



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 24 February 2021

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Weston

To: The Leader (Cllr Thompson)

“How is the Council leading by example to educate the population of Winchester District and raise awareness over the impact of destroying biodiversity, for example by erecting inappropriate fencing, changing the use of agricultural land, and importing industrial material onto land that supports varied biodiversity, in particular allowing retrospective planning and failing to support enforcement notices with stop notices which are within council's power, whilst penalising others who follow due process by making them jump through hoops and incurring extra expense?”

Reply

“National planning regulations allow some works to be undertaken without the need for planning permission from the council. This can include the erection of some kinds of fencing and agricultural activity on land within the countryside.

If a breach of planning control has taken place judgement is needed regarding the merits of the development that was undertaken without permission in order to determine the appropriate course of action.

To assist with this assessment the council updated its Local Enforcement Plan last year, with the support of parish councils, and this sets out how we deal with alleged planning breaches.

On your other point, I was pleased to note that the council launched its Biodiversity Action Plan 2021 this month. This document contains pertinent information on the impacts of destroying biodiversity, as well as ideas to inspire others to protect and enhance biodiversity. In addition, over 60 actions have been identified which the Council will undertake in 2021. Many of these include raising awareness of the issues, identifying potential solutions and working with others to make a difference on the ground.”



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Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Power

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

“Could the Cabinet Member kindly inform us of the geographical split of businesses that have received the Local Restrictions Support Grant and Christmas Support Payments, and the Additional Restrictions Grant?”

Reply

The chart below outlines the geographical split of Additional Restriction Grants payments made, for both Round 1 - 5 November 2020 to 2 December 2021 and Round 2 - 6 January 2021 to date, to businesses up to and including 17 February 2021.

