



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 22 February 2018

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Laming

To: The Leader (Cllr Caroline Horrill)

“How much did the Independent Review of Members Allowances carried out by South East Employers cost including the printing costs and officer time involved in bringing the report both to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Full Council?”

Reply

“On 19 July 2017, the Council formally agreed to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to exercise the functions specified in Regulation 21 of the Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) (Report CL134 refers). Regulations required that that existing inflation index must be reviewed by April 2019. However, it had been previously proposed to review the Scheme as a whole at an earlier stage, having regard to the changes to the Council size after May 2015 elections. This review would have regard to evidence of any changes in Member workload resulting from the overall reduction in size of the Council (from 57 Members to 45). The IRP would also consider the existing Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) and Travel and Subsistence schemes etc.

The 2017 Panel convened on 5 and 6 September 2017 and its report and recommendations were considered at Council on 10 January 2017 where it was agreed that with regard to the basic and special responsibility allowance payments, a revised scheme be adopted that was not in accordance with the IRP’s recommendations. Instead, the Council agreed that the basic and special responsibility allowances would continue to be paid at the existing rate, but with an index linkage from April 2018 agreed to be in line with staff salary increases for a maximum of four years. However, the Council did adopt a number of the other recommendations of the IRP. These included re establishing the qualifying criteria for when particular SRAs can be paid, reimbursing, *at cost*, specialist care provision as well as that basic care should be reimbursed at the rate of the living wage. The Council also agreed to continue current travel and subsistence allowances, including the approved duties and the terms and conditions for which they are claimable.

In conclusion, although there are a number of costs associated with bringing forward the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel, the process is a necessary one and one that is required by Regulations, good practice and in the spirit of transparency and good governance.

The approximate costs of the Independent Remuneration Panel are set out below. The majority of officer time can be attributed to the Democratic Services Manager whose role is to facilitate and bring forward the recommendations of an IRP. This work included recruiting to the Panel, compiling background information, writing committee reports etc and estimated costs are £850.

Printing (2500 sheets approximately)	£175
South East Employers – consultancy, chairman of the Panel	£3750
Guildhall room hire plus catering – two days	£426.49
Payment to the two lay members of Panel @ £200 each	£400
Officer time - approximately 30 hours (less 'on costs')	£850
	£5601.49

A budget provision of £9000 for the Independent Remuneration Panel was agreed at the Council meeting held on 13 July 2017 (Report CL134 refers)."



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QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Burns

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment (Cllr Jan Warwick)

“Following the members’ briefing earlier this week, could the Portfolio Holder confirm as to the progress of the Movement Strategy for Winchester being undertaken by Hampshire County Council, in conjunction with Winchester City Council, when it is expected to be completed and how its recommendations will be implemented? With regard to funding options, will consideration be given to applications for LEP or grant funding?”

Reply

“I was pleased to see so many members and officers at the workshop held on Tuesday evening. I think we would all agree that it was very informative and useful session which showed just how much work has already been undertaken particularly in relation to public and stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering with more to follow as the Strategy develops.

I would expect the Movement Strategy to be completed and adopted by both the City and County Councils before the end of this year which will follow public consultation over the summer on a draft document which will provide another opportunity for stakeholders and all other interested parties to comment.

The challenge will then be identifying funding to further develop and implement the high level options set out in the Strategy. It will not be possible for many of the measures to be delivered using only council resources so we will need to continue to work with our colleagues at Hampshire to look at potential funding streams including grants and other funding mechanisms run by Government as well as more local opportunities such as the funding provided through the LEP.

However, having a comprehensive Strategy in place for the city will mean that we will be in a better position to pursue funding opportunities in future to improve Winchester’s transport infrastructure.”



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QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Porter

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

“What criteria and limitations are in place for purchasers of Shared Equity Housing?”

Reply

“The City Council’s shared ownership properties are only offered to those in housing need. To ensure that the Homes England guidelines are adhered to, applicants should register with the local Help to Buy Agent

- Applicants should be able to afford the cost of purchasing a shared ownership property, but they should not be in a position to afford the cost of purchasing a comparable home outright on the open market.
- Applicants’ household income must not be more than specified by Homes England (currently £80,000 per annum) and they should not already own or part - own another property. Applicants’ should be able to demonstrate their ability to sustain their home ownership obligations both financially and otherwise.
- Applicant(s) must be a British or EU/EEA citizen or have indefinite leave to remain in the UK. All applicants must be able to demonstrate that they are able to raise a mortgage with an acceptable lender and that they can afford to sustain home ownership. This will require a detailed individual assessment using the Homes England affordability calculator.
- Applicants should normally be first time buyers, although previous home owners will also be considered in certain circumstances e.g. relationship breakdown and sale of the home. (There are exceptions to this regarding older persons shared ownership).

