



Winchester
City Council

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – 21 November 2017

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Evans

To: The Leader (Cllr Horrill)

“In 2017 there have so far been 9 cancelled and 21 postponed formal council meetings. Is the Leader aware that these frequent changes, which are often at fairly short notice, have knock-on consequences for Councillors and what efforts are made by the Council to inform members of the public of these changes of dates and possibly venues for meetings?”

Reply

“There have been a number of changes over the past months to meeting dates and I appreciate Councillor’s efforts in ensuring a continued active participation in Council business. There are many reasons for these cancellations or postponements. Firstly, where there is no business at a meeting then there is no point in it taking place and occupying Councillor or officer time. Secondly, the General Election in June this year extended the purdah period and had a knock-on impact on a number of meetings. Thirdly, I have also introduced Overview & Scrutiny Committees meetings to take place before Cabinet meetings to take on board comments from the Committee; this has led to some movements in the timetable. Finally, due to internal or external changes, the need to make a swift or unforeseen decision is required and this leads to a change in the meeting date or time compared to the originally published dates.

I recognise the impact on Councillors and the public of these changes. Democratic Services have recently sent meeting updates for Members Outlook calendars so that we can all see the latest commitments. All future meetings continued to be placed on the external website with location dates, as soon as any changes are known.

We remain mindful of the issue and will endeavor to minimise any changes to future scheduled meetings wherever possible.”



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QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Elks

To: The Leader with Portfolio for Housing Services (Cllr Horrill)

“Could you please explain why the residents of Braxton House in Winnall were without a lift for nearly a week, and what plans are in place to ensure that this doesn’t happen again? There are 9 flights of stairs in the building and it was almost impossible for some elderly and disabled residents, and those with young children in buggies and prams, to leave their homes during that time.”

Reply

“Faults to a number of lifts at the Winnall flats were reported on Wednesday 8th November, following “power surges” in the area.

The Council’s contractor attended that day, repaired all other lifts but unfortunately was unable to bring the Braxton House lift back into use. They attended again on Thursday, when it was identified additional parts were required, although unfortunately, these could not be obtained until Wednesday 15 November. The lift was brought back into use that day.

As soon as the Council was notified of the delays to the repair, additional support was made available to assist with lifting/carrying. Officers also assisted one disabled resident to move to a nearby hotel until works were completed.

The lift was completely refurbished 6 years ago, is well maintained and is in good condition. However, it is not possible to say such an event would never happen again and the Corporate Head of Housing is reviewing existing maintenance and emergency cover contracts to ensure they are reasonable and appropriate. The review will also include a focus on why parts required took so long and on procedures for keeping tenants informed and updated on progress with such incidents.”



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QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Read

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment (Cllr Horrill on behalf of Cllr Warwick)

“This year central government announced that the combustion engine would be phased out and replaced with smarter vehicles. During my visit to both European and the Scandinavian countries this year and witnessing the amount of investment being invested in the basic infrastructure. In the light of this announcement what plans have Winchester City Council to supply electrical pick-up points in the proposed new development in central Winchester?”

Reply

“This year the Council adopted its Air Quality Action Plan and Core Measure 4 states that we will introduce new parking charges/incentives to reduce diesel car parking and high pollution petrol cars (older than Euro 4) from parking in central car parks in favour of low emission vehicles. Furthermore, as part of the complimentary measures which underpin core actions in the plan, we will look at opportunities to introduce more electric vehicle charging points within our car parks.

To this end we are going to commission the development of an electric vehicle charging point strategy which will set out how the Council intends to further develop infrastructure within our car parks to support the increased use of these types of vehicle.

In relation specifically to the Centre of Winchester Regeneration area the draft Supplementary Planning Document acknowledges the importance of improving air quality in the city centre and proposes a number of measures to build upon the core actions within the air quality action plan including introducing electrical charging points in the city centre car parks to give priority to electric vehicles.”



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QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Thompson

To: The Portfolio Holder for Estates (Cllr Miller)

"Can the Portfolio Holder tell us when the City Council purchased the former Registry Office and how long has it remained unoccupied?"

Reply

"The Council completed the purchase of the Carfax site on 13th August 2015 and the former Registry Office formed part of this acquisition. Immediately following the purchase of the property terms were agreed with Hampshire County Council to let part of the site to them for staff parking. A further approach was received from Hampshire Constabulary about the possibility of leasing parking spaces on the site and a tenancy was subsequently granted to them for parking on the car park forming part of the former Registry office.

