



**Winchester**  
City Council

**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 April 2017**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 1**

From: Councillor Hiscock

To: The Portfolio Holder for the Environment

“What is the Waste Collection Contactor’s responsibility for keeping the footways clear after they have emptied the bins?”

**Reply**

“All properties currently have agreed collection points which are generally a point as near as practicable to the edge of the curtilage of the property adjacent to the public highway, public footpath or bridle way on which the collection vehicle has to travel. These collection points can not be changed unless agreed by the Authorised Officer and the resident dually notified.

The contractor will ensure that containers are returned after emptying to the point they were collected from and in the manner they were presented. The contractor will not place any container in any position which is likely to cause damage, danger or obstruction to users of the public highway or footway. In addition, the Contractor will ensure that no container is placed in a position which will obstruct any access to any premises.

As representatives of the council, the contractors’ employees are required to provide a service to residents and their conduct should reflect the professional image of the council at all times. Complaints relating containers not being returned correctly are considered to be a poor reflection on the council, and as such, will result in the issuing of rectification and/or default notices.”



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**QUESTION 2**

From: Councillor Scott

To: The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment

“Can the Portfolio Holder explain how Stanmore in WIN 9 policy terms was left far too late when it reached saturation levels of over 20% HMO’s before the non-immediate Article 4 was implemented, unlike the Winnall Estate contrary to the WIN 9 policy with only 8% of properties currently HMO’s (CAB 2917 on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017). Will the Portfolio Holder in the LPP2 review in 2018 recommend changes to the policy so that Stanmore percentage comes down to the Winnall level?”

**Reply**

“The purpose of the Article 4 direction which is in place in Stanmore and which will apply to Winnall in due course is to enable the planning process to control the percentage of HMOs either by neighbourhood or by street at the level set out in the WIN9 Local Plan policy. The level is the same for Stanmore and Winnall (and everywhere else in Winchester). The Article 4 was made as soon as the WIN9 policy itself was sufficiently well advanced to have weight in planning terms.

We now have the evidence about the trend that might be followed in other parts of the town and we can use this to justify the earlier implementation of an Article 4 in relevant locations. The Article 4 requires that planning consent be obtained for a conversion – it does not mean that it will be refused unless it is contrary to policy WIN9.

Cllr Scott is aware that the WIN9 policy is already working effectively and that the Council has won recent appeals for further conversions of houses to HMOs.

The actual number of HMOs in Stanmore will reduce if any properties which are currently HMOs are purchased and returned to use as family homes. This does happen from time to time and does not require planning consent.”



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**QUESTION 3**

From: Councillor Mather

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“Can the Portfolio Holder give an update on the progress with the commercial waste collection pilot considered for central Winchester following the presentation to members by Westminster City Council?”

**Reply**

“The presentation from Westminster City Council was certainly thought provoking and provided plenty of ideas as to how we might be able to address the difficult issue of commercial waste storage in the centre of town.

However what was clear is that we need to work with various partners if we are to develop new proposals to tackle this issue so our officers have been engaged in constructive discussions with Hampshire County Council, as the highway authority, and Business Improvement District. We have also been gathering data over the last couple of weeks so we can identify where problems are most evident.

Once we have completed this preliminary work we will be looking to bring forward proposals for a pilot scheme.”



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**QUESTION 4**

From: Councillor Hutchison

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“We were impressed by the presentation from LB Westminster on how they had managed to tackle waste collections; can the Portfolio Holder please let us know when Winchester City Council will be bringing forward proposals to address issues of bins on pavements and in public spaces in Winchester?”

**Reply**

“The presentation from Westminster City Council was certainly thought provoking and provided plenty of ideas as to how we might be able to address the difficult issue of commercial waste storage in the centre of town.

However what was clear is that we need to work with various partners if we are to develop new proposals to tackle this issue so our officers have been engaged in constructive discussions with Hampshire County Council, as the highway authority, and Business Improvement District. We have also been gathering data over the last couple of weeks so we can identify where problems are most evident.

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**QUESTION 5**

From: Councillor Tod

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“As the UK market for electric vehicles continues to boom, what is the council's plan to ensure that there are enough 'fast' and 'rapid' chargers available across the district for public access and use?”

**Reply**

“The Council has 2 fast charge points at Park and Ride South, 2 in Chesil Street MSCP, 1 at Arlebury Park in Alresford, 1 in the Guildhall Yard and 2 in the Brooks Centre car park. The replacement Friarsgate car parking spaces will incorporate 2 charging points.

As part of the Car Parking Strategy Review considered by Cabinet in December 2016 it was agreed to look at the provision of new ULEV spaces and this also forms part of our new Air Quality Action Plan.

