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Winchester
City Council

Meeting	Council
Date and Time	Wednesday, 7th July, 2021 at 6.00 pm.
Venue	Ashburton Hall, Elizabeth II Court, The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UJ

Agenda Item.

10. Questions from Members of Council (Pages 3 - 26)

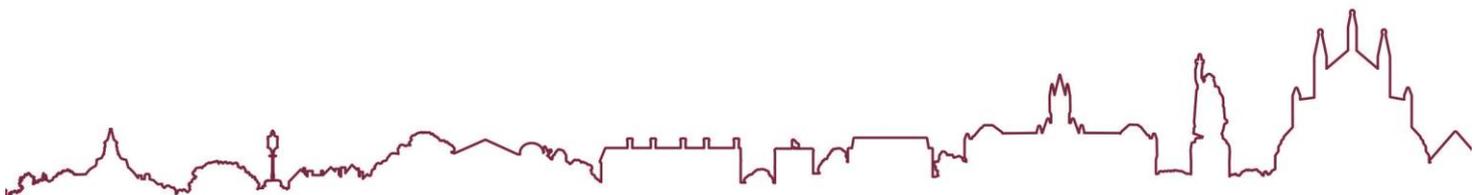
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7 July 2021

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Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor McLean

To: The Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management (Cllr
Learney)

“Is Winchester City Council supporting the Afghan relocation and Assistance programme, and if so how?”

Reply

“Our council has always stepped forward to assist those in need and Members may recall the council were the first local authority in Hampshire to offer refuge to a family through the Syrian Refugee Resettlement scheme in December 2015. We have since supported a further seven families to successfully relocate to the Winchester district through the scheme.

Hampshire County Council is coordinating a Hampshire wide response to the Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES) Relocation scheme in partnership with the 11 districts and boroughs and is working on the principle from the Home Office scheme which requires each UK council to take 2 families in order to meet the identified relocation need.

Families have already begun to arrive in the UK and our council has agreed to meet its request to relocate two families through a settled housing offer and a support package to help with the resettlement process.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Rutter

To: The Cabinet Member for Built Environment (Cllr Gordon-Smith)

“Will the City Council’s response on the current proposals for the M3 J9 challenge missing pieces, like the necessary changes to the Cart & Horses Junction in Kings Worthy and address the changes in the proposals that take away cycle links and propose totally unsuitable walking routes?”

Reply

“The council’s response to the M3 Junction 9 will highlight the exclusion of the Cart and Horses junction from the project.

The response also raises concerns about the proposed footpath links and requests improvements to support other modes of transport such as cycling and horse-riding. Whilst this project has come forward as a road improvements scheme for the M3/A34 we are very keen to see enhancements to local infrastructure included which promote and enable active transport.

Our officers have also discussed these matters with colleagues at Hampshire County Council and we understand they will also be including these points in their own response to the consultation.

The council will send its comments to Highways England on the 8th July and the full response will be made available to view on our website.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Scott

To: The Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery (Cllr Tod)

“Both St Luke Ward City Councillors attended a site visit in November 2020 with Andy Hickman regarding the parking issues in the South of Stanmore. So can the Cabinet Member please confirm if the South of Stanmore due to their parking issues will be placed on the TRO programme for this coming year?”

Reply

“A traffic regulation order programme of works is to be considered by at a Cabinet Member Decision Day on 6th September.

I have reviewed the many requests received for Traffic Regulation Order work with officers, including in the south of Stanmore, and we are in the process of drawing up a two-year programme based on meeting safety needs, addressing requirements from new development, tackling legal issues and delivering the Council’s priority projects.

The City Council undertakes traffic work on behalf of the County Council under an agency agreement arrangement. The County Council funds part of the work required and the City Council provides some support funding. The County Council provides clear guidance to the City Council on how their funding should be used and that traffic management resources are focused on measures that can benefit road safety.