Members will no doubt recall that the registry office was the subject of extensive works by the County Council in the early 1980's, which converted the building into a large chamber in which wedding ceremonies could be conducted. This required the removal of most of the upper floor to create a chamber similar in nature to a small church, complete with stained glass windows. The balance of the building was laid out as offices for the Registrar's service, complete with a very large deed safe.

As members are aware LDS have been appointed to develop a design for the development of the Carfax site. As part of this process LDS are giving full consideration as to whether it would be appropriate to retain the building for an alternative use as part of any future development."



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QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Burns

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment (Cllr Horrill on behalf of Cllr Cllr Warwick)

“While congratulating the Winchester Round Table on the great success of its fireworks display in North Walls Recreation Ground on the 4th November, and applauding the large amount of money raised by it for charity, can I ask what steps are being or will be taken to ensure that the Round Table and/or its subcontractors and suppliers repair the considerable damage done by their vehicles, which include vehicles entirely unnecessarily equipped with ridged-tread agricultural tyres that have caused deep rutting to the playing surfaces of the two cricket pitches? Could the Portfolio Holder say how the grossly inconsiderate treatment of this much-used and valuable public asset will be prevented in the future; and whether any consideration has been or is being given to appropriate compensation to regular users of these areas, such as Winchester Rugby Club, various cricket teams and the Park Run?”

Reply

“The Council is pleased to be able to accommodate the annual charity bonfire at North Walls and has developed a good working relationship with the Round Table which organises the event. The Round Table understands that it has to meet the cost of reinstating any damage done to the area by the event and has always been billed accordingly.

Councillor Burns is correct that this year’s event caused much greater than normal impact both on the recreation ground itself and through litter in the town centre. The Round Table is aware of this and very much regrets that its organisation allowed this to happen. Conversations are underway between officers and the Round Table to determine the amount that will need to be claimed back for reinstating the damage done, and as to how the Round Table will ensure that it does not happen again.”



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QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Weir

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment (Cllr Horrill on behalf of Cllr Cllr Warwick)

“What funds have been raised and distributed under the Textile Bank Charity Income Allocation Scheme since it was launched in 2014? How much have the Council, existing charities and other organisations received?”

Reply

“The funds raised by the textile recycling scheme have always been dependent upon the commodity value of the materials collected. Due to global financial conditions which has affected all textile collection schemes this price has dropped from £500 per tonne to £250 per tonne since the scheme commenced. Current annual income is now approximately £31K.

Because of this price instability the Council has taken a very prudent approach to the allocation of any funding received. The outturn from the previous year was therefore considered before deciding where funding would be placed. I am pleased to report that the commodity price has now stabilized at the £250 per tonne figure following renewal of the textiles collection contract in February 2017.

The original Portfolio Holder Decision Notice committed to match the existing funding received by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance from their displaced textile banks for a period of 3 years. This arrangement will be reconsidered at the end of the current financial year. Allocations were also made to the Salvation Army and TRAIID for 1 year only.

Plans are underway to shortly make a payment to the Air Ambulance who will have benefited from £32K of funding since the scheme began. It is also forecast that by the end of this year it may also now be possible to release £24K of funding for community grant purposes which the Portfolio Holder will consider at the end of the current financial year.”



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QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Gemmell

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment (Cllr Horrill on behalf of Cllr Cllr Warwick)

"Can the Portfolio Holder outline the revised laws for Dog Breeding and what the Council is doing to police them?"

Reply

"The current law governing Dog Breeding Establishments is the Breeding of Dogs Act 1973, as amended. My understanding is that there have been no recent revisions to this Act and it was this legislation that was used in a recent case brought by the City Council against an unlicensed dog breeding establishment operating within the district.

The City Council currently employs two Animal Welfare Officers to undertake various services, including responding to stray dog and dog fouling service requests, inspecting licensed animal boarding, breeding, horse riding and zoo establishments. They also respond to and investigate animal welfare complaints, and reports from the public on unlicensed animal boarders and dog breeders. They also investigate the illegal sale of animals on social media.

Winchester remains one of the few Hampshire Authorities that actively investigates and prosecutes on animal welfare cases and works closely with the RSPCA when carrying out these duties,

I am proud to say that Animal Welfare Team have won two Gold RSPCA Awards for our Animal Licensing and Stray Dogs policies / procedures which reflects their excellent work in this area."



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QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Laming

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment (Cllr Horrill on behalf of Cllr Cllr Warwick)

“Is the Portfolio Holder aware that part of the BMX circuit by St Catherine's Hill Park and Ride is to be used as a coach park? What plans are there to replace the circuit and how much will it cost?”

