



**Winchester**  
City Council

**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 October 2022**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)**

**QUESTION 1**

From: Councillor Wallace

To: The Leader (Cllr Tod)

“In 2021/2022 there was a shortage of around 4,200 full time equivalent (FTE) fully qualified, permanently employed GPs in England. Under current policy, this is projected to rise to around 6,700 FTE GPs in 2023/24. And by 2030/31, the shortage is forecast to rise to 8,800 FTE GPs. This means that without a change to current workforce trends and policies, more than 1 in 4 of the estimated 37,800 FTE GP posts needed to deliver pre-pandemic standards of care would be vacant.

GP practices in Hampshire already have some of the highest numbers of patients per doctor in the country and it is being reported that a number of GP practices are reaching a population whereby they will be forced to close their list. Despite this, WCC is making decisions (including planning decisions for future housing), which do not consider the risks associated with provision of public health services.

Whilst WCC is not responsible for providing Health Services, does WCC have a responsibility to do more to monitor the Local Health Authority performance, both for our residents' benefit and to inform Council decisions?”

**Reply**

“Thank you very much for raising this issue. I am aware of and share your concern about the pressures on GP surgeries in Hampshire and within the district. I'm also aware that in some cases, such as Bishops Waltham, the buildings themselves are not large enough to cope with local demand – and there is a challenge getting the NHS to allow permission for expansion.

The primary local government authority responsible for addressing health & care policy and resourcing issues in our area is Hampshire County Council.

Aside from providing the county's public health and adult social care services, they also run the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee – which is

explicitly tasked with scrutinising the provision and operation of health services in Hampshire – and has the power ‘to make reports and recommendations to relevant NHS bodies and to relevant health service providers on any matter that it has reviewed or scrutinized’ and, in extremis, to refer certain NHS decisions to the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care for reconsideration.

Separately, the County Council convenes the countywide Health & Wellbeing Board that agrees the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy for Hampshire – and also has automatic representation of on the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) that governs the Integrated Care System (ICS) which runs health services across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Hampshire’s districts – collectively – do have representation on the select committee, Health & Wellbeing Board and the ICB. Within the Hampshire ICS, the importance of district councils in early intervention has been recognised and Councillor Simon Bound, Leader of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council who represents district interests on the ICB – and I have already arranged to meet him to discuss health and other local issues of common interest.

Members also know that senior colleagues in the ICS have already agreed to provide a Members briefing on the operation of the new ICS system.

Generally, in terms of ensuring that major developments include suitable health provision within them, these have previously been offered as part of MDA masterplans, but this has not automatically led to the NHS accepting them. We know from our own experience with the construction of a new and improved St Clements surgery in Winchester how extraordinarily complicated it is to get the NHS to accept extra capacity and improved buildings. Indeed, a recent trend has been the closure of smaller GP surgeries and satellite surgeries – such as the one in Kings Worthy. Both our current, and draft new, local plans provide explicit reference to the need for increased provision – although this does not give us the power to force the NHS either to build or to adopt them.

If there are policy issues that members consider are not being adequately addressed via Hampshire’s Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee, Health & Wellbeing Board or ICB, or via the planned ICS member briefing, then they can be raised via our own Health & Environment Policy Committee – although unlike those other committees, this does not have the power to compel NHS representatives to attend or the dedicated extra resource that would be required to locally duplicate the work already being undertaken by Hampshire County Council.

As announced at yesterday’s Health & Environment Policy Committee, the City Council will shortly also be relaunching the Winchester Health & Wellbeing Advisory Board. This includes representatives from the NHS and will encourage collaboration and the development of innovative ways to support our communities to lead healthy, active and rewarding lives.”



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)**

**QUESTION 2**

From: Councillor Clear

To: The Cabinet Member for Business and Culture (Cllr Thompson)

“Please may I ask how the recent planned meetings with the Market Towns have progressed?”

**Reply**

“I am pleased to report that there has been a good response to the recent market town meetings which took place in Bishop’s Waltham on 26 July 2022, Denmead on 10 August 2022 and Alresford on 16 August 2022.

Invitations have also been extended to Wickham and Whiteley and we are in the process of agreeing the topics to discuss and dates and anticipate these meetings will take place soon.