The Council strongly supports the use of environmentally friendly vehicles, and providing ULEV charging points is consistent with this aim. There are issues relating to the robustness of electricity supplies for rapid charging points, and we need to strike the right balance in order to avoid having spaces which are underused, but as demand increases we will aim to increase supply.

We will therefore be developing a strategy for ULEV charging points over the coming months to determine what sort of investment will be needed to accommodate likely future demand.”



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**QUESTION 6**

From: Councillor Byrnes

To: The Portfolio Holder for Business Partnerships

“Can the Portfolio Holder tell me how the level of commercial vacancies in Winchester compares to the national average, and give an explanation for any variance?”

**Reply**

“According to Winchester BID’s Business Barometer, the vacancy rate in the High Street in January was at 3.9% which represents five premises. Since this time, two others have become empty, raising this level to approximately 5.5%. According to the national monitoring programme ‘Springboard’, the national vacancy rates stand at 9.4% (January 2017).

Winchester benefits from a high demand for its commercial space, with most vacant premises soon being occupied by other businesses. There are, however, some premises which cross into a longer term vacancy threshold, such as the unit next to Coral on the Broadway.

Winchester City Council and the Winchester BID continue to work together to reduce the vacancy rate further. Not only do we provide intelligence for potential investors, and sell Winchester as a place to do business, but we also join forces to present Winchester as a top end retailing destination, with a varied independent retail offer alongside household names.”



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**QUESTION 7**

From: Councillor Thompson

To: The Leader

“When will the report from the Peer Review carried out in February be published?”

**Reply**

“We are in the process of finalising an action plan and the final peer challenge report with the Local Government Association and will publish the report and action plan on our website in the coming weeks. We have also asked our internal auditors to provide an update to the audit committee on the Council's responses to the peer review to ensure that we implement the key recommendations from the report.”



## COUNCIL MEETING – 5 April 2017

### Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

#### QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Gemmell

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance

“Can the Portfolio Holder tell me what steps are being taken to support local businesses following the revaluation of property values for Business Rates?”

#### Reply

“The latest revaluation of rateable values (RV) for business rates came in to effect from 1 April. As in previous revaluations the government introduced a scheme of transitional relief (TR) which allows rate increases to be phased in between a one to five year period, depending on the level of the increase. The TR works by only allowing a fixed percentage rise in rates each year after an increase for inflation (2% in 2017/18) and before any other reliefs were awarded on the prior year rates. The thresholds which trigger TR are as follows:

Property Size	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Small RV < £20,000	5.0%	7.5%	10.0%	15.0%	15.0%
Medium RV ≥ £20,000 & < £100,000	12.5%	17.5%	20.0%	25.0%	25.0%
Large RV ≥ £100,000	42.0%	32.0%	49.0%	16.0%	6.0%

So for example:

An RV increases from £11,250 to £17,000. Rates in 2016/17 were £5,445.00 (before any reliefs were awarded) and rates in 2017/18 would be £7,922.00 without TR. However, the £5,445 is limited to a 2% increase for inflation and 5% increase for TR making the actual rates payable in 2017/18 £5,831.60 (so TR awarded is £7,922 less £5831.60 = £2,090.40).



The government has increased support for small businesses. Occupied properties with an RV below £12,000 will pay no rates if they qualify for Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) or will receive tapered SBRR for RVs below £15,000. The limit on the multiplier will now apply to RVs up to £51,000.

We welcome the Chancellor's proposal at the Spring Budget to set aside further funding of over £900,000 in the next four years for the Winchester District. The conditions of the grant currently suggested in the government's consultation are as follows:

- support should only be provided to those businesses facing a significant increase in their bill and that increase is due only to the revaluation
- more support will be provided to –
  - ratepayers or localities that face the most significant increases in bills; and
  - ratepayers occupying lower value properties
- consultation with major precepting authorities must take place before adopting the scheme
- the relief can be recalculated in the event of a change in RV (e.g. successful appeal to lower RV)
- any relief will be subject to state aid conditions

We will work on a new discretionary relief scheme and support the government's intention to ensure that monies are targeted towards those businesses who are facing large rises and who occupy lower value properties. A Portfolio Holder Decision on the consultation response was circulated recently.

The Economy and Arts team are happy to meet with business groups to explain more about these rate relief schemes. The Portfolio Holder for Estates, Cllr Steve Miller, met with Wickham Chamber in the Autumn, and a meeting is planned with Alresford businesses later this month. The subject has also been discussed at the Winchester Business Improvement District board.

The Council will also implement other measures suggested by the Chancellor in respect of a £1,000 relief for pubs with an RV less than £100,000 (subject to the government's consultation, not yet released) and a cap on the increase of rates on all businesses which are losing SBRR from 1<sup>st</sup> April.

