



Meeting	Council
Date and Time	Thursday, 26th February, 2026 at 6.30 pm.
Venue	Council Chamber, Castle Hill, Winchester SO23 8UL and streamed live on YouTube at www.youtube.com/winchestercc

S U P P L E M E N T A R Y A G E N D A

Agenda Item.

10. Questions from Members of Council (Pages 3 - 16)

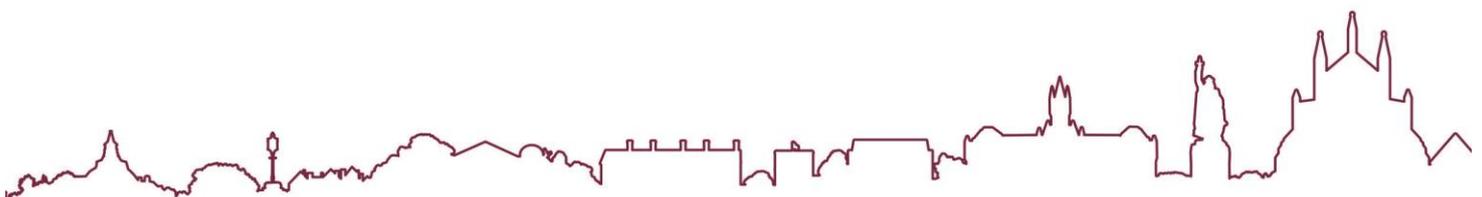
City Offices
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13 March 2026

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COUNCIL MEETING – 26 February 2026

Questions by Councillors under Council Procedure Rule 19.1

- Each questioner will have 2 minutes in which to ask their question.
- If a questioner who has submitted a question is unable to be present, the Mayor may ask the question on their behalf, or invite another Councillor to do so, or indicate that a written reply will be given and published on the website following the meeting. or decide, in the absence of the questioner, that the question will not be dealt with.
- Please note that following the response given by the Leader, a Cabinet Member or Committee Chair, the questioner may also ask a supplementary question which must arise directly out of the original reply.
- The **total** time allocated for Councillor questions will normally be limited to 40 minutes.
- Written answers will be published to questions submitted (but not supplementary questions) following the meeting.

	From Cllr:
1	Langford-Smith
2	Rutter
3	Warwick
4	Clear
5	Bolton
6	Murphy
7	Batho
8	Cunningham



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Question under Council Procedure Rule 19.1

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Langford-Smith

To: Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan)

In April 2025 I met with Cllr Tod and discussed some significant enforcement issues in Denmead. On one of them, an enforcement notice was issued in 2018, nothing has progressed on that case, nor seemingly any of the others since.

Across the District residents are outraged at the lack of enforcement – cases include new habitable accommodation in the countryside, the tarmacking of fields and change of use of land from uses suitable to a countryside location.

This is a blight on our precious countryside and threatens our strategic gaps. Most of us comply with the rules and apply for planning permission, however, there are those who don't which makes a mockery of the planning system.

What are the administration doing to ensure compliance, protect our chalk streams and clean up our countryside?

Reply

The situation in Krabbit Lane is extremely concerning and there are a number of open cases in this area. Dradfield Lane has been the focus our of attention for that and a particular member of the enforcement team recently because there're some very urgent cases there, but other public protection teams are also contributing to the work in this area and in your ward. Obviously you will understand that I can't discuss it in detail here, but I will make tomorrow morning an appointment to meet you. I've already spoken to the Director about it, and we'll have an immediate answer for you and your fellow councillors.



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Question under Council Procedure Rule 19.1

QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Rutter

To: Councillor Reach (Cabinet Member for Good Homes)

How is the plan to bring on board new Council Homes in Kings Barton going, and how many are expected to come through by the end of next year please?