Reply

“We have been working closely with Hampshire County Council in relation to finding a site for a new coach park to serve Winchester. This is a long standing aspiration and was first identified in the Winchester Town Access Plan which referred to St. Catherine’s Park and Ride site as an appropriate location for such a facility.

An area of land adjoining the existing car park had been identified as potentially suitable to accommodate a new coach park and I am aware that this area has a long standing use as a BMX track although my understanding is that this activity has not been authorised by Hampshire County Council as land owner. I should say that the coach park would only involve taking part of the land where the track is situated.

The proposal for the coach park is at the feasibility stage at present and officers have been involved in discussions with the County Council and users of the BMX track. This has helped us and Hampshire to understand how the track has been used to date as well as providing an opportunity to hear the views and suggestions of BMX riders.

The continued provision of a BMX track is an issue County are considering as land owners and I understand that they may be willing to formalise this use in relation to the area of land outside the proposed coach park. However, we are working with them and the BMX riders to see whether plans can be developed which satisfy everyone’s aspirations. Any formalisation of arrangements for the track will be a matter to be agreed by Hampshire and the BMX riders.

As this project moves forward I will be arranging briefing sessions, including ward members, and I anticipate that a formal report regarding the proposed delivery of the coach park will be brought to Cabinet for a decision early next year.”



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QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Thacker

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance (Cllr Ashton)

“What has WCC done to help businesses deal with the uplift in Business Rates as a result of the recent uplift in rateable values?”

Reply

“Winchester City Council has allocated over £300k in Business Rate Relief to over 360 ratepayers by creating a scheme to apply reductions using Central Government funds. The relief was released to ratepayers in August in a bid to support the local economy. The scheme targets ratepayers where their increase in business rates is greater than £500 this year and they have a rateable value less than £200k.

Two further schemes have been implemented, also using Central Government funds. Pubs with a rateable value less than £100k are entitled to a £1,000 per year reduction on their business rates. Over 90 businesses have benefited from £92k in this scheme. Ratepayers previously in receipt of small business rate relief that lost their entitlement this year have had any increase in their rates limited to £600 per year. Over 60 businesses have benefitted from £80k of relief in this scheme.

Winchester City Council was one of the first in Hampshire to both develop these schemes and allocate the funds.”



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QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Weston

To: The Leader with Portfolio for Housing Services (Cllr Horrill)

“Discussion on the cost of affordable homes especially in Winchester was reported last week on local radio. Would the Portfolio Holder let us know how many new affordable homes have been built from 2006 and how many we have in the pipe line for Winchester Town and the rest of the District? How many sites have achieved 40% affordable housing, 30% affordable housing and 20% affordable housing? How is Winchester performing against our neighbouring councils?”

Reply

“Slightly more than 1200 new affordable homes have been provided across the District since 2006. It is forecast that a further 560 new affordable dwellings will be completed by the end of 2018/19.

We do not hold data relating to individual sites which would enable us to answer Cllr Weston’s question without going through every planning application for the period and this is not a task which there is time to carry out. We can say from aggregated data for the period 2011/12 – 2014/15 that approximately 30% of housing completions in the District were affordable housing.

Members will be aware that the Government has introduced a policy that no affordable housing can be obtained from sites of 10 or fewer dwellings and this will have an adverse effect on affordable housing delivery from Section 106 sites in the future. On the other hand the Council is actively pursuing its own Council housebuilding programme which delivers up to 100% affordable housing on these sites.

We are not aware that other local authorities compile information regarding how many affordable units are provided on an application by application basis and comparisons would be of little assistance to us given that affordable housing policies vary from one area to another depending upon local circumstances including housing need as well as viability considerations.”



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QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Huxstep

To: The Portfolio Holder for Business Partnerships (Cllr Humby)

“Will the Portfolio Holder for Business Partnerships update members on the Council’s involvement with Whiteley and how the reconvened Whiteley Forum could assist in anyway?”

Reply

“Whiteley is one of the most important settlements in the District providing housing, regionally important employment, retail opportunities and leisure facilities. The original allocation of housing from the 1980’s is now effectively complete and we are looking forward to the start of the North Whiteley major development area next year. Our focus has always been on creating a sustainable community in which people are happy and successful.

The City Council has developed a constructive relationship with Whiteley Town Council since it was established in 2003 to ensure that new services are provided in a carefully managed way and that local people have a real say in how their community develops.