- Applicants whose income would ordinarily be sufficient to support an outright purchase, but whose disposable income is severely restricted by commitments such as childcare or maintenance payments may be considered.
- Applicants with a large deposit but a low income level will be considered; as well as applicants who are unable to obtain a mortgage due to their age.

The Council Strategy (supported by its Housing Strategy) is committed to provide “affordable housing options across a range of tenures” principally to help create mixed communities and to meet household aspirations to own their own homes. It is appreciated that shared ownership housing is not the answer to address all forms of housing need in the district and we will continue to develop the majority of housing on Council owned sites and developer lead schemes for affordable rent.”



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QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Pearson

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

“Would the Portfolio Holder explain how he proposes to improve the reliability and efficiency of IT support for Members?”

Reply

“The security, reliability and usability of Members IT have been the subject of some concern over several years. With the pressing need to safeguard all sensitive data with the introduction of GDPR (General Data Protection Requirement) in May 2018, we have started a programme of security and productivity improvements that will be implemented over the next few months.

All Council Members are to be supplied with WIFI enabled i-Pad’s with protective keyboard cases. Members will be able to access Microsoft Office 365 (WCC email, Office 2016) and access to the new Modern.Gov CMS (Committee Management System) using these devices. They will be locked down and secured for business use, providing Members with secure and straightforward access to Council emails and committee papers, including confidential and exempt papers.

The Council is procuring the ‘Modern.Gov’ application, which will allow faster and easier distribution of committee papers and other key documents, without the need to navigate the Council website. This app allows users to write notes on the committee papers just as if they were hardcopy printouts.

To improve efficiency and justify the cost of these IT improvements, we will soon cease to print out committee reports and other key documents. This should save the cost of their printing and postage, which was £32,000 in 2016/17. This should reduce our annual printing by approximately 150,000 to 200,000 sheets, bringing many financial and environmental benefits.

The IMT service, in conjunction with Democratic Services, is currently trialing the solution with a handful of selected members, before a planned full implementation in May 2018.”



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QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Evans

To: The Leader (Cllr Caroline Horrill)

“Could the Leader please itemise the cost of taking the Cabinet out on two occasions 1) to Whiteley and 2) to Alresford, to include extra costs of room hire, refreshments, hire of audio equipment and extra staff hours required?”

Reply

“For Cabinet meetings held in Winchester Guildhall, costs associated are internally recharged. For the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 14 February 2018, the total cost incurred by Democratic Services was £560.

Therefore, for the two meetings of Cabinet held elsewhere in the district, although there were incremental increases in meeting costs (mainly with regard to hiring in microphones etc) these were not new costs incurred by the Council.

For the meeting held on Monday 13 November in Whiteley (Solent Hotel) there was an increase in costs of £940. However, there was a meeting immediately afterwards (utilising the same facilities) of the North Whiteley Development Forum, which would have otherwise incurred similar costs. For the meeting held on Wednesday 17 January in Alresford (The Alresford Community Centre) the incremental costs were £140.

The Cabinet is committed to dialoging with all residents and businesses of the 250 square miles of the Winchester district and taking Cabinet meetings outside of the Winchester town area is an important part of this.

Although there may have been some additional time spent by officers making reservations and ensuring rooms were set up etc, these were not excessive, nor easily quantifiable compared to the usual time spent supporting the meetings.”



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COUNCIL MEETING – 22 February 2018

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QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Weston

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment (Cllr Jan Warwick)

“Could the Portfolio Holder confirm that kerbside glass collections are being actively considered as part of the 2019 Environmental Services Contract negotiations? Also could she please confirm when the results will be publicly available of the Hampshire County Council review through Project Integra of materials collected, encompassing changes to the processes at the Materials Recycling Facility in order to recycle increased amounts and types of plastics and other materials?”