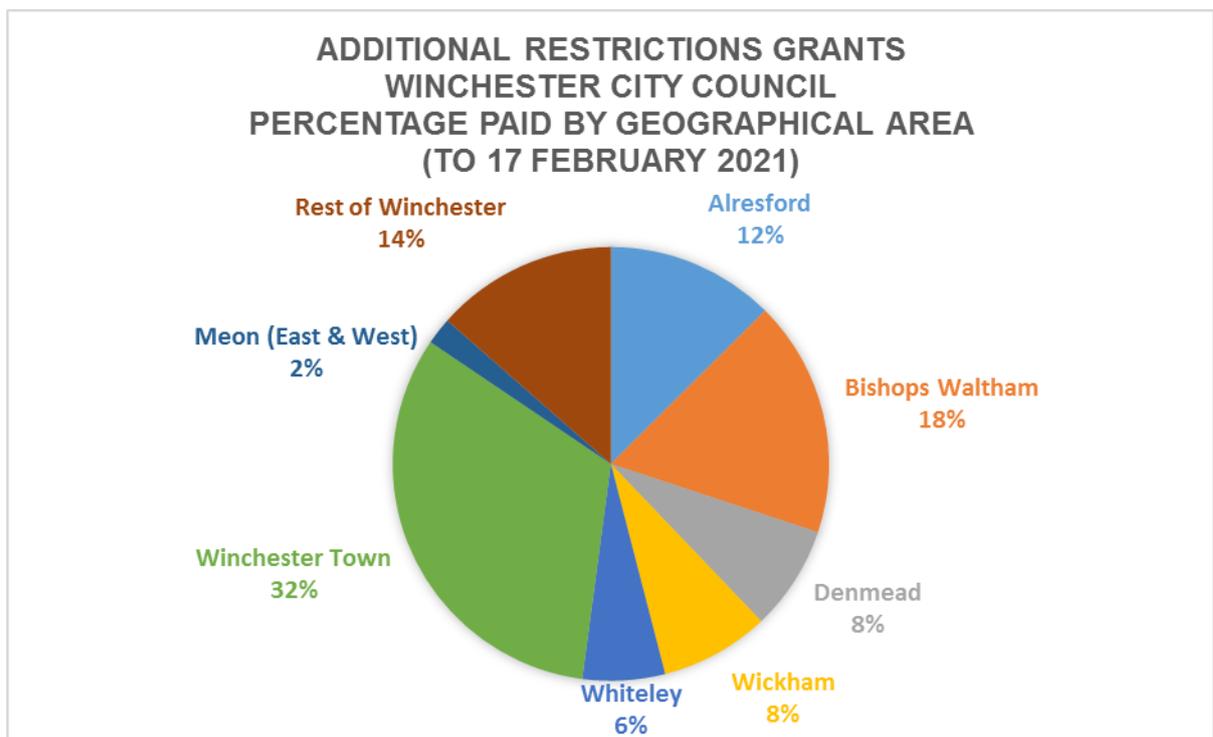


Table summary – ARG

Location	No. Paid	% Share
Alresford	37	12.5%
Bishops Waltham	52	17.6%
Denmead	23	7.8%
Wickham	24	8.1%
Whiteley	18	6.1%
Winchester Town	96	32.4%
Meon (East & West)	6	2.0%
Rest of Winchester	40	13.5%
Total	296	100%

The chart below outlines the geographical split of Local Restrictions Support Grants and Christmas Support Payments paid up to and including 19 February 2021.

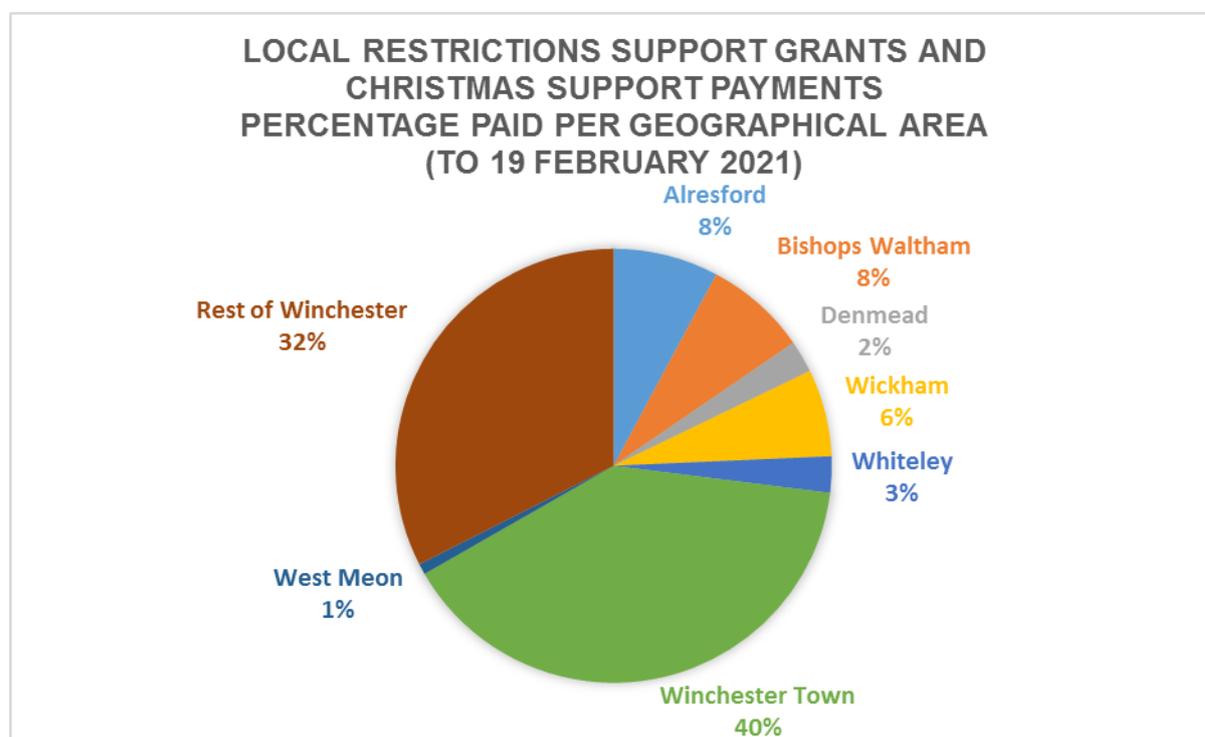


Table summary - LRSG & CSP

Location	No. Paid	% Share
Alresford	226	7.8%
Bishops Waltham	218	7.6%
Denmead	69	2.4%
Wickham	188	6.5%
Whiteley	79	2.7%
Winchester Town	1,144	39.7%
West Meon	22	0.8%
Rest of Winchester	937	32.5%
Total	2,883	100.0%



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QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Godfrey

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

“The launch of the paid for garden waste collection service has seen instances of householders who have paid for new brown bins that have not been delivered. Despite paying the subscription, these householders did not have their garden waste collected when presented in the old garden waste bags. Can the Cabinet Member tell me how long it has been taking for new subscribers to the paid for garden waste collection service to receive their new bin after ordering and when will they start to receive the service that they have paid for?”