Most importantly, over the last five years we have worked with British Land to facilitate the creation of the new town centre which has transformed Whiteley, providing first class retail and leisure facilities within walking distance of many homes and businesses. This includes a new cinema and other commercial leisure activities which have helped to create opportunities for people of every age.

The Meadowside Centre has been extended and provides a good range of sports and leisure activities, although limited by its small size, and Whiteley Town Council have taken over the management of the recreation ground and play areas to good effect.

On the business front, major employers such as HSBC have relocated to Whiteley, joining the likes of NATS, Zurich and Shoosmiths Solicitors with

positive assistance from on planning and parking matters to try to balance the benefits of increased employment with the pressures on the local road network.

We are about to enter a very busy phase in and around Whiteley.

The development of 3500 new homes over the next ten to twenty years will bring infrastructure improvements that will benefit all residents. Two new primary schools will be provided and a new secondary school is planned, the first in Hampshire for many years. A range of new sports pitches, play areas and large areas of open space will also be provided. The addition of new highway connections between Whiteley and Botley to the north will improve the options for traffic flow and eliminate the 'Whiteley cul-de-sac' which can form at the moment if roads are busy.

The Highways Agency will be upgrading the M27 to 'smart motorway' status and the County Council will be improving the M27 junction 9 and roads either side to improve flow. The County Council has also now confirmed that the Botley by-pass will go ahead, subject to funding (planning approved).

All these works will secure the future of Whiteley as a desirable and sustainable community in which to live, but there will be a lot to manage over the next five years and some disruption is inevitable. Local residents and businesses will want as much timely information as possible about what is going to happen and when. They will also want to be able to talk directly with those who are managing the process.

This is where the Whiteley Forum will play a vital role. The City Council has a well developed approach to using regular Forum meetings to provide up to date information, take feedback and using the dialogue with Members and with the public to adjust and amend plans to best effect. Officers from the City and County Councils will attend, but so will representatives of the North Whiteley developers and the Town Council. Plans can be presented, ideas raised and information passed on. The appointment of an Implementation Officer who will support the Forum as well as the wider development process will also be a key part of this.

Whiteley is one of our largest and most important communities and the Cabinet will be paying close attention to managing change successfully over the next few years."



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QUESTION 12

From: Councillor Gottlieb

To: The Leader (Cllr Horrill)

“What period of time does the Leader consider fair and reasonable in which to deal with any complaint under the Council's Complaints Procedure, other than one giving rise to criminal proceedings, about any councillor or officer?”

Reply

“Members will of course be aware that the process to deal with complaints about staff and councilors are not the same.

The Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee have overview of matters concerning complaints against councillors and those procedures are well documented and indeed agreed by Council.

The Head of Paid Service has responsibility for matters concerning staff and these are set out in internal procedures that meet with good practice employment law.

We would want any complaint to be dealt with as swiftly as possible for the sake of all parties concerned, but reaching the right conclusion is most important, and we must take account of all the relevant information. This can take some time.

Although I am happy to take any supplementary questions, it will not be possible to comment on the specifics of any particular complaint.”



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QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Pearson

To: The Portfolio Holder for Finance (Cllr Ashton)

“In the light of recent publicity about the roll out of Universal Credit, what steps is Winchester City Council taking to look after residents moving into the new benefits regime :-

- a) during the 6 to 13 week waiting period?
- b) self employed tenants who have a variable income that occasionally ‘falls below the minimum income floor’, and those tenants who are work part time because of family circumstances? Again the income of these tenants may also fall below the ‘minimum income floor.’”

Reply

“The City Council is working closely with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in preparation for the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) in Winchester from April 2018. It’s too early to provide a specific response to the two points raised above. We had hoped that discretionary housing payment legislation would be amended to allow a payment to be made in advance of UC, where a claim had been received. At present this isn’t the case and discretionary housing payments can not be made until UC is in payment. The extent to which other support can best be provided to the groups highlighted above is still to be determined. Discussions with DWP and with colleagues in areas already subject to UC roll out are ongoing.

The recent transformation of the Council’s Benefits team has sought to ensure appropriate advice and support is available and this, alongside Council Tax and the Housing team’s Money and Benefits Advice Service are the key steps already in place to support UC applicants.

The “Make Money Work” and “Its Great to be up to date” campaigns have also contributed towards preparing residents for UC and the current direct payment pilot will be useful in both assisting UC recipients and in providing insight into the likely impacts of the roll out.

A report on proposals for the recovery of Council Tax and Housing rents from UC claimants is due to be considered by Cabinet in January 2018.”