Although I fully appreciate the issues we will need to be realistic in terms of what can be achieved and in what timescales.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Laming

To: The Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing (Cllr Clear)

“Could you please update me on the visitor numbers to the new centre since it opened and how they compare with the business plan expectation?”

Reply

“I think we can all agree that the WSLP is something we can all be proud of and the visitor figures for June are outstanding given we are still in the pandemic. I can confirm the following figures for June;

Fitness

Around 2500 new members have joined since presales went live in March. EA should reach around the 3,500-member mark by beginning of July. The target for the Centre, in a mature year, (without COVID-19 restrictions) is 5,000 members.

There have been 22,000 fitness bookings (a similar EA site, Hart Leisure Centre has had 11,000 fitness bookings) since the 1st June. On average 733 per day.

Swimming lessons

An additional 300 children have been booked for swimming lessons and EA are now adding additional classes to cope with the demand. There are over 1,150 children having swimming lessons every week. The target for the Centre is 2,500 at maturity (without Covid-19 restrictions).

Exercise classes

There have been 7200 group exercise bookings since 1st June. The classes are so popular that 7 new classes have been added this week to cope with demand, which has created over 150 additional spaces per week

Swimming

In June fitness and family swimming sessions are running at 75% capacity. Additional public swimming has been added during the day as Schools swimming will not start until September.

The overall attendance at Winchester Sport & Leisure Park for June is 60,000.

Despite the reduced occupancy levels in all activities, WSLP is now one of the busiest centres in the whole of the Everyone Active estate (EA manages around 200 centres on behalf of 64 local authority areas) across its Fitness and Swimming attendances.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Warwick

To: The Cabinet Member for Built Environment (Cllr Gordon-Smith)

“Could the Cabinet Member state how many designated open spaces in the Winchester District are now in private ownership and what guarantees exist that they will never be built upon?”

Reply

“We do not keep a specific record of how many open spaces across the district are in private ownership but we are currently undertaking a review of historical open space transfers.

When a new development is built the developer is required to ensure the long term management of any areas of open space. There are several ways that this can be achieved. This will generally involve the creation of management company, that will assume responsibility for the land in question, or a transfer of that space to the local parish council or city council with a commuted sum for maintenance. Alternatively the developer can decide to manage the land themselves and very occasionally such space is maintained by an individual.

There are a number of open spaces which are managed in this way and, as you know, the council is currently undertaking a review of 126 historical sites to ascertain their current standing in terms of their transfer status. Once this is completed we will decide what further action by the council may be required in relation to individual sites.

The policies within our adopted plan are designed to protect land which is designated as open space. These policies would be the starting point for the assessment of any application submitted on such land.

In particular Policy DM5 in Part 2 of the plan relates specifically to open spaces, which lie within defined settlement boundaries of places in the district, and states that they will be protected from development.

Built development will usually only be allowed on these areas if ancillary to the function of the space and the contribution of the open area to the character of the wider area is maintained or enhanced.

Development may be exceptionally be permitted in these areas where it is demonstrated that the benefit to the community clearly outweighs the harm caused by the loss of all or part of the facility and options for developing elsewhere have been explored. However, instances where this would apply will be rare and there are few recent examples of open space being developed in this way.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Ferguson

To: The Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery (Cllr Tod)

“Could the Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery please provide an update on the level of grant support that has been offered to district businesses throughout the pandemic period, and in particular what the response was to the recent Transformation, Adaptation and Diversification Grant Fund?”

Reply

“From the beginning of the pandemic, Winchester City Council have made 9131 grant payments to businesses across the whole of the district, totaling a grant value of £50,189,494. These have been delivered through a combination of mandatory grants administered by officers in Revenues and Benefits (£45,164,135) and discretionary grants made via an eligibility checked application process by the Economic Development team (£5,025,359).