When we have met these have been well attended by Parish Councillors, Clerks and Ward Councillors and we had the opportunity to discuss areas of mutual interest. This has included where the council may be in a position to provide support including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the City Council’s Town Improvement Fund. Topics discussed have included opportunities to develop the street market and upgrade of the millennium trail information boards along with challenges around parking enforcement in Alresford, the need to upgrade the public toilets and co-ordination of commercial waste in the Bishop’s Waltham and a walking heritage trail in Denmead.”



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**QUESTION 3**

From: Councillor Bolton

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

“Much work is in progress with officers and council members with regards to the development of the local plan and identification of housing development sites within WCC district excluding those areas which fall under the SDNP. The SDNP have also instigated a review of their local plan and have written to all the parish councils asking them to update them on any housing development sites they have identified previously and any new sites, by the end of September.

Clearly, within our district there are two streams of local planning work underway on slightly different timetables, WCC versus SDNP. For some of the wards, their parishes straddle both jurisdictions. How will the administration ensure that there is a joined-up and proportionate approach taken to site allocation particularly in those parishes facing competing local plan strategies?”

**Reply**

“It is the nature of the planning system in this country that means local planning authorities are rarely able to align the timing of the production of their local plans. This means that neighbouring authorities in Hampshire and beyond will usually be at different stages in their plan making process.

In order to ensure that authorities liaise with one another when drafting local plans there is a national requirement, under the ‘duty to cooperate’, to address cross-boundary and other wider planning issues.

I am pleased to say that the council has a good working relationship with the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), including in relation to planning policy, and has already been talking to their officers about our new Regulation 18 Plan which is due to be subject to full public consultation shortly. I am sure therefore that they will do the same regarding their Local

Plan review so we can achieve a joined-up approach to plan making across the whole district.

The National Park was formed over a decade ago, and so this situation is nothing new, and to date we have well worked together to ensure that our local plans are coordinated including in those parishes which straddle the boundary.

The working relationship that we have with officers from the SDNPA regarding the development and content of our Local Plan, will be encapsulated in a Statement of Common Ground, which will be published alongside the Regulation 19 Local Plan next year.”



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)**

**QUESTION 4**

From: Councillor Tippett-Cooper

To: The Leader (Tod) on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities (Cllr Ferguson)

“Many Winchester District hosts under the Homes for Ukraine scheme will be continuing to support their Ukrainian guests beyond the initial 6 month period that is required under the scheme. Winchester City Council’s housing and community teams have worked extremely hard ensuring that all of the District’s hosts and guests are supported with arrangements after 6 months, be it staying in their host home, being rematched with a new host or locating alternative accommodation in the community.

Many hosts in the District will be feeling the squeeze of the cost of living crisis and are asking what Hampshire County Council is planning to do with the £10,500 per Ukrainian refugee provided to it, as well as pointing to other councils who have “topped up” the monthly “thank you” payment to offset the impact of stark costs rises as our economy suffers as it is now.

Two weeks ago, I wrote to the Leader of Hampshire County Council asking that he clarify what is happening to these funds, asking if he would confirm whether HCC will be providing top-ups to Winchester’s hosts and asking that HCC and Winchester’s MP lobby the government to increase the payments to hosts under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. I have not had a substantive response yet.

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that they will join me in asking HCC to clarify its position on these matters and also call on the Government to offer this increased support to hosts under the Homes for Ukraine scheme?”

**Reply**

“As you are aware Winchester City Council has been working closely with Hampshire County Council and the other district councils in Hampshire to help and support the many Ukrainian refugees that have arrived in our district

under the Home for Ukraine Scheme, and we are proud of the number of our residents who have come forward to offer refugees a place in their homes.

We recognise that the current Cost of Living crisis is putting financial pressure on many households across the district which is likely to include some people who are currently acting as hosts under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Therefore, we are pleased that Hampshire County Council have recently announced that from October they will be topping-up monthly host payments by an additional £200 for 5 months in recognition of the financial pressure hosts may be coming under.

Hampshire County Council received £10,500 per Ukrainian refugee arriving in the Winchester district under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Part of that money has been passed on to Winchester City Council to cover the work the city has done and continues to do to support and protect refugees when they arrive and begin to settle in our district. I can confirm that I will be writing to the Leader of Hampshire County Council to acknowledge the increase in the host payments and to ask him to provide details of how the remaining funds from the £10,500 per refugee has and will be allocated.”