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QUESTION 14

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Leader (Cllr Horrill)

“In a report prepared for the BBC on the 9 November 2017 titled “how much of your area is built on” Mark Easton, the BBC Home Editor detailed the land use make up of every local authority.

Winchester’s figures mentioned that only 4% of the District is built on (significantly lower than the national average) with 85% being farmland, 8% natural land with the remaining 3% being green urban land.

This shows that the Winchester District is a very rural area and far from being “concreted over”.

With our shared views about the critical need for more inclusive housing does the Leader share my belief that Winchester almost certainly needs a new Barton Farm which could be built out as a modern, fit for purpose Council Estate without damaging the essential character of the District?”

Reply

“Exploring options to plan for more housing growth across the District will be a key focus for the Local Plan Review which will commence in 2018. With two adopted local plans in place a number of our settlements are having new homes built covering a range of tenures, this is on top of the Council’s own active house building programme.

The Government has recently consulted on a standard housing methodology to be used by local planning authorities in determining the levels of housing growth. Consequential changes to planning guidance are now awaited, and this will be crucial to our local plan review and the quantum of housing growth that will be required to plan for. This will not however, specify the type/tenure of homes and it will be for the Local Plan Review process to commission evidence such as a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, to establish the

key sectors of our population that will require housing accommodation in the future and taking a longer term view looking ahead to 2036/41.

With this data it will be possible to explore options as to how the quantum and types can be delivered, bearing in mind the environmental constraints and landscape sensitivities of the District. Utilising the local plan review route is also considered the most appropriate mechanism to ensure that any potential larger scale developments are comprehensively planned for in terms of infrastructure provision to deliver inclusive sustainable communities.”



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QUESTION 15

From: Councillor Burns

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment (Cllr Horrill on behalf of Cllr Warwick)

“Please would the Portfolio Holder for Environment provide an update on the Movement Strategy for Winchester, which has a public consultation currently under way until 8th December? What is it hoped to achieve by this Strategy and what is the timeline? When is the conclusion of the exercise expected to be reached, and the final Strategy published?”

Reply

“I am pleased to report that the Strategy has moved into the engagement phase which includes an open consultation which runs until the 8th December and provides an opportunity for anyone interested in transport matters to provide comments which will then be used to inform and help shape the development of the Strategy as it moves forward next year. The feedback received will be considered in conjunction with the traffic data currently being collected as it is important to ensure the Strategy is evidence based.

In addition officers from the County and City Councils are arranging workshops with interest groups and the city’s major institutions as well with transport operators and providers. A phone survey of number Winchester residents will also be undertaken.

Furthermore, officers have been promoting the consultation at various events over the past few weeks with the aim of encouraging as many people as possible to participate in the engagement process. A session for County and District members will also be organised after the open consultation has ended and this should take place early in the New Year.

It is envisaged that the Strategy will identify high level options for change over the next 20 years and beyond which will help to improve all forms of movement in and around Winchester. Having options within a Strategy will mean that we are well placed to develop more detailed schemes, as and when funding opportunities arise, and will inform future Council policy.

In terms of timescales I am hopeful that the City Council will be able to adopt the Strategy in Autumn 2018 which will follow a period of public consultation on the draft document during the summer period.”



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QUESTION 16

From: Councillor Weston

To: The Leader (Cllr Horrill)

“In my opinion the council has shown by initiating an SPD for the Central Winchester regeneration that engagement and transparency can help the people of Winchester understand the process and difficulties that have to be overcome to deliver a process to develop the future of Winchester. Could the Leader confirm if the process followed for that SPD is being applied to other major projects, although obviously one assumes these will be tailor made to suit those projects?”

Reply

“I am pleased to say that we have had positive feedback about the process of preparing our draft SPD for Central Winchester and I would like to thank the Members of the IPG, our consultants JTP and our officers for their work on this so far.

We will continue the work on the SPD with informal and formal consultation which enables local residents, businesses and other stakeholders to make a meaningful and detailed contribution to the final document. This will include:

- Drop in sessions here in Winchester and in other parts of the District
- Opportunities for submitting written comments through the consultation periods and which will include the ability to submit in various formats
- Dialogue with the stakeholders groups such as the BID, the City of Winchester Trust, Hampshire Cultural Trust and land owners during this period
- Feasibility and viability assessments which will be discussed by the IPG to ensure that the final SPD is a deliverable and financially credible proposition

With all our major projects we have complex and sometimes difficult decisions to make. It is therefore important that we articulate a clear vision for what we want to achieve which has the endorsement of those who live and work in the District, and a willingness to listen to different views and opinions on all aspects of delivery and process. I believe the Council is doing this, and that as a result we are more likely to deliver these projects in a way which adds to our well being today and which leaves a legacy that we can be proud of.”