The Government consultation on Discretionary Relief closes at the end of the week and we hope to launch our rate relief scheme as soon as possible after the Government has confirmed the allocation to us. This will enable us to further support businesses in our district that provide such a valuable contribution to the local and national economy, and that help make the district such an excellent place to work and live.”



## COUNCIL MEETING – 5 April 2017

### Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

#### QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Huxstep

To: The Leader

“What practical definition is to be used for ‘Entrepreneurial Approach’ as articulated in the Council Strategy?”

#### Reply

“We know that we have a major financial challenge ahead of us. Though we have been successful to date in maintaining services and responding positively to the challenge, the complete removal of the main Government grant as well as the constraints put on the new homes bonus money will cause substantial drops in our income. Traditional ways of tackling this problem such as salami slicing council budgets are no longer an option if we want to keep providing excellent services to our residents, businesses and visitors; we will not have the funds to slice in the future. We therefore define an entrepreneurial approach as one which

***“uses the skills and approach derived from the private sector in order to save money and generate new income streams in order to make the Council financially viable, and exploits new opportunities to gain financial and social value to the Council and those we represent ”***

In working entrepreneurially, we will enact change by

- Adopting an imaginative and innovative mind-set towards using our resources
- Clearly understand our residents’/businesses’/visitors’ needs and design our services to meet them
- Maintain an open mind when exploring new models for service delivery and provide options for the Council to consider in order to secure the opportunity which works best for the District – we know that they are always better ways of working and we want to exploit these by working with partners, both public, private and voluntary sector which will secure the best value for money for the tax payer

- We are optimistic about the future. When exploring new opportunities, we want to adopt an agile approach which allows us to rapidly review and learn from experience to ensure the best result
- We want to deliver; to make our services better for those we serve and to meet the challenges that we have set ourselves.

This approach will involve a different appetite to risk and also that we need to generate income from different sources to keep providing services, and that we need to embrace different operating models to reduce costs. For services across the Council this will mean understanding the value that we add, ensuring we maximise the way we deliver, and exploiting the opportunities we have to generate income.

There are other options available to us. We have considered managed decline, maintaining the status quo and basing our plans on hoping the financial problem will go away. We do not believe any of these represent what is in the best interests of those we serve and so will use an entrepreneurial approach, so that in a tough financial climate we will deliver our outcomes that benefit the whole district.”



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 10**

From: Councillor Porter

To: The Portfolio Holder for Professional Services

“What progress has been made on safeguarding checks for Councillors following the Adult Safeguarding review?”

**Reply**

“The Council recognises that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and is committed to working in partnership with others to safeguard people from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

The Safeguarding duties placed on the City Council have been extended beyond safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults to encompass, Domestic Violence and Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation(CSE) and the Missing Exploited and Trafficked (MET) agenda (including Modern Slavery), and Prevent (the Governments Counter- Terrorism Strategy).

The Council has undertaken a major review of its policies, procedures and protocols for Safeguarding and agreed that all Council staff, Councillors and volunteers, key contractors, consultants and directly commissioned or grant funded providers acting on behalf of the Council, undertake training to respond to safeguarding issues.

A Safeguarding E - Learning package has been developed which was launched to all staff in March. It will be launched to all Councillors following the Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Making in May. It will form part of both the Councillor and Staff Induction Programmes and it will be released on a regular basis as refresher training for everybody.”



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 11**

From: Councillor Read

To: The Leader

“Bearing in mind the comments in the press that architects will not wish to work with Winchester City Council, has the registered interest in the Bar End scheme for the new sport and leisure park been disappointing?”

**Reply**

“We are currently at a key stage in the process to appoint a design team for the Leisure Centre project at Bar End. A very good level of interest was expressed in the process and subsequently eight design teams submitted detailed and costed submissions by last weeks deadline. This is a good response and should, subject to the assessment and evaluation process, provide the Council with the experience and skills which it needs in order to progress this important project.

We are currently assessing these bids against the criteria that the Council set and will be drawing up a short list of firms who will then be invited to an interview.

The submissions are from a range of architects with experience and track records in delivering Leisure Centres. It should be noted that the process allows for the lead architect to include other disciplines within their teams such as Urban Design.”



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 12**

From: Councillor Brook

To: The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment

“Do you think that the Central Winchester Regeneration Group Consultation was a success?”

**Reply**

“The engagement and consultation process to support the formulation of the Supplementary Planning Document is ongoing and will be supplemented by further information being assembled and collected but I am really pleased with the process so far in terms of both the outreach work across the District in Bishops Waltham and Alresford, at the Railway station, with local schools and colleges and the community planning weekend.

We saw around 700 people attend the Community Planning Weekend which was excellent in itself but what was really pleasing was the mix and range of different groups and age groups which participated.