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**QUESTION 5**

From: Councillor Read

To: The Cabinet Member for Finance and Value (Cllr Power)

“In August I was unable to attend the Planning meeting in person, so I took the opportunity to join the live broadcast of the meeting. I was shocked to view the proceedings online as on several occasions the audio production was very weak.

I contacted Julie Pinnock the lead officer for Planning by email to ensure that she was aware of the poor broadcast. This was before the lunch break, therefore giving time to correct the problems for the afternoon session. However, the afternoon broadcast was in fact worse, two/three words out of five were not audible at all.

On Tuesday night 6th September I attended a joint face to face and virtual group meeting with members, however the reception dropped out around 10 time over the course of 30 mins, the virtual element of the meeting had to be abandoned. It showed that the drop-out was indeed at Winchester’s end

Over the past two years a greater use of electronic presentations has become the way of briefings and non-decision bodies on system and network that is unable to be guaranteed to work across the whole district.

I feel sorry for the members of the Democratic Services who work so hard to ensure the accurate recording of our minutes of its various meetings.

If this is what is being presented to the public, then it is not showing a professional image of the City and District Council.

I would therefore ask the Portfolio Holder of Service Quality what steps are being taken to ensure that the virtual meetings and public recordings are of a much require improvement standard in order to put the council in a professional manner across the complete district.”



## Reply

“Since 2019, residents have been able to listen to live audio broadcasts of our committee meetings and also enjoy a playback facility. Members are also able to observe meeting proceedings in Microsoft Teams and a recording is uploaded to the council's You Tube channel for all. All Members also regularly attend briefings and training events utilising Teams rather than having to travel to Winchester.

I am sorry to hear that you have experienced some recent connectivity difficulties – reviewing the afternoon session of the Planning Committee meeting that is referred to in the Question (<https://youtu.be/APu5m20yam0?t=114> ) indicates that the meeting was audible.

You raised the issue of the group meeting with the Chief Executive the day after and this was immediately looked into. There was no immediate IT support available that evening but once the issue was raised IT logs were reviewed and couldn't identify any immediate issues. The meeting that was held was in the same building that night as the Licensing & Regulation meeting which, when reviewed with IT, had good connectivity and audio.

The council (including the Guildhall) ensures a sufficient bandwidth and that backup systems are in place to provide necessary resilience to our council committee meetings. We have the ability to quickly revert to a backup Wi-Fi should the primary system be subject to any unforeseen failure.

Of course, our greater use and reliance on technology requires systems to be robust and resilient. Accordingly, the council continues to invest in its IMT infrastructure but it is important to remember that smooth audio and visual relaying of meetings also relies upon the person viewing to have the sufficient connectivity.”



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**QUESTION 6**

From: Councillor Cutler

To: The Leader (Cllr Tod)

“Havant Borough Council have announced plans for regeneration of Waterlooville Town Centre. What steps has The Leader taken to ensure that residents of the West Waterlooville MDA will be consulted on the proposals for their town centre?”

**Reply**

“I met with the Leader of Havant three weeks ago with our respective Chief Executives to discuss Waterlooville regeneration and other matters of common interest.

Cllr Rennie absolutely agrees that the views of all residents who see Waterlooville as a part of their neighbourhood should be able to take part in consultation and comment on any proposals that Havant put in the public domain regardless of which district council they live in.

This should not only include any proposals for Waterlooville Town Centre regeneration – but other projects of common interest such as intended improvements to the Horizon Waterlooville Leisure Centre.

We also discussed whether the West of Waterlooville Forum could have a wider role – although, of course, any changes to the forum’s terms of reference would not happen without consultation with the forum, Newlands parish and local members.

Our team is yet to receive further detailed information from Havant, but we will ensure that residents in the Winchester district who are interested in engaging with the regeneration proposals for Waterlooville Regeneration or other locally relevant consultations are aware of those opportunities.”



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**QUESTION 7**

From: Councillor McLean

To: The Cabinet Member for Service Quality (Cllr Gordon-Smith)

“I thank Councillor Thompson and her team for visiting Bishops Waltham for the stakeholder meeting/briefing on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July, it was a productive meeting.

The meeting had as a major point of discussion the condition, cleaning, repairing and reconditioning of our public toilets. It is now the 21<sup>st</sup> of September, and nothing has been communicated to any stakeholders. Therefore, my question is when will these questions be answered?”