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QUESTION 17

From: Councillor Gemmell

To: The Portfolio Holder for Professional Services (Cllr Godfrey)

"The Living Wage Foundation announced recently that the real Living Wage is now £8.75 per hour. Will the Portfolio Holder confirm that the Council is still committed to paying at least this amount to all their staff?"

Reply

"The council has been an accredited Living Wage employer since 1 April 2013 and regularly reviews the latest position on the Living Wage. The new Living Wage hourly rate is applied to the pay structure at the time of any increase (usually early November), ensuring all staff employed on the Council's Pay Scales are paid at least the Living Wage."



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QUESTION 18

From: Councillor Gottlieb

To: The Leader (Cllr Horrill)

“The Hampshire Chronicle reported last week that the Council spent £35,000 on plant to clean the swimming pool water at River Park. Could the Leader please explain why this cost was not, it seems, borne by the contracted operator, Places for People, and could she please clarify what other equipment, plant, repair and maintenance costs are not the responsibility of PfP?”

Reply

“Cllr Gottlieb is referring to the installation of the new ultra violet water cleaning system which significantly improves water quality and reduces the use of chemicals in water quality – all of which is a tangible benefit to users of the swimming pool. This expenditure was approved by Cabinet on 17 March 2017 (CAB2914). The report also explains why this is a City Council expenditure item and what the arrangements are in the contract for maintenance works.”



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QUESTION 19

From: Councillor Pearson

To: The Leader with Portfolio for Housing Services (Cllr Horrill)

“Working with the Fire and Ambulance Service and the judicious use of Licensing are we able to ensure that HMOs - whether from converted housing or converted office accommodation - do not fall below minimum standards of space and fire safety?”

Reply

“All large HMOs are required to be licensed in accordance with Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004. The Council currently licenses over 100 such HMOs and a further 60 smaller HMOs are licensed through the discretionary accreditation scheme run in partnership with Winchester University.

Both schemes ensure that HMOs meet minimum standards for space and fire safety.

Whilst the Council does not routinely inspect smaller HMOs, it does have powers under Part 10 of the Housing Act 1985 (overcrowding) and the 2004 Act (Housing Health and Safety Rating System) to take formal enforcement action when minimum standards are not maintained.

Government proposals to extend mandatory licensing for all HMOs were announced earlier this year, although no further information or proposed implementation timetable has been forthcoming.”



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QUESTION 20

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment (Cllr Horrill on behalf of Cllr Warwick)

“Due to the recent demolition of the bus station shed the pigeons who used to use the roof as a resting area now use the Guildhall entrance pillars with all the associated problems of pigeon mess.

What action is being taken to address this matter?

In answering my question it would be helpful if the Portfolio Holder could address the wider issue of pigeons in Winchester. I have asked a similar question previously however little action was taken as a result of my enquiry but the problems have increased significantly.”

Reply

“Since the completion of the works to the bus station pigeons using the Guildhall to roost has become more of an issue. This is being actively managed by the Guildhall team, with fortnightly cleaning of parts of the building most affected by pigeon mess, and the deployment of a product which deters birds from roosting in the first place.

The team is looking at other possible options, such as “fire gel”, which was very effective in the past when used at the Guildhall, but is currently unavailable because of licensing issues. Unlike fire gel the product being used at the moment has to be re-applied on a regular basis. However it is possible that the “fire gel” will be available again in 2018.

Wider pigeon control in Winchester has been a matter of consideration for the Council’s Public Realm Group and action to try to tackle the issue has been taken in the past. It is recognised that there are certain ‘hot spots’ of pigeon activity which can be the cause of particular nuisance for pedestrians and outside dining areas.

Although the Council has no direct statutory duty to control pigeons we recognise that it is in the City's interest to promote a shared approach by working with local businesses and other groups to find ways to manage the impact of pigeons in the centre of town.

This question is timely in that the Public Realm Group is seeking to develop a policy, building on earlier successful action undertaken like the use of fire gel in locations where pigeons were a particular issue, which will enable the Council to identify and target 'hot spots' and, by working with businesses, property owners, and Historic Environment colleagues, it should be possible to agree an approach which is both effective in controlling pigeons and sympathetic to the city's heritage."