Reply

“The City Council is investigating in detail the option of introducing a kerbside glass recycling scheme as part of its overall Options Appraisal process for the future of the environmental services contracts which end in October 2019.

The financial appraisal of the service will include the ongoing cost of collection, one off costs of providing suitable containers for residents balanced by the glass recycling income. The final decision will depend upon the overall financial position resulting from the Option Appraisal decisions however the administration is committed to improving glass recycling across the District.

Members will have the opportunity to comment on the outcome of the option appraisal process before any final decision is taken and members were updated on progress at a recent members briefing session. An update report setting out current progress is also on the agenda for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 February.

The outcome of the Project Integra review into future arrangements for the provision of Materials Recycling Facilities should be completed by the autumn of this year when it will be known whether the range of materials collected in our recycling bins can be increased. The PI Scrutiny Board received an update on progress at its meeting on 15th February and will continue to

monitor progress. I will update Members once a final decision has been made.

In the meantime the Government has asked the Waste Resources Action Programme in partnership with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF) to look at ways to transform the UK plastics system and tackle plastic pollution as part of its' 25 Year Environment Plan. This work will inform future decisions on plastics recycling through an action plan aimed at

- Eliminating unnecessary and problematic single-use plastic packaging
- Making sure all plastic packaging is reusable, recyclable or compostable
- Significantly increasing the collection and recycling of plastic packaging
- Increasing recycled content in plastic packaging to drive demand for recycled material
- Inspiring citizens to play their part in reducing plastic packaging waste and litter

This work should make the range of plastic materials easier to collect which will assist with the PI project to upgrade Hampshire's Materials Recycling Facilities."



COUNCIL MEETING – 22 February 2018

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Green

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

“Could the Leader tell me what changes have been made to council policy's and procedures as a result of signing the armed forces covenant?”

Reply

“The Council has a well-established culture of support for the Armed Forces and has, for many years, had policies and procedures that seek to ensure that members of the Armed Forces suffer no disadvantage. The following all predate the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant:

- Concessionary rates for membership and occasional use of River Park Leisure Centre
- Direct matching for those with a local connection when making their first bid for a house via Hampshire Home Choice after leaving military service
- Organisation of freedom parades and support for civic function such as Remembrance Day and Armed Forces Day.
- Disregarding of War Widows Pension and War Disablement Pension when assessing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims.

The signing of the Armed Forces Covenant has seen a significant improvement in communication and collaboration. A Councillor Armed Forces Champion has been identified and an officer identified to be a first point of contact for all military matters. This direct contact has helped resolve a number of situations quickly and efficiently; a good example being an Army Sergeant based at Worthy Down who was due to leave military service, but who hadn't made appropriate housing arrangements for himself and his family. A call to the military lead officer was immediately referred to the Housing Allocations Team who resolved the issue as a matter of priority and helped ensure that the family wasn't left without a home.

Regular membership of the Winchester Community Safety Partnership and the Health & Wellbeing Board has been established, providing Winchester Garrison with access to information and a network of contacts so they can work with partners at strategic level and effectively represent the needs of the military community. Access to health services can be particularly challenging for military personnel so the relationships forged through the Health & Wellbeing Board are of great significance.

The *Working Time and Managing Time Off Policy* includes a new commitment to support employees who are members of the Reserve Forces (alongside special constables and retained firefighters). Also a future review of recruitment policy and practice will give consideration to a guaranteed interview for former Armed Forces personnel, should they apply for a job at the Council.

Other community-based initiatives are supported by the Council, such as a regular reminiscence session called 'Kitbags and Berets' for veterans with Alzheimer's. Alongside the more structured support already set out, these initiatives demonstrate a level of commitment from the Council to our Armed Forces community which recognises the depth of goodwill and gratitude felt by residents of Winchester District."

NOTE:

The Armed Forces Covenant was signed on 15th May 2013 by the Mayor of Winchester, Cllr Jeffs, Brigadier Allan McLeod and representatives of the Royal British Legion (Hampshire) and the South East Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (SERFCA).



COUNCIL MEETING – 22 February 2018

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Stallard

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

“Will the Portfolio Holder advise members of the status of the proposed new housing development (in conjunction with Homes England) at Knowle village.

QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Berry

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

“Can the Portfolio Holder advise the status of the new housing development in conjunction with Homes England at Knowle?”