Reply

“The new charged for garden waste service started on the 1st February as part of the new 8 year contract with BIFFA.

In preparation, BIFFA began delivering the garden waste bins at the start of December well before the new service began. As a result, 7,500 residents had already received their bin before the service started.

Sales and deliveries have continued at pace, and as of the 22nd February we had sold approximately 14,050 bins and BIFFA had delivered over 11,780 to residents who have signed up to the new scheme.

To minimise the impact on the environment, and to enable a quicker overall distribution of new bins, we have arranged for BIFFA to deliver them in groups by area coordinated with planned pick-up days. For example the waste crews will deliver to Colden Common and Twyford one day, and Sutton Scotney and South Wonston the next, and this approach, combined with agreeing with BIFFA to fund extra teams and extended hours for bin delivery, means we are currently delivering just over 1,750 bins per week.

As highlighted in the agreement when people sign up, there is unavoidably a lag between purchasing the bins and delivering them to the customer. As of

the 22nd February, there were around 2,250 bins awaiting delivery and, at the current rate, it would take under two weeks for them to reach the customer – and we have put arrangements in place to ensure that in no circumstances it should take more than four weeks for their bin to be delivered. On average it is taking 2-3 weeks for most bins to be delivered.

In the meantime, since February 15, we have arranged with BIFFA for householders who have paid for, but not yet received, their brown bin to have their old garden waste bags collected. This only applies to people who have joined the new scheme.

Despite the on-going impact of COVID 19, which has affected BIFFA like many other companies, they have managed to provide a full waste and recycling collection service across our district to date while managing the roll out of this new service: an impressive achievement and we are particularly grateful to the crews at BIFFA for their hard work during these difficult times.”



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QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Bentote

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

“As one of the many frustrated sport players and gym fanatics I am very pleased to see the progress on both the Winchester and Whiteley Leisure Centres.

I greatly appreciate all the workers who have continued to work throughout the pandemic but wonder if this has been at personal physical cost to them. Do we have details about their wellbeing?

Release from lockdown still seems distant but when will the leisure centres be ready to operate if given the go ahead from government?”

Reply

“The commitment of Willmott Dixon should be welcomed as they have continued to build the new Winchester Sport and Leisure Park during the pandemic ensuring that their workforce and the construction site are operated in accordance with all COVID19 guidance.

The Government has announced inside leisure activities will be permitted to open not before 12 April. Both River Park Leisure Centre and Meadowside Leisure Centre can be re-opened quickly in line with this Government Guidance if and when appropriate.



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QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Brook

To: The Leader (Cllr Thompson)

“What meetings has the Leader and each member of her Cabinet had since September 2020 relating to their role within the administration with any person from any external organisation, authority or business and what was the purpose of each meeting?”

Reply

“Please see diary listing attached separately (to follow).”



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QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Evans

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

“Could the Cabinet Member please inform me how the City Council collection of garden waste compares to that of other local authorities?”

Reply

“The city council now operates a charged for garden waste collection service in common with all bar one of the other authorities within Hampshire. The exception is Fareham and they are due to begin a chargeable service in February 2022.

The main charges are shown in table 1 below, and whilst there are some subtle differences between councils, such as ‘early bird’ discounts, Winchester has set the 2nd lowest service price of all Hampshire councils, whilst also offering a larger bin to those who need it, and with no charge for the bin in the first place. We also provide a service nearly all year round, but this is not the case in all the other places, where some services cease over winter for example.

In common with all Hampshire authorities Winchester’s garden waste is taken to the county council’s composting site, where it is treated and turned into pro grow soil conditioner which is available to purchase.

For those not wishing to take part in the charged for service, all Hampshire authorities, including Winchester, have free household waste recycling centre options for residents.

In terms of progress with our scheme which began operating on February 1, as of February 22, we have now sold 14,050 bins, of which over 70% are of the larger size, and have had over 11,780 delivered to customers, with around 1,750 being delivered each week at present.

