



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 11 October 2017

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Weir

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“The latest report on the Winchester district carbon footprint shows that, despite lower CO2 emissions, the target 30% reduction by 2015 compared with 2005 has been missed. The target for 2020 – 40% lower CO2 emissions relative to 2004 – is even more challenging at a time when progress is stalling.

How will the Council tackle this challenge going forward and which of our Council officers are responsible for ensuring that Winchester gets back on track and plays its full part in helping the UK meet its climate change commitments?”

Reply

“Cllr Weir’s question demonstrates the difficulty of taking statistics at face value. I am pleased to say that the report, produced by Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC) and based on national verified figures, actually shows that if you take into account the growth of the population of the District the target has been exceeded on a per capita basis by 0.8%.

Between the time that the target was set in 2004 and 2015, the population of Winchester increased by 11% - so the per capita figure is a fairer reflection of the efforts being made by householders in particular to adopt a more planet-friendly way of living.

I agree that the next target for 2020 is a challenging one. As a Council we have already done much to reduce our own carbon footprint. We have also made a public commitment to doing more, through agreeing our route map to a low carbon economy in Winchester District and [Twelve Actions for a Lower Carbon Council](#): this includes a range of measures from making the new leisure centre as close to zero emissions as is financially and technically possible, to the introduction of eco-driving training for officers and Members and installation of more energy efficient lighting in some of our car parks..

Furthermore we introduced new lower emission buses as part of the new park and ride contract, which came into effect last year, and have supported the generation of green energy by giving planning permission for a number of solar farms across the district in line with policies set out in our adopted Local Plan.

We are also working closely with WinACC, who have produced a parallel plan called [Ten Actions for Low Carbon Communities](#).

We need to focus on behavioural change in the business community, where the consumption of electricity shows no sign of reducing. Goods vehicles have also been on the increase (14% more since 2009) and are another significant contributor to our carbon footprint.

Whilst much is being done at a national level, we all have a part to play locally, and the Council will continue to play a community leadership role in line with the commitments it has already made.

Addressing the challenge climate change presents is our collective responsibility, members and officers, but the lead officer for the Council moving forward will be Simon Finch (Assistant Director Environment).”



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QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Tod

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“The Executive Member for Environment and Transport at Hampshire County Council has agreed to take forward to Hampshire's Cabinet and Full Council cost saving measures for the county including ending "all current transport and traffic agency arrangements with the District Councils" and the removal of responsibility from District Councils for "on-street parking pay and display and other parking" and their replacement by "by providing a single countywide, standardised approach to civil parking enforcement."

What impact would these changes have on the City Council's finances and the service provided to local people?”

Reply

“The County Council has yet to make a final decision regarding which options it intends to pursue relating to the agency agreements it currently has with district councils and its approach to on-street parking and other parking charges countywide. These decisions will rest with full County Council on 2 November.

The City Council currently provides traffic management and development management under agency agreements both of which were reviewed with the County Council last year.

In addition we also deliver on-street parking enforcement services for Hampshire and set parking charges. The City Council would still need to retain some Civil Enforcement Officers to cover our off-street car parks even if we no longer provide on street enforcement for Hampshire.

We have started to consider what these changes may mean for the City Council but it is too early to say exactly what the impact will in financial terms bearing in mind that there may be options available to us around these service areas once we have had the opportunity to discuss these matters with

Hampshire. If the County Council does recover these activities and delivers them directly the level of service provided to the public will be a matter for them to decide and this is reflected in their report.

With regard to on-street parking the County Council acknowledges that there will be an impact on district councils and providing a countywide approach to civil enforcement could impact on service users as some charges may increase and new charges be introduced.

In relation to ending the agency agreements the County Council indicates that Highway Development Planning Service will be delivered in a different way and acknowledge that will be more restricted district activity in traffic management which they say could have a low level impact on some service users.

We shall therefore continue to monitor progress of these budget options closely, assessing potential impacts on the Council in financial and other terms, and would welcome early discussions with the County Council once they have determined which budget options they want to take forward after November 2nd."



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QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Ruffell

To: The Leader with Portfolio Holder for Housing

“How many council houses have we built since the start of this period when we were as a council able to build council houses, how many are planned to be built? and do we own the land to build on?”

The PM in her speech to conference said she was proposing £2billion towards council houses in England, are we likely to get any of this money?”

Reply

“The council has completed 92 homes as part of its original commitment to build 300 new homes in the period 2012 – 2022. A further 102 homes are currently on site, the majority of which will be completed during the financial year.

Two schemes totaling 89 homes have planning consent and are currently out to Tender. The New Homes Delivery Team are working on potential schemes that could deliver a further 400 Council homes within the next 3 years. A proportion of the sites for the additional housing are in Council ownership.

The Council has already met with representatives from the Department for Communities and Local Government to make the case for additional funding to support housing delivery. The existing New Homes programme is a clear demonstration of the Council’s ability and commitment to deliver new housing.

The additional £2 Billion in funding being made available is welcomed and the Council will be bidding for a proportion of this funding to support its new build programme.”



