitoring the occupancy of spaces in Chesil MSCP since the closure of Chesil Street surface car park. This includes daily counts to see how quickly the car park fills up to floor 5 which is the lowest level Council staff are currently permitted to park to see if this arrangement needs to be reviewed. The car park still has un-used capacity at the present time.”



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 16

From: Councillor Tod

To: The Portfolio Holder for Service Delivery

“What arrangements does the council have for licensing use of its photos – including charging and management of permissions and use of photo release forms – particularly when photographs feature members of the public?”

Reply

“Our policy is to only undertake photography so long as we have verbal consent from adults that feature in the images. In the instance of children or vulnerable people written consent is gained from the Parent, Guardian or Carer. The purpose of the photography is always made clear to the individual and is only used in the way that it is intended. An indication of where the images are used is also communicated.

Images are held on secured servers where only authorised personnel can access them. Images are only released to working partners or media organisations. Addresses and personal details are not disclosed. Images are reviewed periodically and removed from the system.

This policy is being reviewed to ensure best practices are being followed.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 25 February 2016

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 17

From: Councillor J Berry

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing

“How is the Council increasing biodiversity in its green spaces?”

Reply

“The biodiversity of the Council’s green spaces is a key priority. The majority of work to increase biodiversity is undertaken by the Landscape and Open Spaces Team. The appointment of the Ecologist/Biodiversity Officer in 2015 has been of significant benefit as it has provided a resource to drive forward and delivery many work areas which benefit biodiversity.

The work currently undertaken by the Council to increase biodiversity in its green spaces includes:-

1. ***Updating Management Plans for key sites*** for example St Giles Hill Management Plan 2015 and the subsequent changes to the management of grassland woodland management.
2. ***Increasing the use of volunteers and community groups:*** The Council is increasing the use of volunteers and community groups to help delivery biodiversity benefit, through the management of our sites. For example,
 - a. Bishops Waltham Pond Conservation Group.
 - b. Conservation volunteers group at St Giles Hill
 - c. Trialling the use of The Community Rehabilitation Company to undertake practical works.
 - d. Fruit hedge and tree planting project at Abbots Barton with the Residents Association.
3. ***Enhancing existing areas:*** For example, Whiteshute Ridge, Winchester by introducing grazing and Greenacres, Otterbourne by working with the local conservation group and Residents Association to enhance this area not only for biodiversity but also recreation and flood alleviation.
4. ***Creating new areas of high biodiversity value:*** For example, wildflower meadow creation at Magdalen Hill Cemetery extension and

at Water Lane, which will not only provide biodiversity benefit but also improve the amenity of the open space.

5. **Working in partnership with external bodies.** For example
 - a. *Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre* which provides biological data to inform planning applications and projects.
 - b. *The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust* who manage key sites on our behalf including Winnall Moors and St Faiths Meadow.
 - c. *Cluster Farm Partnership*. This new partnership is looking to improve chalk grassland at a landscape scale in partnership with other bodies including the South Downs National Park, Environment Agency, Butterfly Conservation and private consultants.
6. **Working with other WCC departments:** The New Housing Team and the Landscape and Open Spaces Team are working to enhance biodiversity as part of the new housing programme. One example the land known as L4, near Hillers Way, Winchester.
7. **Adopting a strategic approach to open spaces within Winchester.** The Council is ensuring play areas provide multiple benefits including biodiversity. For example, at Abbots Barton
8. **Tree planting.** Following approval from the Town Forum in 2015, a tree planting programme is underway. Currently we are undertaking a planting scheme at Rack Hill, to help mitigate the impact of the loss of a significant number of trees at Chesil Street Car Park.

There are many more examples of work being undertaken to improve biodiversity on our open spaces and Members who wish to know more should contact Susan Croker, Head of Landscape and Open Spaces.”