



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 4 November 2020

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Gemmell

To: The Leader (Cllr Thompson)

“Considering the paucity of the Full Council Agendas in the past year can you tell me what exactly has gone on behind closed doors that has not been brought forward for Full Council.....and when we will be able to see it?”

Reply

“We were given the option of cancelling the meeting but we felt it was really important to allow members of the public and Councillors to put their questions to the administration. There are no decisions being made ‘behind closed doors’. I would have thought that the large number of additional Cabinet meetings we have slotted into the calendar taking decisions on a variety of issues - CIL Spending Programme, the Vaultex Site, The Bar End Depot, our response to the Government’s proposed changes to the planning system, amongst other things – all online and in public, clearly demonstrates that this is not the case.”



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QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Weir

To: The Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing (Cllr Porter)

“Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on progress with providing safe, suitable pedestrian access from phase 1A and phase 1B at Kings Barton to the new Barton Farm Academy?”

Reply

“At the last Kings Barton Forum meeting held on 20th October it was resolved to write to Hampshire County Council confirming the Forum’s support for the following measures to improve the connectivity of the development to wider Winchester:

- A traffic light controlled crossing on Worthy Lane near to Courtney Road.
- Appropriate surfacing of footpath links to the Academy.
- The Residents Associations petition for a traffic light controlled crossing on the ridge line on Andover Road.

I understand that the Resident’s Association petition is being presented to the County Council’s Committee (Full Council) on 3rd December.”



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QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Godfrey

To: The Cabinet Member for Local Economy (Cllr Ferguson)

“Apart from the distribution of funding from central government, what is the City Council doing to support businesses in Winchester, Whiteley and the market towns to survive the challenges of the pandemic?”

Reply

“The Council responded quickly to the challenges facing local business across the district as a result of COVID restrictions. Our support for business has been delivered over three main areas of activity:

Information and guidance

- Opened a dedicated telephone support line at the beginning of the pandemic and given support to over 900 businesses.
- Enhanced regular communications and business engagement has been maintained throughout the period of the pandemic to support businesses in general and specifically those impacted by Covid-19.
- Specialist Environmental Health advice and guidance.
- Corporate ‘back to business’ social media campaign supporting reopening of local businesses and those that took part in the government’s Eat Out to Help Out scheme during August 2020.

Building confidence

- Mobilisation of street ambassadors providing advice and re-assurance in the city centre and market towns coupled with social distancing signage and painted street demarcations.
- City Centre Partnership and meetings with Market towns and Whiteley community and business stakeholders to discuss business challenges, share best practice and source collaborative solutions.

- Rediscover What's on your doorstep campaign encouraging people to stay local and spend local across the whole district.

Direct Help

- Business support via our dedicated business support service provided by IncuHive including virtual 1:1s, workshops and networking events supporting over 650 business contacts.
- Moved the market back onto the High St with the Sunday markets located on the Broadway from Sunday 6th Sept.
- Approximately £250,000 of rent abatement offered to tenants of City Council property to support these businesses cash flow challenges.
- Streamlining the licensing process for Pavement Licensing and proactive support.”



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QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Bronk

To: The Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing (Cllr Porter)

“Southampton International Airport issued further information in October pursuant to its planning application to Eastleigh Borough Council for a 164m runway extension and other works. That information included an Environmental Statement Technical Note related to noise; and Air Quality Appendices and Sensitivity test.

Will the Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing, Cllr. Porter, inform us whether that or other information has resolved concerns previously expressed by the City Council as a consultee; and whether the City Council continues to oppose granting of the planning application?”

Reply

“The planning application ref. [F/19/86707](#) is under consideration by Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) and has recently been updated with further information. Our officers are currently assessing this additional information.

As an adjoining Local Authority the Council was originally consulted on the planning application to extend the runway and objected to the development on 22nd January 2020 on the grounds that the development would increase carbon emissions and have harmful noise impacts on the residents of Winchester. The economic benefits of the application did not outweigh the harm caused.

On 15th October 2020 further information was submitted by the applicant and we have been notified of the changes. We have until the 20th November to form a response to the consultation. The updated information is centered around noise and providing an alternative scenario relating to the use of the airport based on approximately 3 million passengers per annum and the data that sits behind this. This information wasn't the subject of an EIA Regulation 25 request made by Eastleigh Borough Council. It has however been the subject of discussion between the airport and Eastleigh and is a response to

the different circumstances that the airport now faces in light of COVID and the demise of Flybe.

A provisional assessment has been undertaken by our Environmental Protection Officers and the advice is that the updates do not overcome original concerns with the proposals in relation to noise impact.

I do not therefore envisage that the City Council will withdraw its objection to the proposed development on carbon and noise grounds but a formal response to Eastleigh Borough Council will be made by 20th November.”



