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Winchester
City Council

Meeting	Council
Date and Time	Wednesday, 23rd February, 2022 at 7.00 pm.
Venue	Guildhall, Winchester

Agenda Item.

11. Questions from Members of Council (Pages 3 - 28)

The total time for questions and the answer and supplementaries thereto shall not exceed 30 minutes.

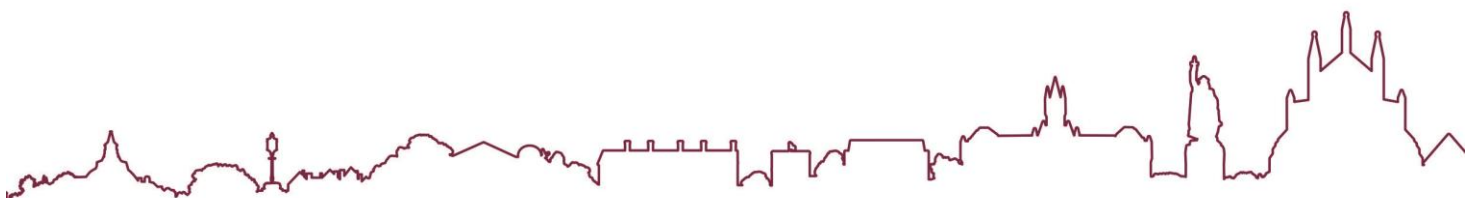
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23 February 2022

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Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Godfrey

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

“As I am sure that the Cabinet Member is an avid reader of the Hampshire Chronicle, he will have seen the summary of the recent survey of residents living to the north of Winchester about the plans to divert traffic through the Kings Barton estate. This diversion will make Winchester a less attractive place to live and will lead to many negative impacts for residents of Kings Barton, particularly those living along the Winchester Avenue. Of over 750 respondents to the survey, 91% object to the closure of Andover Road. In the light of this overwhelming opposition to directing thousands of cars each day off the current main road and through the new housing estate, what action does the Cabinet Member intend to take to minimise the impact on so many residents?”

Reply

“In its Statement of Common Ground on Highways and Transport Issues published in January 2011 in response to Cala Homes (South) appeal (ref 09/02412/OUT), Hampshire County Council supported the realignment of Andover Road in Winchester through the Kings Barton estate, closing the existing Andover Road to through vehicular traffic.

Last week, at Hampshire County Council’s Full Council meeting on February 17, 2022, the Executive Member for Highways Operations, Cllr Russell Oppenheimer, confirmed that this is still its policy:

As Highways Authority, Hampshire County Council is the body responsible for highways design, including the detailed design of the Harestock Road junction which was approved by the Secretary of State on October 2, 2012 to realign Andover Road traffic through the Kings Barton estate.

We have sought to ensure that the County Council is aware of residents’ views on the issue of realigning Andover Road – and continue to encourage the County Council, as Highways Authority, to agree a final design for the Harestock Road junction with Cala Homes which can be brought forward for planning approval.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Laming

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

“Could the Cabinet Member please bring us up to date on the city’s progress in achieving the ambitious climate emergency targets that have been set for 2024?”

Reply

“The council is making good progress towards its ambitious target to become carbon neutral by 2024. The latest published carbon footprint report was for the year to March 2020 and showed the council’s emissions to total 4,268tCO₂e, which represented a like-for-like reduction of 11.7% from the previous year.

The carbon footprint report for the year to March 2021 will be published imminently and this is expected to show a further significant reduction. Key contributors to this were the move to a 100% renewable electricity tariff for the council’s operational buildings and a significant reduction in staff commuting that was heavily influenced by the COVID outbreak. To maintain our progress towards carbon neutrality we will aim to build on this positive change towards more sustainable working and travel patterns.

This positive trajectory was reflected by the recent assessment of the council’s Carbon Neutrality Action Plan by Climate Emergency UK. This nationwide exercise assessed all councils on the quality of their published plans and Winchester City Council’s plan was rated third of the eleven district councils in Hampshire and in the top third of all district councils nationally (58th out of 181).”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Read

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

“Over the past two years there has been a number of major changes on legislation with regards to the Climate Change which this council is reportedly committed too. These changes have a major effect in the Built Environment as a number of them have long term consequences around the district. A number of applications received in the past two years have seen some developments in what are more commonly referred to as backlands developments, this together with the sub-division of plots all around the district which has resulted in having to wheel their bins along a long drive to a collection point adjacent to the highway ready for collection.