Reply

Winchester City Council has exchanged contracts with the developer of Kings Barton for 146 homes in total in the autumn of last year, the first homes are now occupied, and the remainder will be offered to those on our waiting list over the next three years

I had the good fortune to go and visit some of the houses and see them fairly soon after the first ones are constructed. They are built to a very high standard. They are spacious. They have air source heat pumps keeping them warm. So they are built to a very high standard. Beyond what one might fear in in a large-scale development of that kind which is, I think, a tribute to the officers that have worked to identify the housing and make sure the right quality is brought forward.



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QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Warwick

To: Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan)

The City Council closed its call for Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) sites outside of the South Downs National Park area in November last year. When will the list of submitted sites be available to members?

Reply

Thank you, Councillor Warwick, for your question. I know it's tempting. We all want to see what it says, don't we? However, at the moment that's just not going to be possible.

The Council's top priority currently is to agree the new local plan to 2040, and we're still aiming to do this in March. This will decide what land is allocated for development right now and what land isn't, and that's the information that most residents are concerned about right now.

Nothing can be allowed to stand in the way of driving that plan through to adoption. We can see clearly from our Conservative neighbours in East Hampshire the devastating impact of failing to put a local plan properly in place, and we don't have any desire to replicate that failure. So that will come first, and nothing — not even the publication of a SHELAA for the plan after the one we're about to agree — will stand in the way of that.

Our officers are very busy doing the work on the Local Plan 2040. So as far as the new SHELAA is concerned, just as what happened under the previous administrations and us before, there are a range of steps that need to be carried out before publication. The factual accuracy needs to be checked because this time the sites were self-submitted. Missing information needs to be asked for and included. They need to be checked against the new government regulation process, which unfortunately hasn't actually been specified yet. And they need to be evaluated against heritage, landscape, and all the other criteria we assess on.

After that's done, it is — as you know — just a wish list. That's when the SHELAA will be available. Over 90% of the sites submitted in that SHELAA were rejected last time, and everybody had to put their sites in again afresh this time. So it's the choice from the list that matters, not the original list.

But we will see that original list — it just won't be until the summer. The local plan has to come first, because it's just too confusing for the public to have both going at the same time. Our officers are going very fast and very efficiently to get the Local Plan 2040 through, and that will give residents the reassurance they really need and clarify where new development is going to come and where it isn't, and the policies that those developments will be governed by. And that's our critical priority.

So once that's done, we aim to develop and open the SHELAA to the public in the summer.



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QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Clear

To: Councillor Becker (Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities)

Would the Portfolio holder please provide an update on recent progress on River Park Pavillion. I would be grateful for any information.

Reply

I'm very pleased to report that construction is almost complete on the new £2.3m sports pavilion at River Park.

Despite the horrifically wet weather over the winter the project has continued to be constructed on time and within budget, ready for use this summer. We anticipate that handover of the facility to Winchester City Council from the building contractors will take place in April with a soft-opening later in the month.

The completion of this project follows:

- the completion of (and continued investment in) the very successful King George V Pavilion at Bar End;
- a new 3G pitch at Winchester City Football Club;
- the refurbishment of the Winchester City Football Club clubhouse;
- the relocation of Winchester Boxing Club to new premises in the former air cadet hut in Hillier Haven, next to River Park.

This is in addition to the ongoing play area refurbishment programme overseen by the Town Forum.

I'm really proud that this administration is not just talking about making our communities healthier but is actively investing in and delivering first-rate local sports facilities for our residents.

The new pavilion will support cricket, rugby, park run and other sports and will have high quality facilities for all users. It will also be available for use by the community all year round.



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QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Bolton

To: Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan)

How can the Council claim to be 'protecting' the River Itchen when it fails to even monitor the level of nutrient pollution pouring into our rare chalk stream from 15 of its own 17 sewage works?

By refusing to measure the 'poison' entering the water, the Council is operating in a data vacuum; yet it still has the audacity to sell 'nutrient credits' to developers to build 70 more homes. Will the Portfolio Holder stop hiding behind estimates, commit to immediate water quality testing at every council-owned sewage treatment works, and publicly release a 'League Table of Polluters' so residents can finally see the true impact of these 15 neglected assets on the environment?