**Reply**

“The meeting at the end of July was very useful covering a number of significant issues for the parish council, including bin stores, litter bins and the toilet issues you raise in your question.

Some good progress has been made since the meeting including:

- The disabled toilet has also been repaired and reopened.
- Additional work has also been undertaken across the district reviewing all public toilets and provides feedback on both cleaning and maintenance issues. We are using this in discussion with our cleaning contractor to improve cleansing standards and this includes Bishops Waltham.
- We have appointed a new officer to manage and monitor closely our cleaning contractor’s performance and to lead on repair and maintenance issues.

- We are also carrying out condition surveys of our toilets, including Bishops Waltham, which we will use to inform any required future investment and improvements.
- Furthermore the other issue of bins and bin storage that were discussed at that meeting has also moved forward, and following a meeting of the parish councils Planning & Highways Committee on the 27<sup>th</sup> September we now have an agreed approach which we are progressing.

We are seeking to meet with ward members and the parish council shortly to discuss these matters.”



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**QUESTION 8**

From: Councillor Radcliffe

To: The Leader (Cllr Tod) on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Community and Housing (Cllr Ferguson)

“What has been the impact of the increasing cost of building supplies and labour on the Council's house-building programme?”

**Reply**

“The Council currently has two schemes on site at Whiteley and Winnall, both schemes are subject to a fixed price Design and Build contract with no specific provisions for materials inflation.

There will however be an impact of future schemes due to the unprecedented levels of build cost inflation. Advice from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) suggests that build cost inflation between Q1 and Q2 of 2022 alone was 8.5% driven by high demand for materials relative to supply, rising energy costs and labour availability. These factors are predicted to affect new projects well into 2023.

With regard to the Council's future new build projects, three schemes have been submitted for planning consent but are subject to further consultation with regard to nutrient mitigation and therefore will not be tendered until a solution is found to this issue.

The Council is currently evaluating a Tender return for Southbrook Cottages, Micheldever the outcome of which will be reported to Members at Cabinet (Housing) on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022. Interest in the project from contractors has been encouraging however there have been requests for contract clauses which share the risk for materials inflation which the Council has not been asked for previously for new build housing projects.

Other factors which will affect the viability of future new homes projects are the recent increases in borrowing rates, which have risen significantly in last quarter and how the overall economic climate will affect property values and future rent levels.”



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**QUESTION 9**

From: Councillor Cunningham

To: The Leader (Cllr Tod)

“Would the Cabinet Member agree with me, the residents of Kings Barton and the 92% of 800 surveyed respondents in Winchester, that to continue with the proposed diversion of the Andover Road through Kings Barton would be an act of supreme folly and in direct opposition to the stated wishes of the people and jeopardising their health and safety.

The continuing industrialisation of Three Maids Hill Roundabout/A272/A34 area – specifically 2 Inert Waste Recycling Plants, 1 Solar Farm – another proposed, and a proposed Anaerobic Digester, progresses at pace. Now add the new MDA of 900 dwellings and Park-And-Ride at Sir John Moore Barracks, increased traffic flows, and the emerging M3.J9 works to the mix. Can the Cabinet Member acknowledge that these multiple developments have profoundly changed the dynamics of the Andover Road North corridor since the original decision was made over a decade ago.

Across the country residents and local authorities continually fight to build bypasses to divert traffic flows **away** from densely populated areas, but here in Winchester you still seek to divert a bypass **into** a housing estate of 2,000 dwellings and through a neighbourhood centre – 92% of over 800 Winchester residents have called for this insanity to be stopped.

As local planning chiefs, you could have led discussions with the developer on the future of the Andover Road. It is not too late...Will you do so now?”

**Reply**

“The highways authority responsible for the road system in the north of Winchester is Hampshire County Council who, as the member knows, originally signed off the realignment of Andover Road in their statement of common ground in January 2011 and, as recently as February this year, remained publicly committed to that statement.

The obvious time for the City Council, as planning authority, to have sought to get Hampshire County Council and Cala homes to revisit this realignment was before construction started and both housing and the road system started to be laid down.