What steps are being taken to ensure that all planning application can accommodate in current requirements such as EV Units as well as the coming of extra waste collection bins (which is about to start in the next municipal year - April)?”

Reply

“Cabinet on 25th January 2022 considered and approved a report relating to the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. The proposals will not result in additional large waste collection bins at most residential premises.

The current Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 (March 2013) and Part 2 (April 2017) forms the Council’s adopted development plan for decision making purposes. Policy DM.16 of Local Plan Part 2 deals specifically with site design criteria, with paragraph (iii) requiring design for service areas including bin storage. The Council has also published waste management guidelines for developers. Waste collection provision is therefore considered as part of the assessment of applications for housing development.

For most residential developments there are not currently any local plan requirements for EV charging points. However, these can be secured through negotiation with developers in some cases. In addition the council is currently working on its new local plan and is considering how climate change and sustainability issues should be addressed moving forwards by the introduction of new policies.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Weir

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

“In the light of the Council’s 2030 target for zero carbon across the district, what steps is the Council taking to persuade developers across the district, particularly on major developments, to bring forward new homes that are highly energy efficient and as close to net zero carbon as can be achieved with building and heating technologies widely available today?”

Reply

“The current Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 (March 2013) and Local Plan Part 2 (April 2017) forms the Council’s adopted development plan for decision making purposes.

Policy CP11 of Local Plan Part 1 deals with sustainable low and zero carbon built development. At its adoption it required housing schemes to achieve level 5 for energy and level 4 for water to meet the former Code for Sustainable Homes. Non-residential schemes should aim to meet BREEAM outstanding.

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Paragraph 47 of the NPPF requires that applications for planning permission must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National guidance was updated in 2015 and advises that local planning authorities can set energy performance standards for new housing, or the adaptation of buildings to provide dwellings, that are higher than the building regulations, but only up to the equivalent of Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Therefore, in applying policy CP.11 for residential development, applicants are required to demonstrate they can achieve level 4 for energy and 110 litres per day for water. This is approximately 20% above current building regulations.

Nonresidential schemes are required to meet BREEAM outstanding unless there are sound planning reasons that make this unachievable.

When applicants approach the Council for planning advice officers do actively engage with applicants to achieve the best outcomes, noting that the local planning authority cannot require more than national and local plan policy.

Looking to the future the council is currently working on its new local plan. As part of this programme we are considering how climate change and sustainability issues should be addressed moving forwards by the introduction of new policies.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Warwick

To: The Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Quality (Cllr Cutler)

“When will the Cabinet Member make information available to our residents on details of the housing numbers, and proposed locations WCC has agreed to provide on behalf of the Partnership for South Hampshire authorities?”

Reply

“Members should be aware that under the Government’s local plan making requirements we have to engage with neighbouring authorities to fulfill our obligations under duty to cooperate. Failure to do so in a meaningful way would place our plan at risk of being found unsound.

Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) provides a mechanism to do this and work is well underway regarding assessment of housing need across the Solent area and how this might be planned for.

Whilst we clearly have to talk to our neighbouring authorities about housing numbers I can confirm that, at this point in time, conversations in PfSH are on-going and nothing has been resolved. We have not therefore agreed any figures for Winchester district relating to accommodating unmet need from other councils and, as a consequence, where these homes may be located.

Ultimately, whilst we have a duty to cooperate, it will be for us to decide how we would propose to plan for any unmet need as part of the development of our new local plan which will be subject to full public consultation in due course. We have not reached that point yet.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Becker

To: The Leader (Cllr Thompson)

“Can the Leader please provide an outline of the measures that the council is putting in place to ensure that the future of the skatepark in the proposed lease agreement of the old Riverpark Leisure Centre site to the University of Southampton, is both safe and guaranteed?”