The latest scheme to be paid from the Additional Restrictions Grant Fund (ARG) was the Transformation, Adaptation and Diversification Grant (TAD). The programme was oversubscribed attracting 117 applications and resulted in 86 eligible payments to businesses totaling £592,063. This grant has helped businesses fund adaptations they had made or were planning to make as part of their immediate resilience ensuring their business was operating within Covid-secure guidelines. It also helped fund businesses undertaking more profound diversification and transformational changes to their business model for longer term survival and growth (44 businesses).

Officers have been able to meet the June deadline for ARG expenditure and as a result it has been confirmed that a further £1.3m will be received shortly. Plans around how that fund will be deployed are currently being developed. These will be considered by the cross party Discretionary Fund Panel, that has underpinned all of the Discretionary Grant programmes, in the coming weeks.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Gemmell

To: The Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing (Cllr Clear)

“Can the Cabinet Member let the members know what discounts and concessions have been allowed in the new Swimming and Leisure Park and to whom (Groups)?”

Reply

“The following groups (as a result of purchasing an Everyone Active Card) are entitled to receive a 50% discount on the standard pay as you go rate during off peak times for usage of the Facilities:

- Registered students with current NUS card
- Registered unemployed claiming income support of job seekers allowance
- Registered disabled (incapacity benefit)
- A lone parent receiving income support
- Persons over 60 years of age (those in receipt of Pension Credit – Guaranteed Element)
- Carers

Although not a requirement of the Leisure Centre Contract, Everyone Active are offering a 10% discount to registered sports clubs who use the facilities on a regular basis.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Williams

To: The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency (Cllr Murphy)

“Can the Cabinet Member for the Climate Emergency please outline what the council’s policy is for maintaining the beautiful wild flower areas that have been deliberately planted throughout the district to support and increase biodiversity? And can the Cabinet Member also please outline our strategy for mowing the verges and other grassed areas during the growing season?”

Reply

“Over the last 6 years ten wildflower areas have been planted in the district with the aim of enhancing biodiversity. These wildflower areas are planted with native species mixes to benefit pollinating insects such as bees and butterflies as well as enhancing the public realm. These areas are cut twice a year, the first cut is done in March or April and the second cut is done in September, after the flowers have set seed. The cuttings are then collected, something which is essential in maintaining the suitability for wildflowers.

The Council is also changing the way it manages road verges to benefit biodiversity. We are in the first year of our pilot scheme which is running in Badger Farm and New Alresford. Working closely with Hampshire Highways, IDVerde, New leaf Alresford and Badger Farm Parish Council, we are reducing the amount we cut some of our road verges from nine times to either four or two times per year. Cuttings will also be collected from these verges. This change in management will increase the number and variety of flowering species and will provide better habitats and green corridors for wildlife. This is an important aspect of our Biodiversity Action Plan and contributes to our overarching response to the Climate Emergency.

These pilot verges will be monitored and depending on the success of the project we hope to expand it to other areas of the district.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Pearson

To: The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency (Cllr Murphy)

"New legal limits on air quality will be introduced before the end of next year (2022), following a second inquest (Ella Kissi-Debray) which ruled that air pollution contributed to the death of Ella, the Coroner called or legally binding goals for dangerous pollutant particle matter (PM2.5) in line with WHO guidelines. The Government announced that tougher standards 'could be set' in the emerging Environment Bill.

Would the Cabinet Member define what plans are emerging that will allow the measurement of air pollution by particle matter at least within the Winchester Air Quality Management Zone, but also in the Market Town High Streets?"

Reply

"I am aware of the landmark legal case of Ella Kissi-Debray, linking poor air quality with her tragic premature death and that the emerging Environment Bill, expected to receive Royal Assent later this year, proposes to adopt new more stringent particulate PM_{2.5} standards by regulation in 2022.

Through the Council's Air Quality Steering Group, of which Cllr Pearson is a member, the Council's current Air Quality Action Plan will undergo a review and report on progress in 2021, which is expected to identify further measures that are needed to bring the City's air quality to within national standards. This will likely include the adoption of new particulate PM_{2.5} standards of compliance.