For reasons that are now unclear, between October 2012 – when the Secretary of State signed off the design of the Kings Barton development – and May 2019 when construction was well underway, houses being occupied, and the changes highlighted in Cllr Cunningham’s question in process, I have been unable to find any evidence of any political leadership being shown or discussions led by the City Council to resolve this issue during that period.

Since then matters have progressed. On May 24 2022 Hampshire County Council signed a S106 Deed of Variation with Cala Homes reconfirming its role as the body responsible for authorising the road scheme for Kings Barton. Under this deed, Hampshire is legally responsible for agreeing a “Highways Agreement” with Cala Homes for every section of the road design. Under the deed signed by the County Council, any change to the junctions and “New Andover Road” works must be agreed in writing with the County Council.

Although responsibility is now clearly assigned, this reconfirmation of Hampshire’s responsibility for the Kings Barton road system has not yet led to the direction we could expect from Hampshire in its role as Highways Authority to work with Cala to authorise and deliver a coherent road system for the north of Winchester – addressing resident concerns about Andover Road, Winchester Avenue, Priors Dean Road and Worthy Road.

To this end, I have written to the responsible Executive Member at Hampshire County Council restating residents’ concerns with the current road network, highlighting the main stakeholders I believe they need to engage, and offering to work with them and Cala to resolve the issues raised. To date, I have not received a response.”



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)**

**QUESTION 10**

From: Councillor Batho

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

“The Council is committed to responding to the Climate Crisis. One of the key aspects of this is to encourage an increase in walking and cycling. What is being done to provide facilities for pedestrians and cyclists across the district?”

**Reply**

“Working in partnership with Hampshire County Council we have developed a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Winchester which is currently being updated. An LCWIP for the district is also currently being developed. Working with stakeholders these plans look to identify key routes and opportunities to improve cycle and walking facilities, encouraging more journeys to be made through active travel modes.

The County Council has made good progress on its work preparing a bid for ‘mini-holland’ funding from the government. This could provide considerable funding for measures to make it easier and more attractive to walk and cycle in Winchester.

We are starting to implement the agreed cycle parking plan for the centre of Winchester and are looking to develop a Cycle Parking Plan for the district as part of the Parking and Access Strategy. We will work with stakeholders developing this alongside the district LCWIP.

We are also working in partnership with Winchester Police and will be arranging bike marking and bike security events across the district.”





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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)**

**QUESTION 11**

From: Councillor Pearson

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

“The UK imports some 62% of its food supplies from countries far and wide. Could the Cabinet Member therefore define our land use priorities regarding - solar ‘farms’, planting trees, ‘wilding of pastures’, storage of water, or food production?”

**Reply**

“The spatial planning of the district is set out in the adopted Local Plan which includes policies for accommodating the growth we need to plan for in terms of housing, economic and other land uses whilst protecting our countryside and biodiversity.

The impact of new development on agricultural land in the district, outside the South Downs National Park, would be very small overall and of course the plan has policies which allow development required to support farm businesses and therefore local food production.

However, many of the factors which determine how much food the country produces, and conversely imports for elsewhere, lie outside the scope of planning and indeed the council’s influence more broadly.

The local plan also has policies designed to address the challenge of climate change and these support sustainable low and zero carbon development. For example, in relation to new housing (policy CP11), a limit on water consumption (from the tap) of 100 cubic litres per day in relation to new housing (policy CP11). CP11 also allows for renewable and decentralized energy developments (Policy CP.12).

We have approved a number of large scale solar farms over the last couple of years.

We are about to consult on a new draft plan which will place the climate emergency at its heart. It includes ambitious policies regarding energy performance and water consumption for new homes, supports green energy generation, promotes active travel. It will prioritise the use of previously developed land in order to minimize the amount of greenfield land required to take the new development we must accommodate to meet our district allocation by the government. These policies reflect the aspirations within the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (CNAP) for an increase in renewable energy generation, tree coverage and biodiversity.

However, it is not just about our planning policies but what the council is doing directly to tackle these important environmental issues on land which is in the countryside.

The City Council does not keep a record of farm land producing food, much of which is privately owned, but I believe the County Council may hold this data. Can I suggest that you enquire of your county councillor for this?