Reply

“Homes England have recently purchased a large tract of land (over 50ha) at Knowle Village in their strategic role as the facilitator of new housing.

Homes England have been in conversation with Wickham Parish Council since 2014 with regard to the options for this land, in June 2015 the Parish agreed to support the principle of the a development of approximately 200 new homes in return for 44.5ha of open space being made publically available.

A consultation event was held in February 2018 with the local community, the results of which are currently being analysed.

It is the intention of Homes England to meet the Parish Council to review the outcome of the most recent public consultation and to submit a planning application relying on planning policy MTRA 3 “ *other development proposals may be supported ...to meet a community need or to realise local community aspirations*”.

The City Council has initially been working with Homes England and the Parish Council in the role of housing enabler and adviser on meeting the requirements of the relevant planning policy. Negotiations are underway with Homes England for the affordable element of the Knowle scheme to be developed, owned and managed by the City Council.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 22 February 2018

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Tod

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

“What is the expected timetable for the extension of the Article 4 direction withdrawing permitted development rights for conversion of houses into HMOs into new areas of the city such as Fulflood?”

Reply

“Our officers have already started to look at extracting data from Council records to develop an understanding of how many HMOs are located in the Fulflood area of the city. I should add that whilst looking at Housing and Council Tax records provides an indication of the number of HMOs it will not necessarily identify every one but it will provide a clearer picture of the situation in this part of Winchester.

It should be possible for this work to be completed in March at which point we can review the position in Fulflood to decide whether there is sufficient justification on planning grounds to propose another Article 4 Direction which would remove the rights of property owners to change single family homes to HMOs without needing planning permission from the Council.

However Government guidance on the use of Article 4 Directions makes clear that permitted development rights should not be removed lightly and restrictions should only be made where needed to protect local amenity or the well being of an area. We will therefore need to take view once we have a much better of idea of how many HMOs are located in Fulflood.

Undertaking this work requires significant resources as it involves looking at and correlating various sources of information held by the Council so we can start to assess if there is a proliferation of HMOs in a particular neighbourhood. This means we will continue to concentrate our efforts on areas where there is information to suggest that the number of HMOs is causing an imbalance in the local housing stock.”



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QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Huxstep

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

“Will the Portfolio Holder please explain what an ‘Unconference’ is?”

Reply

“An unconference is a conference with an overall theme, but no pre-defined agenda. Delegates pitch session themes to each other at the start of the day and these form the programme for the day’s activities.

The Economy and Arts team have commissioned Winchester’s first Unconference on Friday 2 March from 9.30am to 4pm at Winchester Guildhall. The theme of the Winchester Unconference is ‘*How can Winchester be a premier business location*’. It has been organised by AHA Digital Ltd and supported by business sponsorship. More information is available on the Council’s website at www.winchester.gov.uk/business or for twitter users, search for the hashtag #Winchbiz

All elected members are very welcome to come along and join in but must book in advance. A light lunch and refreshments will be provided at the event. You can register via a feature on the home page of the city council website.

Delegate discussions will help inform the next Winchester District Economic Strategy. It is intended that the Council, working with AHA Digital, will organise a second event – a hack day in June 2018 – which will identify practical solutions to the issues explored at the Winchester Unconference. At the end of the conference delegates will be asked to prioritise the subjects discussed during the day, with a view to the council exploring them further.”



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QUESTION 12

From: Councillor Thompson

To: The Leader (Cllr Caroline Horrill)

"When is the Chesil Extra Care Scheme likely to be completed?"

Reply

"No official opening date for Chesil Lodge has been confirmed, however the Council expects the scheme to be fully completed in the Spring.

The contractor, Galliford Try, has encountered a number of design challenges which has resulted in a longer build than originally anticipated. As the contractor has been responsible for both the design and build of the scheme, the cost of delay falls to them and not the Council. However, the contractor and the Council's New Homes team are now in detailed discussions regarding the "handover" of the building, with both parties determined to ensure that the overall quality of the development is maintained in this final phase of works."



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QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Ruffell

To: The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment (Cllr Caroline Brook)

"There has recently been a 20% increase in Planning fees. What are the plans, if any, for the allocation of this additional funding"?

Reply

"The Council welcomes the Government's announcement to increase planning fees by 20%. The increase came into effect on the 17th January 2018. This helps to raise a greater proportion of the cost of the planning service from those who are using it.