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QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Rutter

To: The Leader with Portfolio for Housing

“Re: Government change in policy of last year capping affordable housing contributions to developments of 10 or more homes.

- a) What has this change in policy cost the Council’s new homes delivery budget?
- b) How many fewer affordable homes have been built as a direct consequence of this change in policy?
- c) What is the number of developments of 10 homes or less which have come forward for planning permission this past year since the change of policy as compared with the number for a comparable period before the cap was introduced?”

Reply

“Whilst we know that 203 applications for 10 or fewer homes have been determined since the change in Government policy (13th May 2016), it is not possible to quantify what the impact has been in terms of the affect on affordable housing contributions received from developers or units provided on site.

Under Local Plan Policy CP3 the Council seeks to secure 40% affordable housing subject to considering scheme viability which can result in the proportion of such housing being reduced. Some schemes can provide 40% whilst remaining economically viable but many cannot sustain this proportion so it has to be reduced in line with this policy.

We can say therefore that the 203 applications which proposed up to 10 dwellings may have delivered affordable housing on site, or by way of financial contribution, because they would have been assessed against Policy CP3. Prior to that period (May 2015 – April 2016) 124 schemes were determined. However we cannot know how many affordable units would have been secured, or the level of financial contributions which would have been paid to the Council, only that affordable housing would have been considered as part of the application process.

It should also be noted that the Ministerial Written Statement not only refers to schemes of 10 units or less, but also applies to development of 1,000sq.m. floor area.

In the period since the May 2016 over 180 new affordable homes have been completed by the Council and other registered providers and over £1m in financial contributions have been collected from developers through S106 agreements. During 2017/18 80% of this will be used to support the provision of 57 new affordable homes. The remaining 20% will be used in 2018/19.”



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QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Mather

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment

“Can you outline the process and the timeline for public consultation on the City of Winchester Movement Strategy?”

Reply

“The City of Winchester Movement Strategy is an exciting opportunity to take a comprehensive review of how transport works in and around the city and to shape priorities and produce high level options aimed at improving how Winchester functions in relation to all forms of movement over the next twenty years and beyond.

Early engagement is a key component to developing the strategy and, to this end, we will have an open on line consultation which is scheduled to begin at the end of October and will run into December so that anyone who lives, works, or visits the city can provide their comments. We will also encourage people living over a wider area of the district to participate in the consultation as we are seeking input from anyone who may have cause to come to Winchester. We want to hear from everyone who may have an opinion about how we can improve transport in the city.

At the same time a qualitative telephone survey of residents will be undertaken in order to understand their views on travel behavior and attitudes as well what they would like to see prioritized as part of the study. This may help to reach people who may not otherwise take an active interest in this type of project.

Workshops are also planned in November to engage with transport interest groups, operators and infrastructure providers as well as other major stakeholders in Winchester, such as large employers in the town, to understand their views regarding the main factors which constrain movement in the city and how these matters could be addressed.

We will also be briefing county and district members shortly, as the project is formally launched in terms of public engagement, and a workshop with them is being planned to take place after the feedback has been received ahead of developing the draft strategy in 2018.

Consultation on the draft strategy will then take place, most likely in the spring and early summer of next year, with a view to both Hampshire County Council and City Council adopting the final version of the strategy in the third quarter of 2018.”



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QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Evans

To: The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment

“When a planning condition concerning necessary archeology to be undertaken is attached to a permission do we ensure that these works are carried out and what would happen if they are not?”

Reply

“There are a variety of planning conditions used to protect and safeguard archaeology. The type and nature of the condition used will vary depending on specific circumstances in each case.

Often archaeology conditions will require the submission of a method statement for approval, the fieldwork will then be monitored on site. The findings of this work will then be required to be assessed and scrutinised prior to reporting or publication if warranted, the results thus being made available in the public domain.

There has been an isolated situation in the past (nearly 10 years ago) when a developer did not satisfy the requirements of the planning condition, and due to the passage of time, and the particular circumstances in that case it has not been possible to publish the findings. It was not possible to pursue a breach of the condition, however the baseline data exists and site records and finds exist and it would therefore be possible to publish the findings in due course, subject to the identification of funding. There has been no ‘loss’ of archaeological information.

The responsibility lies with the developer to ensure that they satisfy all conditions of a planning permission. The Council’s Archaeologist ensures that when information has been submitted it satisfies the requirements of the conditions and that the developer undertakes the works and publishes the findings.”



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QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Berry

To: The Portfolio Holder for Estates

“Could the Portfolio Holder please provide information regarding the future arrangements (if any) for the Bus Station? Could we also have all the information of the public’s response to the recent reconfiguration of the facility – notably of buses entering from The Broadway and exiting onto Friarsgate. Any information provided would be of great interest to full Council.”

Reply

“Bus operators are pleased with the new facility and feel that it is operating very well.

Some remedial works are still being undertaken including the installation of some additional lighting, shelters and bins.