Reply

“I am very pleased to report that a change is proposed to the Heads of Terms to secure the continuation of the skate park under the council’s management, by way of a lease back of the skate park to the council.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Cunningham

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

“The land (in the Northern Fields of Sir John More Barracks) has never been ‘brownfield’. It has never been anything other than undeveloped open space. The MOD has effectively run the area as a nature reserve, and in the 80s and 90s used to promote its green credentials in the care of the land. For the DIO to claim it as brownfield now because recruits have used it for cross-country runs or training exercises will not wash.”

Not my words but the Editorial Comment of the *Hampshire Chronicle* dated 23rd September 2021.

Recent Case law suggests that where land is separated from the main building/s e.g., by fences, walls, hedges, etc. the land beyond is not considered to be part of the curtilage ref; case law *Burford v SSLG&TVBC* 2017*.

Can the Cabinet Member therefore please clarify on what grounds could the Council decide that all of the Sir John Moore Barracks site is brownfield, and will you revise the assessment for site LH05 on the SHELAA list, as residents of Wonston & Micheldever Ward and Littleton & Harestock Parish will be most interested.

**SSLG&TVBC - Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Test Valley Borough Council.*”

Reply

“Cllr Cunningham raised the issue of development of Sir John Moore Barracks at Full Council in January 2022 and I refer to the response I provided.

Officers are still having ongoing discussions with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) regarding the redevelopment of the barracks site. Their plans continue to evolve and they have not supplied us to date with information regarding what they consider to be the extent of previously developed land and how this would meet the definition in the National Planning Policy Framework.

As I said before we would expect any plans for redevelopment of this site to make the best use of the land available. Clearly identifying the extent of previously developed land is an important part of this process but is not the only consideration.

I can only reiterate the point that anyone with an interest in the site should continue to engage with the DIO, as plans for the site are still being developed, and have not yet been finalised as part of the master planning process.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Westwood

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

“A local newsletter has suggested the Council is planning 53,000 more houses for Winchester. Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on housing development proposals?”

Reply

“The reference to 53,000 homes in the local newsletter to which you refer is a figure based on the recently published Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). This is a report we need to produce each year and is a list of sites put forward by landowners and promoters as being available for development. This administration took the decision to share fully all the sites as submitted to the SHELAA.

The inclusion of any land in the SHELAA does not mean that it will be allocated in our new local plan for development or that the council would grant planning permission for its development under current planning policy.

The 53,000 is simply an estimated figure as to the housing capacity of all of the sites in the document. Clearly, this is a considerably greater number of homes than we will need to accommodate in our new plan up to 2039. We will only need a small fraction of the sites put forward in the SHELAA.

We will very shortly be engaging with members and parishes regarding the distribution of housing numbers in the settlements across our district outside of the National Park.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Pearson

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

“All political parties advocated the declaration of the Climate Emergency in 2019 as a route way to reducing the risk of global warming and resultant extremes in weather events and damage to biodiversity.

Recently Climate Emergency UK assessed plans according to 28 questions across nine sections, based on expert-approved "checklist for Council Action Plans". Ref councilclimatescorecards.uk

This work was completed June and December 2021. The scores were recently reported in Hampshire Live.

As Winchester is 174th on the National list with a score of 49%, could the Cabinet Member state what meaningful 'Actions', other than conversations in Committees, and Fora, the Council is to take to achieve its target of "carbon zero" by 2030?"

Reply

“The recent assessment of all councils’ climate action plans by Climate Emergency UK showed our plan to be one that this council can be proud of. The most relevant comparison is with other district councils and our ‘score’ of 49% was above the average score for district councils of 43%, with the council’s plan rated third of the eleven district councils in Hampshire and in the top third of all district councils nationally (58th out of 181).

The ambition of Climate Emergency UK is to next year assess not only the plan itself, but the action taken as a result and we believe this will further elevate our position in relation to our peers. Actions taken directly by the council include:

- An increase of 287 additional park and ride parking spaces at the Vaultex site:

- The creation of more than 40 new electric vehicle charging points in public car parks;
- Increased energy efficiency standards of new council homes, including the proposed Passivhaus standard homes at Micheldever;
- The start of a retrofit programme for our council housing stock of over £1M per year for the next ten years;
- Collaboration with Marwell Zoo and Biffa to generate renewable energy which reduces their reliance on the national grid;
- We are procuring a zero carbon business support service through which businesses will be able to access funding until March 2023 to pay for measures to make them more sustainable; and
- Increased wildflower meadows and other biodiversity projects.