Reply

I'm going to put these water treatment works in context first of all. So thank you for raising the issue of sewage discharges into our vital chalk streams. The Conservatives' appalling mismanagement of the water system for almost the last 15 years was one of the many reasons why they were soundly rejected at the ballot box at the last general election.

In the first seven weeks of this year, sewage has been flowing into the Itchen for over 400 hours and counting from just one monitoring site — a devastating indictment of the previous government's failure to act decisively on this issue, trashing our environment and our chalk streams.

Sadly, it's a similar picture for the Meon, with over 3,000 hours of sewage discharges this year alone, and the Hamble with over 350 hours. Fortunately, Winchester finally has an MP who is taking this seriously, and only this week Danny Chambers MP challenged the Secretary of State again, asking for urgent action.

Over the same period this year, the amount of sewage from Winchester City Council plants flowing into the Itchen was nothing — not a single drop. Admittedly, it helps that none of our plants are actually connected to the Itchen. Thirty-five out of thirty-six discharge into the ground. One is indirectly connected to the Test via one of the tributaries of the Dever.

That one is tested monthly and reported monthly, and it produces far less pollution than the targets set by the Environment Agency.

Councillor Bolton is absolutely wrong to say there's a data vacuum and to say that our water treatment plants are neglected. All of Winchester City Council's thirty-six sewage works are regularly checked to ensure they are operating within Environment Agency permits — for suspended solids, biological oxygen demand, and ammonia. All of them are well within those limits.

It's true that the thirteen smallest sites, producing less than two cubic metres of discharge a day — that's like a running tap — discharge into the ground rather than into a river and are tested less frequently. But that's proportionate. It's a risk-based measure because they are much lower risk, which is why the Environment Agency chooses to test and report on them less frequently. The way they operate is also checked by us.

Twenty-three sites discharge over two cubic metres a day and are monitored by the Environment Agency as well as ourselves. The results of these tests are published online and the aim is to test them once every month. When we test them, the samples are actually sent to Northern Ireland for independent testing.

In a way the Conservatives singularly failed to do in all their years in government, we are upgrading our wastewater treatment plants. We're really pleased that we're working with the Solent Mitigation Partnership, and through that work we've cut phosphates and nitrates in our local water system.

That means we now have 45.1 nitrogen credits available in the district and 4.7 phosphate credits downstream in Itchen Stoke. These are real savings actually delivered, not only by ourselves but through our partnership with the Solent Mitigation Partnership.



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QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Murphy

To: Councillor Reach (Cabinet Member for Good Homes)

Winchester City Council declared a climate emergency back in June 2019, an action my late wife Councillor Lynda Murphy was very proud to have championed. As a council we have taken many steps to reduce our carbon footprint. A key action for carbon footprint reduction is the retrofitting of our Council housing stock. These retrofits also have additional benefits in reducing the living costs of our residents. Can the Cabinet member provide an update on the progress that has been made with the retrofit, and the plans we have in place for the rest of the retrofit programme.

Reply

Providing warm, comfortable homes with lower bills for our tenants is an absolute priority for this council. We have in place a retrofit programme which will ensure that all our homes meet EPC level C standards for energy efficiency by 2030. This is critical to reducing our district's carbon emissions, but it is also about helping our tenants with the cost of living by cutting carbon and cutting bills.

By the end of March, we believe we will have completed 511 improvements to our housing stock this year, meaning another 340 of our homes will meet the energy standard. That represents another important step forward in the annual programme, which is designed to cut carbon emissions and reduce our tenants' bills.

One of the things we are doing that is particularly exciting is that, up until now, we have rightly taken a fabric-first approach. However, there are some places where that on its own is not enough, and where there is an opportunity to go further in reducing the environmental impact of an individual home through the use of solar panels.