The council's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is in its second year and is on track to deliver ambitious targets related to the four habitats and 22 species that were selected for inclusion in the document, including species-rich grassland, chalk rivers, trees and woodland, hedgerows and arable field margins. The BAP also underpins the updating and drafting of new policy used to inform and guide projects and proposals in relation to subjects such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

The council also has its own programme of land management that includes tree planting. We have planted around 1145 trees in the last three years, far exceeding targets set in the council's Tree Strategy, and across various sites including in Micheldever, Alresford and Otterbourne. The Tree Strategy sets out to ensure that there is a net gain in tree stock so when a tree is lost more than one will be replanted. A diverse range of species and age of tree stock is planned to counter any effects of pest and disease such as the Ash Dieback.

Work is also ongoing to enhance biodiversity on council-owned or managed grassland, including road verges we maintain on behalf of Hampshire County Council, with a pilot project in New Alresford and Badger Farm.

In addition, sites such as Whiteshute Ridge in Badger Farm, which is species-rich chalk grassland, is carefully managed via grazing by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. The Trust also manages Winnall Moors Nature Reserve, and St Faith's Meadow on our behalf, promoting biodiversity and access to nature. We have also taken the opportunity to protect or enhance biodiversity at our cemetery sites. Both Magdalen Hill Cemetery and Westhill Cemetery are managed to support biodiversity as species-rich grasslands."



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)**

**QUESTION 12**

From: Councillor Cook

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

“Are Winchester City Council members of Keep Britain Tidy? If NOT, why NOT when the Organisation are so attuned to many of the litter and Fly tipping issues we as a District are blighted with?”

**Reply**

“The main focus is our work in this area with local bodies and I know you are personally a great supporter of one such local body, the Litter Partnership in Winchester, which brings together local people, councils, schools, businesses and military personnel to tackle the scourge of litter. We are incredibly grateful to them and are committed to this partnership.

The partnership was founded by Tom Bristowe, a LitterHero Ambassador of Keep Britain Tidy, who works closely with our contractor IDverde.

We are not currently members of Keep Britain Tidy (KBT) but do receive regular updates on opportunities from the networks that we are engaged with, such as Project Integra, and are able to access the relevant opportunities by using that approach. Two examples of where we've used the KBT network in the last year are;

- this year and in previous years we have taken part in the Great British Spring Clean, run by KBT, which offers local residents the opportunity to undertake cleaning and litter picking opportunities.
- We are currently reviewing opportunities for chewing gum signage on street furniture, through KBT.

Furthermore we are also awaiting the outcomes of the government's recent consultations on waste and recycling, as the Government announced that it will regulate to require producers to cover a) the cost of communications activities aimed at preventing packaging from being littered, and b) the costs of managing packaging likely to be disposed of in street bins.

Once there is clarity over the implications of this we will review what partnership and communication model is likely to be most effective in our district working with our partners.”



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**QUESTION 13**

From: Councillor Horrill

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

“Climate Change is at the heart of the Council Plan. We have proactively committed to a retrofit programme for our Council properties which members have supported.

Can the Cabinet Member explain to fellow councillors whether we have been able to implement the proposed plan, if not why not and when the administration will be bringing all members up to speed at the promised member briefing?”

**Reply**

“As Councillor Horrill states, retrofit is a critical part of our Council Plan. With the recent sharp rise in fuel prices and increase economic uncertainty, our programme to cut carbon and cut bills for our council tenants is ever more important.

It’s important also that any programme is cost-effective, robustly-based and builds on the latest knowledge. I am pleased to confirm that an accredited design and delivery team is now in place to deliver the council home retrofit programme. This element of the programme is really important to ensure the council meets its decarbonising objectives and to also set an excellent example to private households across the wider housing stock on how to successfully retrofit their own homes.

Work is to begin on 2 identified void council properties with an EPC rating of Band D. Retrofit work on both properties will strengthen the evaluation, proof of concept and budget requirements as the programme now gathers pace.

We are launching a campaign to offer tenants an opportunity to opt in to a ‘retrofit ready’ programme to ensure their homes have the basic energy saving measures in place, starting with a full energy assessment of their home.

The 'retrofit ready' programme will initially hard target and focus on houses and bungalows as this represent 90% of council properties that have the poorest energy efficiency rating (EPC Band D or below). The energy assessment will focus on basic energy improvement measures that can be improved in advance of future major planned retrofit works, saving time by assessing properties in advance of planned works. It also helps tenants to reduce their usage and energy bills.