As I reported to Council on 11th October 2017, a light touch external review was commissioned of the Enforcement function and as this was proving useful it was widened to include development management more generally. The review was generally very positive and is due to be published in the next couple of weeks with suggested actions being taken forward.

The increase in planning fees is forecast to generate approximately an additional £160k per annum and an additional expenditure budget of £80k per annum is proposed from 2018/19. This budget will help to fund these actions and to ensure that we have the resources needed to provide support to the major projects such as Central Winchester, Station Approach and new homes delivery which all have a significant planning element."



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QUESTION 14

From: Councillor Learney

To: The Portfolio Holder for Environment (Cllr Jan Warwick)

“Will Cabinet commit to introduce doorstep glass recycling as part of a new or extended waste collection contract?”

What financial provision is being considered to ensure both the initial setup and running costs of a doorstep recycling scheme can be met?”

Reply

“The City Council is investigating in detail the option of introducing a kerbside glass recycling scheme as part of its overall Options Appraisal process for the future of the environmental services contracts which end in October 2019.

The financial appraisal of the service will include the ongoing cost of collection, one off costs of providing suitable containers for residents balanced by the glass recycling income. The final decision will depend upon the overall financial position resulting from the Option Appraisal decisions however the administration is committed to improving glass recycling across the District.

Members will have the opportunity to comment on the outcome of the option appraisal process before any final decision is taken and members were updated on progress at a recent members briefing session. An update report setting out current progress is also on the agenda for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 February.”



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QUESTION 15

From: Councillor Cook

To: The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment (Cllr Caroline Brook)

“Can either the Leader or Caroline Brook give as up-to-date on the stance of Winchester City Council and its neighbouring Eastleigh Borough Council on the latest state of play and after Caroline’s attendance at the Owslebury Meeting that took place earlier in the year please?”

Reply

“In December 2017 Eastleigh Borough Council approved its Local Plan document for publication and subsequent submission subject to completing the evidence base and delegating any final changes to its officers.

Winchester officers have been invited to a series of meetings on transport and environmental matters along with colleagues from numerous other agencies and Hampshire County Council which they attend in the normal course of their duties. It is vital that Winchester understands and inputs into the technical reports and studies on issues which affect our residents. Eastleigh has commissioned a number of detailed studies, in particular transport modelling with results anticipated in early May.

If these demonstrate any fundamental delivery issues then Eastleigh may have to reconsider its proposals but unless this happens there is no further democratic decision making process for Eastleigh to complete before the submission of its Plan for Examination to the Planning Inspectorate, and therefore no further opportunity for any representations on the underlying strategy at Member level.

Winchester will be able to make representations on any matters relating to the tests of soundness at the next stage of the plan making process which Eastleigh anticipate will be June/July. These will be for the Planning Inspector to consider as part of his/her decision making process.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 22 February 2018

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14

QUESTION 16

From: Councillor Laming

To: The Leader (Cllr Caroline Horrill)

“Will the Leader list the Special Responsibility Allowances given to Chairs of Committees and could she also list how many times they have chaired meetings of those committees during the 2017/18 municipal year?”

Reply

“The Members’ Allowances sets out Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) or various roles including Group Managers, Leader of Principal Opposition etc. The following sets out SRAs for Chairs of Committees and the numbers of meetings chaired to date during the 2017/18 municipal year”.

SRA Role		Number of Committees chaired during 2017/18 Municipal Year – to date
Leader	£16,734	Cabinet – 8 Housing Cttee – 4 CWR Cttee – 1 CWIPG - 3
Cabinet Member with a Portfolio	£7,605	Cllr Miller – 1 (Station Approach) Cllr Brooks - 1 (Local Plan) Cllr Griffiths – 3 (Leisure Centre)
Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£7,605	8
Chairman of Planning Committee	£7,605	15 (including Viewing Subs)
Chairman of Personnel Committee	£3,042	3
Chairman of Licensing & Regulation Committee	£3,042	3
Chairman of the Council	£2,280	5
Chairman of Audit Committee	£2,280	3
Vice Chairman of Planning Committee	£2,280	N/A
Chairman of Winchester Town Forum	£1,521	5
Chairman of Standards Committee	£1,521	0 (2 Sub Committees)