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	£30.00	No	£70.00	n/a	£100.00
Basingstoke and Deane	Yes	£29.71	Bags or bin	£48.41	n/a	£78.12
Hart	Yes	£34.22	Yes 2 size bins	£51.33	£77.00	£85.55
Fareham ^{*1}	No. ^{*1}	£34/£36 ^{*1}	2 size bins ^{*1}	£50.00 ^{*1}	£60.00 ^{*1}	£84.00 ^{*1}
Gosport ²	Yes		No	£60.00	n/a	£60.00
Test Valley	Yes	£25.50	1 size with bag option	£35.00	n/a	£60.50
Havant	Yes		Yes 2 size bins	£45.00	£66.00	£45.00
Rushmoor	Yes		1 size bin with paper bag option	£42.00	n/a	£42.00
Eastleigh	Yes		No	£39.50	n/a	£39.50
Winchester	Yes		2 size bins, bags where required.	£39.00	£59.00	£39.00
New Forest	Yes		Only Bags	£35.00	n/a	£35.00

^{*1}Fareham charge starts Feb 2022

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



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QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Lumby

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

“Please would the relevant Cabinet Member provide a table showing for each of the three preceding years in relation to Enforcement:

- the total number of complaints received
- the total number investigated
- the total number where successful enforcement action was taken
- the total number where no action was taken
- the total number in that year time barred from action being taken”

Reply

“The tables below show enforcement activity for the last three years. All cases received are investigated albeit the initial assessment may determine that there is no breach, or the issue identified is so minor, that no further action is needed.

In order to assist with the assessment the council follows its Local Enforcement Plan adopted last year which sets out how we deal with alleged planning breaches. In cases where a breach has resulted in material planning harm enforcement action will be taken, unless the matter can be resolved without having to instigate formal action.

Year	2018	2019	2020
Complaints Received	307	342	298
Notices	9	6	3

In terms of measuring successful enforcement action, there are a range of options which achieve a positive outcome and therefore it is possible to resolve many unauthorised developments without having to take formal enforcement action. Listed below are reasons for case closure.

Year	2018	2019	2020
Application Invited	5	1	5
Breach Ceased	44	40	38
Compliance Completed	8	3	10
Planning Application Approved	31	50	29
Voluntary Compliance	6	2	2
Immuned	5	14	2
No breach	120	121	109
Not expedient	33	30	28
Permitted development	3	2	6
Total	255	263	229

Enforcement remains a priority for the council as it underpins the planning service and we have undertaken a recent restructuring of our team. As I have explained in responses to previous questions I am confident that once the new structure beds in it will provide a sharper and more strategic focus for the service, as we will have greater resourcing at the principal level with overall responsibility for delivery resting with the Planning Delivery and Implementation post.

However, enforcement can be a sensitive subject which provokes debate. It is not always possible for us to meet expectations of the service, which is often the product of the constraints of the system in which we have to operate, but I understand that is not an easy message to convey and it will not necessarily well received by everyone that has raised an enforcement issue with the council.”



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QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Weir

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

“What steps does the Council take to clawback affordable homes contributions on qualifying developments which yield in excess of the values stated in viability assessments?”

Reply

“Policy CP3 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 sets out the circumstances when affordable housing contributions should be collected. This has been updated by national legislation, where paragraph 57 of the National Planning Policy Framework states

“..... All viability assessments, including any undertaken at the plan-making stage, should reflect the recommended approach in national planning guidance, including standardised inputs, and should be made publicly available.”

National planning policy guidance sets out the framework within which local planning authorities should deal with viability. On large scale schemes that will be developed in phases (such as major development areas), it advises that where contributions are reduced below the requirements set out in policies to provide flexibility in the early stages of a development, there should be a clear agreement of how policy compliance can be achieved over time, noting that a review mechanisms is not a tool to protect a return to the developer, but to strengthen local authorities’ ability to seek compliance with relevant policies over the lifetime of the project.

In smaller scale applications (10 or more dwellings or sites over 0.5 hectares), national planning policy guidance advises that viability assessments should follow the government’s recommended approach to assessing viability and these types of applications are the ones we routinely deal with. Explaining that in decision making they need to strike a balance between the aspirations of developers and landowners, in terms of returns against risk, and the aims

of the planning system to secure maximum benefits in the public interest through the granting of planning permission.