No public surveys have been undertaken since the new facility opened but extensive surveys were undertaken which informed the design of the works. Responses stated that certain issues were important including the location of the bus station and the provision of facilities such as real time passenger information which has been provided as part of the new scheme.

We expect that views on the bus provision will be expressed through the movement study and we will seek to review these and the forthcoming engagement on the CWR SPD will be a further chance for comments to be made.”



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QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Elks

To: The Portfolio Holder for Estates

“There has been a very positive response to the new bus station, however, passengers catching the nos. 1, 4 and 64 outside Abbey Gardens are concerned about the lack of seating and shelter. This is the area where the National Express coaches leave from and when it is wet passengers and luggage are competing for the very limited dry areas. Could the Portfolio Holder please explain what is planned to solve this problem and the timeframe for implementation?”

Reply

“A plan is currently being prepared in conjunction with the County Council to improve passenger information and shelters in this area.

It is hoped that this can be implemented in the New Year once funding for the shelters has been identified.”



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QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Cook

To: The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment

“Enforcement regularly receives criticism for its lack of action and amount of time that it takes to respond to issues. Are there any plans to address this as this is constantly a question that is raised by many Councillors and Parish Councillors?”

Reply

“We are aware of some dissatisfaction around enforcement within the district. The claim about lack of action within the Enforcement Team is refuted. Enforcement by its nature is a difficult and complex matter and we are confined by the law on the steps we must take to action enforcement cases (for example being able to demonstrate that we have worked with developers to try and resolve problems before we are able to take formal action).

Earlier this year we published an Enforcement Plan which set out the priorities for dealing with alleged breaches of Planning Control.

Recent successes include securing an Injunction in the High Court against the occupation of gypsies and travellers on a site in Denmead. Prosecution through the courts for non compliance with enforcement notices. They have also instigated direct action. In the last 6 months, 6 enforcement notices have been issued. This has resulted in a heavy work load dealing with the subsequent appeals.

Work also continues to defend Carousel Park, with the Public Inquiry due to reconvene at the end of November.

Much of the work that takes place within the enforcement team is in the background and so not always visible to the complainant and those effected. We are working on our communication strategy to ensure that the expectations of cases are laid out clearly and that updates are more transparent to the Parish Councils and residents.

We have recently commissioned a peer review of the Enforcement function. The findings and any recommendations will be taken forward to ensure that the focus and priorities of the Enforcement Team align with the Council's priorities. Action will be taken to address the concerns and ensure that the perception of the enforcement team is more in line with the amount of good work that is achieved by them within the district.”



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QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Learney

To: The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing

“In the light of the closure of the Brownhill surgery which serves part of our district due to "difficulties in the recruitment of GPs as a result of national GP shortages and increasing workload" and the knock on effects on neighbouring practices can the Portfolio Holder tell us:

- a) What action she is taking to monitor provision of primary care services across the district?
- b) Whether she shares my concern that the failure to recruit and retain sufficient GPs is a matter which requires urgent and increased action by government?”

Reply

“The City Council has maintained regular dialogue with the West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group with regard to its ongoing communications with those residents affected by the closure of the Brownhill Surgery in Chandlers Ford.

All residents affected are currently being consulted on their preferences for moving to an alternative practice (options for residents of the Winchester district include the Twyford practice as well as other practices in Chandlers Ford, Boyatt Wood and Eastleigh). On 3 October, the CCG stated that 79% of patients had submitted their preferences and that everyone who has chosen will get their first choice of new practice. Letters will be sent mid-October to patients regarding next steps. An upgrade to the IT system will mean records will be automatically transferred to their new practice.

Pressures on GP services are well documented. However, The CCG remains confident that capacity exists for all patients to register with their preferred practice and has agreed additional financial packages to support those practices. In addition, new service models, such as the Primary Care

Hub recently opened in Badger Farm will help maintain access to GP services locally.

In April 2016, the NHS announced 'the General Practice Forward View' and is moving forward with plans including additional funding on sustainability and transformation around recruitment and practice development. Members may wish to watch the Secretary of State's speech at the Royal College of General Practitioners Annual Conference on Thursday of this week to understand how this is progressing"



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QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Huxstep

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance

“Councils up and down the country have made significant investments in commercial property as they try to replace the loss of revenue as a result of government policy. The LGA estimate that Councils have paid £2.7 billion for commercial properties since 2015. For example, Mole Valley Council, in Surrey, have spent £11.5 million buying an ASDA supermarket. There is another example in a neighbouring local authority. Does our Treasury Management Strategy permit such investment? Do we have plans to follow suit and if not why not?”

Reply

“Our financial strategy does permit the investment of commercial property. The Council allocated a budget of £15m in 2016/17 enabling a clear governance structure to make strategic acquisitions which may include the purchase of commercial property to generate revenue streams. To date one purchase has been made, the acquisition of the bus station. Potential opportunities are considered by the Strategic Asset Purchase Scheme board, and the aspiration is for future purchases to generate a ‘double-win’ that enables other policy objectives to be achieved.”