Although the Air Quality Management Area already has an MCERTS standard 'FIDAS 200' particulate monitor located in St Georges Street and an 'AQ Mesh' particulate monitor on Romsey Road, it is expected that additional 'low cost' particulate monitors will be procured as part of a joint DEFRA funded project, with Southampton, Eastleigh and New Forest Council's. Officers are, in anticipation of this piece of work, trialing a new 'low cost' particulate monitor over the summer and will be pressing for the procurement process with

Southampton who are leading the project. The number of these 'low cost' monitors to be procured is yet unknown, however we expect to be allotted sufficient resource to monitor sites within Winchester's urban area and additional sites in the wider district.

Of final note, Winchester's 'Annual Status Report', reporting on the 2020 data set, was submitted to DEFRA by the June deadline and once approved, will be published on the City Council's web site soon. This ASR reports that all particulate levels complied with the current $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ annual mean standard, as follows:

Location	PM₁₀	PM_{2.5}
St Georges Street	14.2	9
Romsey Road	20.0	11.3

Particulate Levels as measured as an annual mean in $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Tippett-Cooper

To: The Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management (Cllr
Learney)

“Hampshire County Council are currently consulting the public on their plans to make significant cuts to public health services in the County. One of the proposed cuts is to close the substance misuse hub in Winchester - a vital service that supports some of the most vulnerable in our District and is the only hub in Hampshire being targeted for closure. WCC have worked tirelessly to support vulnerable people with addictions into housing over the last year and, amongst other things, closing this hub is likely to make it harder to support people to retain that housing. Can the Council urge Hampshire County Council to review its decision to cut this service and recognise that the savings projected will be outweighed by the social costs of its closure?”

Reply

“The Hampshire County Council proposal to close the substance misuse treatment centre in Winchester is based on having the second lowest number of clients accessing the treatment centre (276) with the lowest numbers in Andover (215). The suggestion is to replace the treatment centre in Winchester with smaller satellite clinics and drop in services based within local venues and established homelessness premises.

The voluntary homelessness sector in Winchester have for some time successfully introduced satellite health services and outreach work within their premises. And so it is conceivable that the proposed satellite substance misuse treatment clinics based in similar venues may be an effective option for engagement with homeless clients, especially those rough sleeping. However, substance misuse is not just faced by homeless people it also affects many other households including council tenants who may not wish to access treatment this way.

It is unlikely as HCC suggest that Winchester residents will travel to the next local treatment centre in Eastleigh. It will instead be a barrier for vulnerable

Winchester residents seeking support with substance misuse issues, putting them at greater risk.

There is no doubt that the suggested HCC commissioning and Public Health budget cuts will make it harder to sustain council tenancies, prevent homelessness and to support people out of rough sleeping. Making action to tackle health inequalities amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our communities that much harder.

I can assure that feedback to this effect will be provided to Hampshire County Council as part of the consultation process.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Horrill

To: The Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery (Cllr Tod)

“Would the Cabinet Member please explain how we intend to implement the Movement Strategy which we as a Council have wholeheartedly endorsed, when the action plan which needs to happen to deliver the Strategy, has not been implemented?”

Reply

“The City of Winchester Movement Strategy (WMS) is a transport strategy that sets out an agreed vision and long-term priorities for travel and transport improvements in Winchester over the next 20-30 years.

Since the 2018 public consultation – and following from Movement Strategy work – HCC and WCC have between them delivered:

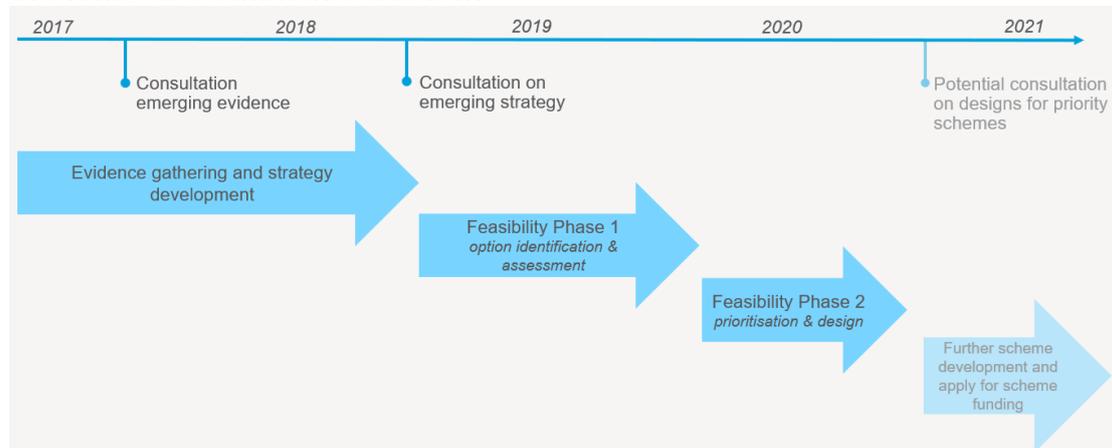
- The Wales Street zebra crossing
- Walking and cycling improvements to Kings School on Romsey Road
- A new pedestrian and cycle route to Bar End Leisure centre
- A new Parking & Access Strategy with a much stronger focus on active travel, carbon reduction and air quality
- A Winchester City Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – with consultation on this planned in Autumn 2021.
- The closure of the Square to through traffic and a new pedestrianised space on the Broadway for Sunday markets

And the following have secured funding and will be delivered in the next 2-3 years:

- WCC has secured £5.6m of funding for a 287-space extension to Barfield Park & Ride
- HCC has secured £440k from the Active Travel Fund for trial roadspace reallocation schemes and road closures in the City Centre
- A new crossing on Romsey Road by Clifton Terrace is planned on trial basis.

- HCC and WCC are working with South Western Railway to deliver a new pedestrian access route from the rail station towards Peter Symonds College, avoiding the need to cross the busy Stockbridge Road – construction complete by early 2022.
- HCC are planning to provide a new crossing on Andover Road to help residents of the new Kings Barton housing development to access local shops, services and facilities in Harestock by foot or by bike.

In terms of future delivery, the different stages of work undertaken to progress the WMS are summarised below:



Following the Stage 1 report, in summer 2020, Atkins were commissioned by Winchester City Council (WCC) and Hampshire County Council (HCC) to undertake five feasibility studies that are complementary and inter-dependent to support the delivery of the Winchester Movement Strategy (WMS).

The five “Phase 2” WMS studies undertaken between July and December 2020 were:

1. Park and Ride expansion study (P&R)
2. City Centre Movement and Place Plan (MPP)
3. Winchester City Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
4. Bus Provision Study
5. Winchester City Centre Urban Freight Transport Study

The results of these studies have been finalised for publication and were approved at the Winchester Movement Strategy Board this morning. They are also already being used to support funding bids by ourselves and by the County Council to bodies such as DfT and Solent LEP.

Further detail will be provided to City and County Councillors at a briefing on July 27, 2021.

Subject to agreement at WCC and HCC decision days or cabinet, there will then be further public consultation on the detailed actions following from these studies in the Autumn.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 12

From: Councillor Godfrey

To: The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency (Cllr Murphy)

“Among the threats and weaknesses highlighted by the expert consultants, Urban Foresight, in their Emerging Vision report on Winchester City Council's Green Economic Development Strategy, the first threat highlighted is a "lack of decisive leadership and can-do culture". Given that this strategy is a key element of the Council's response to the Climate Emergency, the Cabinet Member must be embarrassed and disappointed in these comments by these expert external consultants. What is being done (and when) to reduce the threat of this administration's dither and delay on this most important topic?”