Key strategic documents such as the Local Plan, Winchester Movement Strategy and the Green Economic Development Strategy will drive transformational changes to the way people live, work and move around the district, reducing the emissions that result.

However, only a small proportion of the district's carbon emissions are within the influence of this council so the final element of our role is raising awareness and encouraging people in the district to adapt their behavior through activity such as:

- WeCAN, which has engaged more than 60 communities and groups to consider their own carbon footprints and plan ways to collectively reduce their emissions;
- Carbon literacy, for which the council has achieved bronze accreditation and is recognised as a leading local authority; and
- Climate open forum meetings, which provide additional opportunity for debate and collaboration amongst the many interested stakeholders in the district."



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Power

To: The Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Quality (Cllr Cutler)

“What will be the cost of the work necessary to apply the £150 discount to some council tax bills for 22/23, and will this cost be funded by the Government?”

Reply

“It is impossible to quantify at this stage the amount of work necessary to administer this scheme because the Government has not yet released final details of how the payments will to be made. However, based on initial guidance issued, it is likely a significant amount of resourcing will be required.

Government have stipulated that the energy relief cannot simply be adjusted for on the council tax bill. Instead, they have indicated that the payment will need to be made as a cash transfer for every eligible council taxpayer. To facilitate this, the Revenues team will need to gather bank details for each payer or, where we already have details on record, verify those account details. There are in the region of 33,000 eligible properties within the Winchester district.

Work to verify bank details could take weeks and this must be done at a time of priority annual billing work by the same team who have consistently ensured financial support and grant payments have been promptly distributed during the pandemic such as Covid Business Support Grant and Test and Trace Support payments.

We have not been made aware of any new burdens funding to pay for additional staffing resource or for the cost of writing to eligible households asking for payment information.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Gemmell

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

“Can the Cabinet Member tell us all what numbers of retrospective planning permissions and lawful development certificates have been granted over the past year? How many of these come forward following enforcement action?”

Reply

National guidance is clear that planning applications seeking retrospective planning permission should not be treated any differently to a planning application where new works are proposed and so Government doesn't ask councils to record retrospective applications separately.

We have in the past noted that the works are retrospective (or part) in the description of development but have been picked up on this at an appeal last year where the inspector criticised us and amended the description to remove the phrase retrospective.

Prior to this case there were somewhere in the region of 75 applications in 2021 (47 permitted, 17 refused or withdrawn, 11 current), with 25 lawful development certificates (18 granted, 3 refused, and 4 withdrawn) which represents about 3% of the total number of applications made.

In 2020 the respective figures were 22 (17 granted, 4 refused, 1 withdrawn) and 32 (19 granted, 8 refused, 5 withdrawn) which constitutes approximately 2% of the total.

Retrospective applications which seek to regularise works carried out without planning permission, and applications for LDCs, often come about following enforcement investigations by our officers. In the event such applications are refused we consider whether it is necessary to remedy the planning breach by taking enforcement action.



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 12

From: Councillor Edwards

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

“What steps are being taken to engage further with local residents about the future of the former Bar End depot site; and what assurances can be given that its redevelopment will meet a range of neighbourhood needs?”

Reply

“I am delighted to confirm that a public drop-in event has been organised for Tuesday 8th March at the Winchester Sport and Leisure Park (WSLP), 3.00pm – 7.30pm, where the community will be welcomed and invited to feedback on the Council’s intention to market the site in the early summer this year and to comment upon a proposed healthcare use on part of the site.

Much is already in the public domain about the intentions for the site and engaging with residents is important . The Bar End Forum, which became the WSLP Open Forum, was made up of local residents associations representatives and fed into the WSLP Design Framework and latterly into WSLP design, planning and then construction management. It was a useful group to get direct input and a local perspective. In addition to this there were several public/ stakeholder drop in sessions at UoW Sports stadium to get input into Design Framework.