The key advanced upgrade measures include loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, kitchen and bathroom extractor fans and the replacement of energy inefficient front and back doors and windows. Should loft insulation be found to be insufficient or depleted the tenant will be offered a top-up (subject to the necessary ventilation requirements being satisfied). Extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms will be fitted as heating damp and heavy air uses more energy and in turn reduces condensation by removing water-laden air at source.

I can confirm that an all member 'Council Homes Retrofit Roadmap and Building Safety' brief is scheduled for 1 December 2022, with officers due to issue a Teams meeting invite next week."



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**QUESTION 14**

From: Councillor Isaacs

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

“Last year Winchester City Council received numerous complaints (along with complaints sent to myself and New Alresford Town Council) about the diabolical way the Market Town of Alresford was left in as a result in the failed delivery of the grass cutting and the project areas identified. The areas selected did not receive residents’ feedback and NATC were not consulted in advance. Both factors recognised in the formal apology after investigations into the complaints.

Sadly, this year residents are still very angry and upset about the way they have been left to live in such a mess. Areas once very pretty and cared for are left to grow with dominant meadow and reed grass being cut once this year. Ragwort is spreading and other poisonous weeds. Children that used to play in open spaces are forced into the road due to the long grasses, asthma and allergy issues have increased in the area and tick and pet issues have also been a problem.

When residents say, “It makes us look like we don’t care where we live, and we do, very much “ and more importantly “It makes us feel that WCC don’t care about us as they have made where we live look and feel a disgrace.” Whilst biodiversity areas are welcome, they need to be in suitable areas. These areas highlighted are not.

On a walk about with Community services, I fed this back and was disappointed that Cllr Gordon-Smith said that after 5 years eventually a flower would appear. This was in response to residents complaining of the mess and not a flower in sight. Sadly, as the grass cuttings were not removed last year or this year in these specific areas, there will be no flowers for many years. This is not how residents want to live.

Residents in certain areas have formally asked for the project areas to be removed. Unfortunately, as yet, I have not received a response to my email on this.

Please can the council confirm that the residents' requests for the project areas to be removed will be granted?"

### Reply

"I am aware that a number of issues have been raised concerning the grass verge management in Alresford. Some of these have been in relation to the normal cutting regime and the areas left for wildflowers. In response to either issues site visits and meetings have taken place to listen to these concerns and to give details of the cutting regime and reason why cuts may have been missed and when this will be next undertaken.

Taking on board feedback from the first year of the pilot for wildflower verges, changes were made this year to include cutting visibility lines at junctions and cutting a 1metre edge. Officers also provided detailed information about the areas included in the verge project and shared this with local members and New Leaf Alresford.

We have directly received one complaint from a resident in Alresford about the project this year and we have received positive feedback from two ward members and the following from New Leaf Alresford.

"We are very impressed with the diversity on Mitford Road roundabout and it is wonderful to hear the cricket sounds and seeing bees, butterflies and moths in the uncut verges."

These changes to how we manage our green spaces provide far more benefit than just increasing wildflower habitats, important as this is.

There has been a loss of species-rich grassland within Winchester with the area of lowland calcareous grassland having decreased by almost 20% between 2005 and 2018. For this reason, road verges are becoming increasingly important for our native wildlife. So these areas can form part of the strategic plans to create and manage bigger, better, more joined-up habitats in line with the Lawton principles – making space for nature.

The verge project also contributes to carbon reduction as meadows are very active carbon accumulators. The plant root systems can grow to several metres in depth, evenly distributed. Therefore more permanent species-rich grasslands means more natural carbon storage.

Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) has undertaken a thorough baseline survey which will be repeated in 3-5 years' time.

In the up-coming report to the Health and Environment Policy Committee to consider the approach to verge management, we do acknowledge that early communication and working with local representatives is vital to securing the success of this way of managing our green space. With this in mind, we have implemented a communications plan and we will meet with ward members at



the beginning and end of each season to feedback. We will also commit to liaising with the community, local members and parish councils when expanding into new areas.”



**Winchester**  
City Council

**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 October 2022**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)**

**QUESTION 15**

From: Councillor Godfrey

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

“Could the Cabinet Member tell me what action is being taken to reduce the amount of litter and rubbish that is increasingly spoiling the character and environment of Winchester's streets, open spaces and rural areas, including the rapid spread of flyposting?”