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QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Mather

To: The Cabinet Member for Service Quality and Transformation (Cllr Tod)

“Why were measures to protect central Winchester residents’ parking spaces from extra demand from non residents, as a knock on effect from the abolition of free off road Sundays and evening parking, not in place when the new charging regime came in force?”

Reply

“Free-off road Sunday and evening parking has not been abolished.

As explained on the Variable Message Signs coming into Winchester and on signs in each of the car parks, it remains free to park in “Park & Walk” car parks such as Chesil Street and Worthy Lane. Over half the car parking spaces in Winchester remain free every evening and on Sundays.

We have now had two weekends of the new system and as you would expect we are monitoring the impact of these changes and improved the signage after the first week.

After two weekends of operation we have not received reports of wide spread issues for residents or visitors linked to the introduction of new charges, and income received from the first two weekends gives evidence that drivers are prepared to pay to park in the Centre, whilst also enabling those who wish to help improve the air quality of the City Centre to park for free in the ‘Park and Walk’ car parks.”



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QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Horrill

To: The Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing (Cllr Porter)

“Can the Cabinet Member please advise Council of the timing of the production of the Local Plan Action Plan, discussed at Cabinet on the 21st October? Will the LPAG be consulted?”

Reply

“The Local Plan Action Plan is due to be discussed at Cabinet on the 16th December 2020. Democratic Services are currently in the process of arranging a meeting of the LPAG before this Cabinet meeting so that they are able to provide input into the work programme. The date proposed for this meeting is Monday 23 November.”



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QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Lumby

To: The Cabinet Member for Local Economy (Cllr Ferguson)

“Would the relevant Cabinet Members please provide an update on plans to assist local businesses and residents and to protect ongoing developments in the event of a further lockdown or higher tier ranking affecting the District?”

Reply

“With the Government’s announcement of a national lockdown from 5th November to 2nd December the Council will, as before, ensure business and residents are provided with the latest government information and guidance, through our communication channels and networks, with clear signposting to the support available on the dedicated COVID website pages that have been developed over the past six months.

Given the Government has indicated there will be a new grant scheme for businesses, the Local Restrictions Support Grant, we will use the experience and knowledge gained from previous grant programmes to ensure that businesses can access this support quickly. Under the Government scheme where business premises have been forced to close in England, they are to receive grants worth up to £3,000 per month. The Government have also indicated that Local Authorities will be allocated part of a £1.1bn fund, distributed on the basis of £20 per head to allow for one-off payments to support businesses more broadly.

We know which sectors and businesses are required to close and so we will be able to target support to those most affected; i.e. the hospitality sector and the non-essential retail sector. We will use our experience of supporting this sector to help them respond to another period of closure, including guidance and support for example to diversify to take away services, creating virtual services and events, and helping them to promote these to our residents with a shop local to support your local businesses message.

We will continue the open dialogue we have created with market towns, through the city centre partnership, and with Whiteley to work together to support businesses and communities.

For residents the Local Response Centre has continued to support the vulnerable in our communities throughout the crisis, albeit at a much reduced level in recent months. With the introduction of new national restrictions this week, plans are in place to step up capacity to meet any increased demand for assistance.

Dialogue has taken place with larger parish and town council as well as mutual aid groups and agencies such as Citizens Advice and the food banks to ensure that sufficient capacity exists in our local networks to cope with increased demand. Funding provided by government to help ensure provision of essential supplies is being distributed this week to underpin this work within the community networks.

During lockdown we will continue the P&R service as normal, supporting key workers and others who need to travel.

With regard to developments the council is working hard to keep developments moving ahead during these difficult times. Cabinet decisions have been taken recently about the new Doctor's Surgery in central Winchester, the Goods Shed and the Bar End Depot site.

We will continue to progress the CWR project as planned by seeking approval at Cabinet on 10th November to hold a period of consultation on draft development proposals. The consultation events will be virtual with online interactive public sessions and we will host a virtual exhibition on our website. We will also use social media to support these activities, including posting videos on the Council's You Tube channel. We will continue to progress the project and work towards approval of the final CWR proposals early next year.

For the Winchester Sport & Leisure Park Willmott Dixon's (WD) will continue to work during the lockdown in accordance with Government guidance on social distancing. The impact of a second lockdown on the programme and related cost implications is, however, uncertain as it will almost certainly affect some of their suppliers and sub-contractors. Workers contracting Covid-19 also remains a risk to WD and their subcontractors. Officers will continue to work closely with WD and to assist if possible; and with MACE to monitor programme and cost issues."