Any development must be guided by the Design Framework 2018, including provision for mixed uses, green buffer zones, height restrictions, a convenience store, community facilities and permeability through the site to the Winchester Sport and Leisure Park.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Cook

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

“As we know The Winchester Movement Strategy is a Joint Initiative with Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council. It’s a Vision, Priorities and Proposed Measures for improving walking, cycling, congestion and I know that both Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council were keen to gain the residents views.

The Consultation has now closed and many residents have given their views. So until we are informed of the views that have been made my question refers to the closure to cars into the City on the Bar End entrance and the closure to cars coming into the City via Romsey Road which is already an extremely congested road as a Gateway into The City.

Has anyone given any thought into the upcoming works on the M3 Junction 9 which we have been told at a recent Member Briefing that this junction will be closing for a period of time and all traffic will be diverted off onto Twyford Junction 11 go underneath the motorway and then rejoin the motorway? This in turn would have a congestion problem for the hundreds of vehicles that use the B3335 to gain entry onto the M3, Southampton and the traffic which is on the B3335 many mornings at a standstill as far back as Colden Common.”

Reply

“The City of Winchester Movement Strategy (WMS) does not include a plan for a closure or bus gate on either Romsey Road or Bar End Road.

Andover Road was highlighted as a potential location for a bus lane and priority signals while bus gates were suggested for locations in the area of Bridge Street and Southgate Street. During the recent consultation, the public were asked to state their level of support or opposition to the introduction of bus priority measures and whether those measures should be time restricted or not.

If the closure to cars refers to the installation of bus gates, discussions on their use within the two areas of Bridge Street and Southgate Street is ongoing and the nature of their operation and scale have yet to be determined.

We have – to date - planned on the basis that these bus gates would be installed after the M3 Junction 9 works were completed, since the city traffic reductions that the new junction enables are needed for the new bus gates to succeed. Even if they were introduced earlier, Cllr Cook is right to highlight that they would need to be capable of adjustment or temporary suspension if M3 roadworks require it.

With regards to the M3 Junction 9 works, the WMS is very mindful of the potential impact this will have on the city and surrounding villages during its construction phase. HCC and WCC are working closely with the National Highways team as their project details are developed to ensure any Movement Strategy scheme that does go ahead in the city centre takes account of any J9 works.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 14

From: Councillor Bentote

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

“Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the Council garden waste services and how the service compares against other Hampshire authorities?”

Reply

“The garden waste service started on 1st February 2021, and when we stopped selling the bins for that year on the 1st November 2021 we had sold and delivered just over 22,000 garden waste bins.

Data which is audited and valid comes from the government once a year and the most recent data was released in December for the year April 2020 to March 2021. This includes garden, food and the compostable element of street sweepings. The Winchester garden waste tonnage for this period was 6,298 tonnes.

	green recycling tonnage	Green waste as a percentage of total household waste
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	3,753	6%
East Hampshire District Council	4,078	10%
Eastleigh Borough Council	7,582	16%
Fareham Borough Council	4,489	12%
Gosport Borough Council	1,445	5%
Hart District Council	4,737	14%
Havant Borough Council	4,819	10%
New Forest District Council	5,725	9%
Rushmoor Borough Council	3,693	11%
Test Valley Borough Council	6,548	14%
Winchester City Council	6,622	15%

Whilst we are unable to measure against others performance until validated results come out, the data which we hold shows that for the first year of the new service from February 21 to the end of January 22 we collected 6,591 tonnes of garden waste which was 6% higher than the comparable period in the previous year of the old service (20/21).

In terms of cost to our residents, all authorities in Hampshire now charge an annual fee for garden waste collections. Several councils make an additional charge to purchase bins. We now offer the cheapest price to start bin collections and the 2nd cheapest price to start the garden waste service overall – with New Forest charging £2 less offering bags with a 20kg weight limit. Once our proposed £10 concessionary discount for council tax benefit recipients is taken into account, we have the cheapest service in Hampshire – both to start the service and for renewals as well.