Therefore on a case by case basis, our planning team consult with the council's estates team when considering viability appraisals. Where the viability assessment is robust it is not appropriate to require a clawback clause in any S106 legal agreement regarding affordable housing provision. Exceptionally, in cases where there are significant variance between the applicant's figures and those the council consider to more accurately reflect the viability, will the council recommend a clawback clause.

We will continue to rigorously assess viability appraisals to ensure they are accurate and robust in order to maximise affordable housing provision whilst making sure development remains viable.”



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QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Gemmell

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

“What guidance can we give the general public on planning transgressions?”

Reply

“In July last year we adopted our Local Enforcement Plan which can be viewed on the council website at

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/planning-enforcement/local-enforcement-plan>

The development of this plan followed consultation with members and parish councils and was agreed by Cabinet in May 2020.

The overarching aim of the plan is to manage enforcement proactively and it sets out how the city council will monitor the implementation of planning permissions, investigate unauthorised developments and take any necessary action.

I would therefore direct members or the public to the plan as it explains our approach to planning enforcement.”



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QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Hutchison

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

“Could the Cabinet member please update us on any future plans for the former Register Office, both short term and longer term?”

Reply

“Letting agents have been appointed to secure a commercial letting of the Registry Office on a ten year lease with a 5 year break option.

There is currently positive interest and negotiations are in hand with two interested parties.”



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QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Read

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

“Could the Cabinet Member please confirm the situation of the following bodies:

West of Waterlooville Forum and the West of Waterlooville MDA Joint Planning Committee (*Havant HBC/Winchester CC*).”

Reply

“The West of Waterlooville Forum last met in November 2020 and the next scheduled meeting is for 9 March 2021.

The Joint Planning Committee with Havant Borough Council only meets when there is a relevant development proposal and my understanding is that it has not recently been necessary to convene a meeting of this committee.

Looking ahead, the council will decide what governance structures it wants in place for 21/22 at this year’s annual council.”



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QUESTION 12

From: Councillor Bell

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

“Last year the Council planted 500 trees across the district. What is the situation this year?”

Reply

“The council has a well established tree planting programme across its landholdings. Whilst this has been ongoing for a number of years, the planting season of 2019/20 saw a significant increase in the number of trees planted, following the declaration of the climate emergency. In the 2019/20 season the council planted 590 trees in total, ranging from whips to extra heavy standards.

In the planting season 2020/21, given the restrictions of COVID 19, we are delighted to have planted 391 trees across our district. This includes trees on open space, housing, parking and estate land. We have planted over 24 different tree species of varying sizes, depending on a range of factors including location, soil type and condition, sadly the potential risk of vandalism and size of the plot. Where possible, in line with restrictions, planting has been undertaken by volunteers or alternatively our team take care of the planting arrangements.

The Carbon Neutrality Action Plan requires that the council plant a minimum of 100 trees per year and we well exceed this target.”



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QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Pearson

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

“Regarding Waste Streams:-

You have published via leaflet and Facebook posting the introduction of three 'new' waste streams to Winchester Collections.

- a) Batteries - what is the destination of these batteries - the recycling centre?
- b) Waste Electrical 'goods' (WEEE) - several years ago Project Integra had a trial processing establishment next to the ERF/MRF in Portsmouth. This was suspended after the trial. Has this plant opened up again, if not where is the recycling plant?
- c) Waxed cartons -e.g. Tetra Paks, and drinking Mugs - Again where is the processing plant for these waste products?
- d) Are any of Winchester's waste materials collected going to Project Integra's process plants - eg. the ERFs, the MRFs, or the Wind-row facilities?
- e) Is Biffa using 'land-fill' sites for any of these materials?”

Reply

“Thank you for your interest in this subject. You are right that there have been a number of positive changes with the introduction of the new waste contract delivered by BIFFA which started on the 1st February which allows the council to recycle some new materials not covered in the previous contract. These collections have started well and the volumes of material collected has been quite high so far, which is very encouraging.

Household batteries can now be collected every week if placed in small bags on top of the recycling or residual waste bins, and waste electrical and electronic equipment can be collected from a shopping type bag left alongside the recycling or residual bins.

In all cases the materials are then sorted and recycled in line with the requirements of the relevant regulations.

A) The waste electrics go to Computer Salvage Specialists, 5 Abex Road, Bone Lane Industrial Estate, Newbury RG14 5EY

The WEEE has the metals and plastics separated, including separation of any plastics containing POPs (persistent organic pollutants) and are these are then recycled through markets for each of the relevant materials.