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QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Pearson

To: The Cabinet Member for Service Quality and Transformation (Cllr Tod)

“i) When will residents be informed of the updated arrangements to introduce an annual fee to gain a wheelie bin to dispose of their garden waste? Recall that not all residents are computer savvy!

ii) How many Council tenants rent houses that have gardens? How many of these residents are either low income ‘families’, or pensioners?

iii) Would the Cabinet Member define and explain what measures are being put in place reduce the impact of what is, in effect, a rent increase when these residents require a ‘bin’ to dispose of their Green Garden Waste?

Will these tenants be given a means tested subsidy; or be given a ‘free garden waste’ bin?”

Reply

“i) All residents have already been delivered a leaflet, which was delivered with their annual waste calendar in September to inform them of the change to the charged for garden waste service, and the date of this change. The website has also been updated, and a range of further communications are planned between now and the February start date, both on line and off line, to ensure that all residents are aware of the change and how to order the new service. As well as ordering online, it will also be possible to sign-up for the service over the phone via the Customer Service Centre.

ii) The council do not collect data in respect of council tenants on low income linked to property type. We do know that approximately 57% of all households living in Council owned accommodation as at the end of September 2020 were receiving a housing related benefit (Universal Credit and Housing Benefit) – but not all of these had a garden – and not all those tenants with a garden were receiving a housing related benefit.

iii) There is no obligation to join the new service. If residents are looking for cheaper options then they can purchase a smaller bin which is only £39, they can share a bin with a neighbour, they can compost their material in their garden (composter information is available on our website) or they can take their material free of charge to the household waste recycling centre.

iv) The administration has worked hard to make the service as cost effective as we can. The £39 service is more than £15 cheaper than the average cost to sign up for garden waste collections in other Hampshire authorities. There are currently no discounts available for the new service, but as I said in July in response to Cllr Scott's question about this "we will do a review as soon as we can after introduction ... to see if there are changes we need to make".



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QUESTION 9

From: Councillor McLean

To: The Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing (Cllr Porter)

“Could Councillor Porter please supply the answer to the question I posed at last full council and Councillor Porter assured she would respond. I have received no response, only some words in the Chronical!”

*previous question attached

Reply

“Cllr Mclean at the last meeting you asked are we at full strength. I replied yes. I confirmed we have recruited some excellent agency staff to fill any gaps.

You asked about an out of hours service I replied at that last meeting that I have been interested to see if an out of hours service will deliver a better service for WCC and actually on receiving answers I do believe that this will be cosmetic only. As I said in the written reply and in answer to your supplemental on the evening, it isn't the best use of resources and we often need the use of environment agency, environmental health, the police to attend the site.

You asked again, after your supplemental, if we were at full strength. I had already said yes so said I would double check. As I was correct I didn't confirm what I had already confirmed. We were at full strength last meeting and are at full strength this meeting.”



COUNCIL MEETING – 23 September 2020

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor McLean

To: The Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing (Cllr Porter)

“The planning enforcement team, is it running at full strength? How many part time employees does it currently have? Finally and most importantly for the Southern Parishes what cover does enforcement have in the district at weekends?”

Reply

“The Council’s Local Enforcement Plan was updated earlier this year and published on 1st July 2020. You will know that this sets out how the Enforcement Team investigate alleged breaches of planning control and aligns with enforcement resource available.

The Enforcement Team comprises the following staff:

Enforcement Team Leader – 1 FTE full time
Principal Enforcement Officer – 1 FTE full time
Senior Enforcement Officer – 1 FTE full time
Enforcement Officer – 1 FTE full time
Enforcement Officer – 1 FTE full time
Compliance Officer – 1.1 FTE covered by 2 staff on a part time basis
Enforcement Technician 0.83 covered by 2 staff on a part time basis

As with any team there are times when posts are vacant or staff are absent for a variety of reasons and Enforcement is no exception. In order to maintain this resource therefore we do utilise agency staff to cover the important work of the service.

There is no statutory requirement to provide an enforcement service in the evenings or weekends and like many authorities the City Council does not operate an out of hour’s service for planning matters.

My understanding is that this has been the case for many years and in fact I cannot recall a time when such a service was in place. We need to bear in

mind that the national enforcement regime means that it is not possible to actually prevent or stop planning breaches from taking place in most instances, I am not satisfied that having an out of hours service would represent the best use of resources in a time where Council budgets are already under pressure given the broader picture regarding local government finances.”



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QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Cook

To: The Cabinet Member for Sport, Leisure and Communities (Cllr Prince)

“Can the Cabinet Member please assure All Members that at all times GDPR Regulations were adhered to concerning the transferring and communicating with Members of River Park throughout the transfer of Management Company as it has been brought to my attention by a number of people and friends may I say that this could appear not to be the case?”

Reply

“You asked a very similar question last time. I replied last time and repeat it is considered that the transfer of personal data from one leisure centre operator to another was GDPR compliant. If the Councillor contacts officers with details, any issues of concern will, of course, be reviewed.”