Reply

“I am very glad to hear that Cllr Godfrey acknowledges the importance of the climate emergency. This administration has been very clear and decisive since the beginning. Within weeks of taking control, we declared a climate emergency, setting ourselves some of the most ambitious targets in the country. Our Carbon Neutrality Action Plan forms the backbone to achieving these ambitions, supported by the ten year Green Economic Development Strategy, Movement Strategy, Local Plan and others. We have reduced our own carbon footprint by approximately 40% and we have been working with businesses and community groups all over the district, inspiring and enabling them to set their own targets and reduce their own carbon footprints.

We have appointed Urban Foresight as experts in their field to work with us in developing the Green Economic Development Strategy including a vision, strategy and roadmap to tackle immediate and longer term priorities. Urban Foresight is carrying out extensive stakeholder engagement throughout the life of this study to ensure comprehensive input and to influence the ongoing “buy in” and delivery of the strategy across all stakeholders, including the City Council, other public bodies as well as businesses and related communities. As part of this effort our consultants identified threats in the context of Winchester as a place and the City Council as a whole, which might threaten the success of the strategy now and into the future, potentially beyond the

period of the current administration. It was not limited to perceptions of the present, nor just the issues of climate emergency or economic development.

The strategy is currently in development, the timing of which effectively allows for the inclusion of the impact of the pandemic, the “new norm” and recommendations to build back stronger in the long term. Throughout this process and as part of the ongoing programme of engagement, a cross party panel of councilors and the Housing & Business Policy Committee have been kept informed of progress and have been provided opportunities to comment. A near completed strategy will be brought to the Housing and Business Policy Committee on 21 September 2021 as a final opportunity for input.

The engagement, as outlined above, forms part of the process to ensure we act on initiatives and deploy the levers that we have at our disposal to enable us all to collaboratively achieve the recommendations and the work-streams that will emerge from this strategy. We are ensuring that the Green Economic Development Strategy complements and supports other key current and emerging strategies such as the Local Plan and the Movement Strategy and vice versa.

It was disappointing that Hampshire County Council, which only declared its own climate emergency after pressure from Lib Dem councilors, chose less ambitious targets which makes our 2030 target much harder to hit. We are continuing to keep the pressure on them and the government to bring their unambitious targets forwards.

The Climate Emergency and Green Economic Development, as part of our aspiration for a vibrant local economy as outlined in the Council Plan, remains a priority for this Council.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Kurn

To: The Cabinet Member for Built Environment (Cllr Gordon-Smith)

“One of the major issues effecting our rural communities is the server lack of enforcement when it comes to breaches of planning. From developers hacking down trees and ancient woodland to traveller sites in clear breach of their approved planning. This is a topic which came up time and time again during my campaigning at the election in May. The residents who elect us have had their say at the polls and they want to see action.

Could you please share your thoughts on what actions you will be taking as an administration:

Firstly to support the enforcement team to enable them to carry out their job effectively and secondly to support the actions that team will take to make sure rulings are enforced and not disregarded?

Rural residents in are district are feeling ignored and want to know what your plans are. These communities are just as important as those in the city and they want to see consistent, swift and fair action on all breaches of planning.”

Reply

“Firstly I can reassure you that planning enforcement remains a high priority for the Administration.

Over the past year or so the team dealing with enforcement matters has experienced a high turnover of staff which can happen from time to time in any service we provide. We have nevertheless maintained an enforcement capability by drawing on temporary resources such as agency staff.

However, this is not ideal situation, so we have been committed to recruiting permanent members of staff to the team, which was restructured last year, in order to a give a sharper and more strategic focus to enforcement. We will

have greater resourcing at the principal level with overall responsibility for delivery now resting with the Planning Delivery and Implementation Manager.

Given the importance of this service we needed to make sure we found new officers who are well suited to each role within the team and this can take time. I am pleased to say recruitment is now nearing completion and, by the end of July, there should be a fully staffed team of permanent enforcement officers.