We originally started this as part of a government programme. It has since proved that it is actually cheaper and more cost-effective for us not to be part of that programme, even though it means giving up some of the funding involved. That is the approach we are taking now.

As you go around the district, you will start to see more and more council houses with solar panels on the roof. You can be confident that this is not only reducing the carbon impact of those homes, but also cutting the bills for the tenants who live in them.



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QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Batho

To: Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan)

How does Winchester City Council respond to speculative development?

Reply

Councillor Batho, you will appreciate that I have already had a question on a similar issue. As we've said before, Winchester City Council has a robust forward land supply identified clearly within its current emerging Local Plan. The fact that Winchester City Council has that land supply and a robust Local Plan is vital for our public to have confidence in our planning system, so that developers and residents know exactly where they stand.

Speculative development refers to developments not identified by the policies of the council or by the land allocations in the Local Plan, and we reject speculative development. A recent appeal for Lanham Lane was strongly defended at the examination in public by our own strategic planning team, and our thanks also go to the residents who made their case to the inspector — which is never a bad thing.

The inspector agreed with Winchester City Council. The council has a five-year land supply, and the application did not comply with the Local Plan or the emerging Local Plan policies either. As a result, the appeal was refused, and I hope this case sends a clear message to other developers who may be considering the same process.

We are prepared to do this again to reject speculative and inappropriate development. That is key — not just speculative development, but inappropriate development — in order to ensure confidence in the local planning system.



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QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Cunningham

To: Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan)

The allocation SS01 in Sutton Scotney for up to 60 homes is being included in the final version of our Local Plan Review. It was included without any proper consultation with the Parish Council or local residents and even though evidence was provided that an entirely different site would be acceptable. The developer needs 120 homes on the site to make it viable, which would add an unsustainable 20% more homes to the village. Can the portfolio holder provide any reassurance that our planners will be able to resist an application for 120 homes that the developer wants to put on this site if the allocation is only for 50-60?

Reply

I'm pleased you've taken up some interest in this community, albeit at this stage. I'll go into this in some detail for you.

There were two sites put forward within the village, and this one has the capability of being connected to mains drainage. This was a parish priority. The site does have constraints. There's evidence it may have archaeological interest, which needs investigation before any plans come forward, and there's an opportunity to ensure the land is well drained. These constraints are why the number of homes in the plan was limited by our planners to 50 to 60.

The developer was asked to confirm the viability of the site for 50 to 60 homes because that is the number our experienced planning team expected to see, and they did not deny that. This site is called SUO1, and it was included in the Regulation 19 plan — the plan the council consulted on and the plan that was examined by the Local Plan inspector.

The site promoter has not confirmed to the council that the site is unviable if it comes forward for 50 to 60 homes, and this was discussed in detail at the Local Plan examination. I listened to that online myself. The council is now waiting to hear from the Local Plan inspector following the closure of the examination in public and the consultation on the main modifications.

You will probably know — because your fellow councillors will have told you — that representations were submitted as part of the main modifications public consultation about how the site at Brighton's was selected. The inspector took that on board. She will consider those responses and how officers have responded to those

representations, and the Local Plan inspector will come to her own conclusion about the site and the process that was followed.

I just want to say that Sutton Scotney is a very sustainable village. It has good local resilience demonstrated by its thriving village hall activities, its flood action group, its recreation ground which is managed by a trust, and much more. It has many facilities: a GP surgery, a nursery, two shops, post office facilities, a petrol station, a village hall, employment opportunities, a hairdresser, and even dog grooming.

The village is close to the A34 and the A30, and it has a bus service travelling between Andover and Winchester seven days a week. Winchester City Council has the responsibility to allocate sites for homes within our communities. We do what we can to accommodate the views of local people, but sometimes that isn't possible and it isn't always popular.

The one true measure we have of a community's ability to absorb new homes is its sustainability, and Sutton Scotney is enviable in that regard. The other site currently put forward has a winterbourne running through it as we speak. Thank you.

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