We are currently assessing the feedback and whether there are any gaps in our information and representation which will need to be supplemented before progressing to the next stage.”



## COUNCIL MEETING – 5 April 2017

### Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

#### QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Hiscock

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“What Health and Safety training is given to the Waste Collection Crews about the handling of the green waste bags? What instructions are given regarding what they do with the bags once they have emptied them?”

#### Reply

**“What Health and Safety training is given to the Waste Collection Crews about the handling of the green waste bags”.**

All collection crews receive detailed training on the manual handling of garden waste sacks in accordance with the health and safety requirements relating to this activity. One particular concern is to avoid lifting over weight sacks which can cause back and limb injuries.

The training includes instruction, videos and practical training on the techniques to be used. The initial training is backed up with occasional refresher sessions as ‘tool box talks’ before the start of a shift.

**What instructions are given regarding what they do with the bags once they have emptied them”.**

The overall requirements are for Biffa to ensure that containers are returned after emptying to the point they were collected from and in the manner they were presented. They should not place any container in any position which is likely to cause damage, danger or obstruct the highway or property access.

Biffa are also required to ensure that garden waste sacks replaced in a secure position/location which ensures they will not become dislodged or move prior to the residents retrieving them (e.g. the handles put on a gate post or the sack placed under the bin or its lid) once they have been emptied. This is particularly important during windy conditions.

The Contract Management Team does receive complaints about sacks not being properly returned and these are investigated. If required contract penalty notices are used to secure improved crew performance to ensure they are properly returned.

Finally, any sacks lost as a result of not being properly returned are replaced free of charge.”



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**QUESTION 14**

From: Councillor Scott

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“Regarding to meeting to consider upper Stanmore parking informal consultation results and other factors adding to the parking problems on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017, can the Portfolio Holder confirm the timing of the second formal consultation period up to implementation for the North of Stanmore, Upper Stanmore Lane and Olivers Battery Road North area?”

**Reply**

“The intention is to draft the outline proposals so they are ready by the end of April 2017. These proposals will be shared with residents to establish whether there are any significant changes required before proceeding with drafting the necessary schedules for the formal consultation stage. On this basis I envisage that this will commence in May 2017.”





**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 April 2017**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 15**

From: Councillor Thompson

To: The Leader, with Portfolio for Housing

“What is the Council doing to help vulnerable people now that the budget for the work formerly done by the supporting people programme has been cut at the county council?”

**Reply**

“In 2015, the Supporting People grant for all sheltered residents was removed and replaced with more targeted grant for those with specific care and support requirements. Most sheltered tenants were assessed at that time as not meeting the new “threshold” for support.

However, the County Council do still commission support for vulnerable people, including care and support packages for older people as well “floating support” for residents assessed as vulnerable.

Housing officers continue to refer both sheltered and general needs residents for assessment when they have concerns about their ability to live independently.

In addition to the floating support commissioned by the County Council, the City Council also provides a range of “intensive housing management and advice” services to vulnerable tenants and to residents in temporary accommodation to help ensure they can sustain their tenancies. This includes benefits and money advice, training, employment mentoring, housing options advice and signposting to other support services. The Council also work with a number of organisations (including our core partners such as Trinity and the Nightshelter) to provide support and assistance to vulnerable people threatened with homelessness.

As part of its “sheltered service offer”, the City Council holds weekly surgeries, encourages social inclusion through organised activities and has invested in improving communal areas at each Sheltered Housing scheme.”



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**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 April 2017**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 16**

From: Councillor Hutchison

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“The proposed Movement Strategy for Winchester, and its implementation, is critical to major development areas in Winchester: the Central Regeneration area, Station Approach and the proposed Leisure Centre at Bar End; it is good to see that evidence of traffic movements is now being collected, can the Portfolio Holder please let us know when the draft Brief for the Strategy will be prepared and available for comment and discussion?”

**Reply**

“The preparation of a new Winchester Movement Strategy is a very important exercise given the development proposed in the city over the next few years and bearing in mind the need to begin evidence gathering for the review of the Local Plan which we are required to begin next year.

Our officers have been working closely with their colleagues at the County to develop the scope of the study and finalise the project plan.

The County Council has begun monitoring to collect traffic data which is essential to understanding the flow of traffic in Winchester and which will be used as an evidence base for which we will develop jointly with Hampshire.

Public engagement on issues and options will be an important part of the process.”



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 17**

From: Councillor Porter

To: The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment

“What role will this local authority take in the finalisation of the South Downs National Park Authority local plan?”

**Reply**

“The South Downs National Park Authority is a local planning authority in its own right and will prepare its first ‘home grown’ Local Plan with the policies it sees fit to include. These must be in accordance with the NPPF and meet the necessary statutory tests. The City Council will be consulted on those policies and will respond as appropriate.”