Authority garden waste comparison	Charge for garden waste?	Charge for container?	Offer different sizes or bags?	Cheapest price	Most expensive price	Lowest price to start service
East Hampshire	Yes	£31	No.	£72	n/a	£103
Basingstoke and Deane	Yes	£35	Bags or bin	£60	n/a	£95
Hart	Yes	£35	Yes. 2 size bins	£55 £29 ¹	£81 £55 ¹	£90 £64 ¹
Fareham	Yes	£34/£36	Yes. 2 size bins	£50	£60	£84
Test Valley	Yes	£26	1 size with bag option	£36	n/a	£62
Gosport ²	Yes		No.	£60	n/a	£60
Havant	Yes		Yes 2 size bins	£43	£64	£43
Rushmoor	Yes		No	£43	n/a	£43
Eastleigh	Yes		No	£41	n/a	£41
Winchester	Yes		2 size bins, bags as required.	£39 £29 ¹	£59 £49 ¹	£39 £29 ¹
New Forest	Yes		Only Bags (20kg limit)	£37	n/a	£37

¹ Proposed concessionary rate (Council Tax Benefit recipients)

² Gosport service is only available for 9 months of the year

In summary – in the most recent year for which we have comparable data – we are in the top quartile for waste collections – both in absolute volume and as a percentage of total waste – and since then we have increased the amount of garden waste we are collecting by around 400 tonnes. Our proposed concessionary rate for council tax benefit recipients is the lowest price charged to sign-up for garden waste collections in Hampshire – and our full rate to sign-up for garden waste collections is the 2nd cheapest - and the cheapest for bin collections.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 15

From: Councillor Lumby

To: The Leader (Cllr Thompson)

“Does the Leader believe that Winchester City Council should aspire to the highest levels of democratic scrutiny and why?”

Reply

“Thank you for your question.

Of course my administration does aspire to high levels of democratic scrutiny. It is why we’ve not changed the democratic process from electing in thirds to all out elections every four years. In addition, it is why we have introduced public questions at Full Council, Cabinet Member Decision Days – to enable decisions to be taken in the open rather than the former process which was behind closed doors – and live stream, audio record and video all our decision-making meetings.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny states what they think good looks like;

- Clarity on the role and purpose of scrutiny within the council’s overall governance framework, and how it aligns with council decision-making.
- Proactive approaches being taken by the leadership to draw scrutiny into discussions on the development of policy.
- An understanding that scrutiny’s sense of what’s important may diverge from the executive’s.
- Support for the scrutiny function and a recognition of the value it can add to overall council governance.

Our constitution gives clarity of the roles of Overview and Scrutiny in our council. Reports are offered to scrutiny by Cabinet when they do not appear on the committee owned work programmes. In recognising its value there are 2 policy and 1 scrutiny committees making up the Overview and Scrutiny function involving over 70% of back benchers of this council.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 16

From: Councillor Tippett-Cooper

To: The Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Quality (Cllr Cutler)

“Winchester District is not immune from the cost of living crisis, with rents rising faster than at any time on record according to Rightmove, food prices increasing dramatically after Brexit and energy prices soaring with inadequate help or action from the Government. At Unit 12 in Winnall, the Community Food Pantry has seen a significant increase in demand from families across the District and organisations like this are doing all they can to support people as living costs spiral. What can Winchester City Council do to support people struggling with the cost of living crisis?”

Reply

“I recognise the difficulties many residents are facing with living costs at a 30 year high. The Council has put in place several new measures, alongside existing ones, to support people struggling with the severe squeeze on household budgets.

Our budget for 2022/23 recommended below inflation increases for our social and affordable housing rents, as well as all our charged-for services.

The budget also creates a new £100,000 Council Tax Hardship Fund specifically to support residents struggling to meet council tax payments. This hardship fund will offer up to a £50 discount on Council Tax to those eligible and this will be on top of the existing local Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme for those meeting low-income thresholds.

The Revenues team will be working with the Government to distribute the £150 Council Tax Energy Price Rebate to the estimated 33,000 eligible households in the district. This payment will assist with the surging increase in energy prices.

The Council continues to provide additional funding to top-up the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) scheme where required. Other

Benefits (including the DWP's Universal Credit), and funds available from other organisations and charities within the district, are clearly sign posted on our web pages to ensure they can be reached by all.