B) The batteries go to Mercury Recycling Limited, Mercury House, 17 Commerce Way, Trafford Park, Manchester, M17 1HW.

The batteries are sorted by chemistry and then shredded to extract the various metal types and acids. Most batteries contain toxic heavy metals, including nickel, cadmium and mercury. All of these metals can be recovered and re-used rather than being burned as they would be otherwise.

Both of these materials are collected as part of the standard service that BIFFA operate on the contracts they deliver, and are complimentary to what is in place through Project Integra.

C) The carton recycling bins at Worthy Lane are not part of the waste contract and have been provided by ACE UK, with no charge to the council and are complimentary to work by Project Integra.

The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE) UK provides a platform for the industry to profile and benchmark cartons as a renewable, recyclable and low carbon packaging choice aimed at reducing the environmental impacts of this type of packaging.

Previously cartons collected through ACE UK bring banks were recycled at mills in Sweden. However ACE UK set up the only carton recycling plant in the UK, in 2013 in Yorkshire <http://www.ace-uk.co.uk/recycling/uk-reprocessing-plant>.

This site at Worthy Lane was introduced as a pilot to see how it would operate in Winchester, and has now been in place for 6 months. It is operating effectively, and so we are now looking at additional carton recycling sites.

D) The council, in common with all the district and borough councils across Hampshire, is a waste collection authority and has statutory responsibilities for this activity. BIFFA provide this service for us and all the waste that is collected is then passed to Hampshire County Council, who are a Waste Disposal Authority, and have statutory duties in relation to disposal.

All the waste that is collected by the waste collection authority across Hampshire goes to one of the three energy recovery facilities, one of the two material recycling facilities, or to the composting site, usually via a transfer station where waste can be bulked up for onward distribution, such as the one

located in Otterbourne. This has been in the situation for some years, and there are no plans to change this.

E) These facilities are operated by Veolia as part of a long term contract with the County Council, so none of this material is taken to landfill by BIFFA.

There is percentage of material which can't go through any of the major processing facilities in Hampshire which Veolia do then take to landfill, and this is only about 5% of the total of all household waste in Hampshire.”



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QUESTION 14

From: Councillor Horrill

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

“The Strategic Asset Purchase Scheme was established to create economic, social and environmental wins for the District, as well as to generate financial revenue to reduce the tax burden on residents.

Please can the Cabinet Member detail the assets purchased during the life of this scheme and what actions the current administration has taken to deliver the returns agreed for the assets?

What new opportunities have been explored, rejected and why by this administration?”

Reply

“Assets purchased:

- Bus Station (£4.7m). Currently generates a gross income of circa £130k pa. This site forms part of the CWR regeneration project.
- Friarsgate Medical Centre (£5.2m) – no income generated – the dilapidations claim has been settled and there are plans to demolish the building and create a temporary public open space. Occupation by property guardians was investigated however bringing the building back into use temporarily was uneconomic.
- Vaultex (£1.7m) – building demolished and £5.6m grant from LEP to build decked car park.
- 158-165 High St (£4.3m)
 - *158/159 High Street*. This is a period property that is structurally unsound and unsafe for letting without considerable investment. The viability of this cannot be justified and so the property remains vacant

pending redevelopment. Money has been spent on external decorations to maintain the external appearance

- *160 High Street*: This is let to Coral who continue to pay a market rent. The future of this building is subject to progress of CWR and will most probably be redeveloped due to it occupying a strategic point of entry into a new development.
 - *163/164 High Street*: Let to Ghandi restaurant at a commercial rent
 - *165 High Street*: Let to Subway at a commercial rent. The three bed flat above remains vacant pending a suitable corporate letting.
- Garages – in total, garages with an existing use value of £4.0m were transferred from the HRA to the GF in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and in 2019/20 generated a net income of circa £230,000. The final tranche of garages are expected to transfer in 2020/21 at an estimated value of up to £3.5m (external valuation currently underway).

We have considered a number of properties for acquisition in Winchester over the past year. However, none of them were considered either viable or practical purchases at the prices being asked. HM Treasury has recently revised the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) lending terms which mean that the council would be restricted from borrowing from PWLB for any purpose, including our new housing programme, should it make any asset purchases primarily to generate yield (revenue).”