The majority of enforcement resources are directed to the rural areas where there are currently a number of high profile cases with complex planning histories. These are often the most challenging sites, so take time and substantial resources to investigate, but this is vital before taking formal enforcement action to make sure any notices issued can be properly defended at appeal.

The team is dealing with a number of appeals at the moment which relate to sites in the countryside and these are often subject to public inquiries. The Planning Inspectorate is currently taking around 71 weeks, on average, to determine these cases which means there may be a significant delay between an alleged breach being reported and matter being resolved.

I should also say that it is not always appropriate to instigate enforcement action in relation to every breach we find, as we are required to take a proportionate approach, as set out in Government policy and reflected in our own Enforcement Plan. We understand however this may not meet public expectations regarding enforcement. This is an area we can develop by improving communications to explain why action is not considered appropriate if that is the decision reached by the council.

I am confident that having a team of permanent enforcement officers in place will assist our investigation and resolution of cases. We will in the coming months, when the team beds in, take steps to address issues that have been raised about the service and look at ways of improving our communication with members, parishes and the public.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 14

From: Councillor Cook

To: The Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management (Cllr
Learney)

“Now that the New Winchester Sport and Leisure Park has successfully opened and ALL should be extremely proud of, I should like to ask the Cabinet Member what the vision and future lies before the boarded up River Leisure Park?”

Reply

“Thank you Councillor Cook for recognising the success of the new Winchester Sport and Leisure Park. Winchester now has one of the best sport and leisure facilities in Southern England due in no small part to the hard work put in by our small officer team over a number of years.

We set out our approach in the October 2019 cabinet report - nearly 2 years in advance of River Park Leisure Centre closing. Work on the decommissioning started last month, and the building and site will be secured in the next couple of weeks. We are installing display boards on the outside of the building that show scenes of our beautiful district. The car parking remains for visitors to North Walls and city centre shopping and after the reopening of the tennis courts we have installed temporary accessible toilets. Consultation on the North Walls park plan has now concluded and the Town Forum will be bringing forward proposals for improvements to the park later in the year.

Despite the uncertainty created by the pandemic and the clear need to prioritise Central Winchester Regeneration, supporting the High Street and our local economy, we are continuing to evaluate options for redeveloping the site. I intend to bring a paper back to cabinet in the Autumn setting out the way forward which will take into account the considerable site constraints.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 7 July 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 15

From: Councillor Cunningham

To: The Leader (Cllr Thompson)

“The Levelling Up Fund is a competitive fund, with funding distributed to places across the UK on the basis of successful project selection. Can the Leader advise if the Council has submitted a bid and if so what for?”

Reply

“The Government’s Levelling Up Fund, seeks to invest £4.8 billion in high-value local infrastructure. Whilst the Fund is open to every local area, it is intended to support investment in places where it can make the biggest difference to everyday life, including ex-industrial areas, deprived towns and coastal communities.

The Fund looks to focus on

- Town centre and high street regeneration, including remediation and repurposing of vacant and brownfield sites;
- Improving local transport connectivity and infrastructure, including upgrades to local bus, road and cycle infrastructure; and
- Maintaining and regenerating cultural, heritage and civic assets.

Each local authority area was allocated a category based on the characteristics of the place along with several other metrics. The Winchester district was identified as being in Category 3 – the lowest grouping - along with all other district councils in Hampshire other than Gosport and Havant. The 93 category one councils received up front “capacity funding” to support the preparation of bids.

We carefully considered whether to bid in this round as the City Council has a number of regeneration projects that will deliver infrastructure improvements. However, none would have met the very specific delivery criteria for the first

phase of this fund. In addition, any transport/highway related proposal had to be made in partnership with highway authorities and at an early stage, Hampshire County Council confirmed that they would not be submitting proposals for Winchester.

However, we anticipate a further round to be released and would hope that the proposals for central Winchester would prove worthy of this fund. Any bid requires the support of the local MP and the Chief Executive and I recently met with the Steve Brine to outline potential options for a future submission.”

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