For our housing tenants, we are recommending the rent increase is 3.1% which is below the national permitted maximum of 4.1%. In setting service charges for 2022-23 the council sought to balance the need to recover its costs against the affordability of the likely increases and so we have applied a cap to all service charges so that no tenant faces an increase of more than £5 a week.

There is also a £0.5m Welfare Fund within the Housing Revenue Account that has been set aside to provide additional support for those in crisis need who do not have sufficient funds to meet their basic needs. This includes helping those struggling to afford to pay energy bills to take advantage of benefits, grants and help offered by the Government and energy suppliers. Also financial support for tenants moving into a new home to buy essential furnishings. The fund can also provide employment support to help with job searches, CV writing, life coaching and confidence building to enter the job market.

In addition to these direct support measures, the council works closely with several voluntary sector organisations that provide vital support to people who are struggling with the cost of living. Significant grant funding is given each year to Citizens Advice Winchester and during the six months to September they assisted 2,473 clients predominately with finance, debt and homelessness issues. Our budget recommends an increase of £200,000 to the grants reserve to reduce the immediate impact of planned grant reductions and ensure that vital services such as Citizens Advice continue at this challenging time.

A further example of grant funding is the £25,000 used to help to establish community pantries at Unit 12 in Winchester and at Wickham Community Centre. These complement the Winchester and Meon Valley food banks and help struggling households transition from crisis support.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 17

From: Councillor Horrill

To: The Leader (Cllr Thompson)

“Can the Leader explain why this administration continues to make significant decisions impacting the District without consulting with councillors or residents, such as River Park and the depot?”

Reply

“Thank you for your question.

I would like to reassure you that this administration takes consultation and engagement very seriously - you only have to look at the full agenda's on our two policy committees and scrutiny committee to see the opportunity for members and residents to comment on policies as they develop.

We have announced the Bar End Depot event on 8th March and confirm there will be further opportunities to make views known on the RPLC site. We have won two awards for the quality of our consultation on the Local Plan. We have held budget consultations, we meet with our Parish and Town Councils and at our last meeting this council agreed to take the next step to finally bring forward and get on with delivering central Winchester, the proposals for which have been developed and consistently shared with local people.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 18

From: Councillor Gemmell

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

“Can the Cabinet Member let us all know how often, following the completion of a site, the compliance officer is likely to visit to ensure compliance with conditions set.... and how are section S106 agreements policed?”

Reply

“The Council’s Local Enforcement Plan (adopted July 2020) covers pro-active enforcement and compliance, noting that it is the responsibility of individual developers to carry out development in accordance with the conditions imposed on a planning permission.

Nevertheless, the Council carries out proactive compliance monitoring of some sites, to ensure development is built in line with the planning permission, and planning obligations (s106 legal agreements and undertakings). However, given the number of permissions which are implemented each year, we do this selectively, targeting our resources, as it would be totally impractical and unrealistic to inspect each one. Priority is given to monitoring the following developments:

- All developments involving 10 or more dwellings or residential development greater than 1 hectare in area
- All commercial developments over 1000sq metres floor area or 0.5 hectares in area.
- All developments subject to a planning agreement (Section 106)
- Particular problematic sites such as those involving significant level changes or contamination

This monitoring not only picks up breaches of planning control in individual cases at an early stage, so remedial action can be taken, but helps to encourages developers to implement developments in accordance with the approved plans, to comply with their obligations in S106 legal agreements and to meet conditions. This means that development which is constructed remains acceptable in planning policy terms whilst maintaining an attractive, high quality environment across the district.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2022

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 19

From: Councillor Lumby

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

“Please can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the engagements Winchester City Council has had in relation to the proposed Welborne development since this was last raised as a question at Council?”

Reply

“Cllr Gemmell raised the issue of discussions between Fareham Borough Council and the City Council at Full Council last September in relation to the new development at Welborne.

Since then officers have been in contact with the Fareham Borough Council’s Strategic Lead for Welborne in order to raise with them the issue of future opportunities for engagement between the two councils and other interested parties, now that outline planning permission has been granted, and the project begins to move towards the delivery phase.

The council is keen to play an active role as Welborne is built out over the coming years, and we are keen to understand how Fareham intends to deal with the matter of community involvement moving forwards, and we will continue to pursue this with them.”

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