**Reply**

“The City Council has recently appointed two new officers to deal with litter, fly-tipping and our street scene who started work in the summer and are already having a significant impact.

The first role is an officer to lead on fly tipping, to reduce the number and scale of fly tips and to work on ensuring that prosecutions can be carried through. The number of fly tips has fallen significantly recently, and there are a number of prosecutions in the pipeline. Only last month there was a successful fly tipping conviction in mid-September at Portsmouth Magistrates Court. The outcome was a 12-month Conditional Discharge, compensation of £250 victim clean-up costs, a cost award of £325 and victim Surcharge of £22.

The public are key and we would encourage any fly tipping events which are spotted to be reported through our website, together with any evidence which can help with a prosecution, for example photos of the fly tipped material.

The second role is an officer to lead on managing the street scene of Winchester and the main market towns. This officer is now managing a replacement programme for old and out of date bins, which has seen new bins installed in many locations across our market towns and have been well received. These will shortly be followed by a large number across Winchester city centre.

This new role is also looking at how to encourage better use of commercial waste, with bins stores being reviewed and options for improvement being discussed, all of which is to continue the positive visual image of the city. We are also awaiting the outcomes of the government's recent consultations on waste and recycling, as the Government announced that it will regulate to require producers to cover a) the cost of communications activities aimed at preventing packaging from being littered, and b) the costs of managing packaging likely to be disposed of in street bins.

Once there is clarity over what this means in terms of funding there may be scope to focus more resources on this issue.

However as with fly tipping, if we don't know about it, we can't do anything about it, so anything which you do spot, such as fly posting, can be reported on the council's website, via the 'clean my street' function, and we would encourage this to be done so that we can address the areas that we are responsible for."



**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 October 2022**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)**

**QUESTION 16**

From: Councillor Clear

To: The Cabinet Member for Service Quality (Cllr Gordon-Smith)

“After a recent visit to Wickham and other locations throughout the District, may I ask how the maintenance of our public toilets is progressing as some are not quite fit for purpose?”

**Reply**

“The City Council manages a number of toilets across central Winchester, as well as some in the market towns.

These are cleaned on a contract by a company called Wettons, which is a large and well-established cleaning company, however for a period earlier in the summer they were struggling with staffing and this was causing an issue. We are working with Wettons to improve shift patterns, introduce new staff, and undertake more reactive maintenance.

This is resulting in improvements to opening hours, cleanliness, and a quicker fix of maintenance issues as they arise and regular deeper cleans. This has been led by a new appointment to the City Council, who is focused on improving the street scene of Winchester for residents and visitors.

It may be however that the single daily clean does not meet the required standards of some of the areas in the market towns. We have asked Wetton’s to provide the cost of delivering a second daily clean on top of what is already done.

However the physical structure of our toilets, which are old, is also now requiring investment. The estates team are currently undertaking condition surveys of the toilets that we own and will identify the options that are available to us, to bring forward proposals for the use and improvement of toilets across the district and will engage with interested parties in advance of any changes.”



**COUNCIL MEETING – 5 October 2022**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)**

**QUESTION 17**

From: Councillor Radcliffe

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

“In common with other cities across the UK, Winchester has seen an upsurge in graffiti and, in particular, tagging on walls, bins, benches and utility cabinets across the city centre and elsewhere in the district. What progress are we making in tackling this problem and are additional resources needed in this context?”

Reply

“Earlier this afternoon, I met with officers from across the City Council (Neighbourhood Services & Community Safety, Estates, Environmental Services, CCTV and Special Maintenance) as well as external partners such as the Youth Offending Team, the Police and the Business Improvement District to discuss our ongoing cooperation to tackle the problems of graffiti and property damage across the city.

We – and our partners at the Business Improvement District - have already had to increase spending dramatically on graffiti removal – and we want to ensure that we are doing everything we can with external partners to bring the problem under control.

Our focus is in five areas:

- Detection of those causing the problem
- Intervention with those causing the problem
- Wider preventative measures to prevent and reduce the problem
- Accelerating graffiti removal
- Public reassurance and communications – particularly so that those causing the problem are aware of potential consequences

Work already underway includes:

- Evidence collection via CCTV to try and identify the perpetrators
- Partnership work with schools to raise awareness of the consequences with young people
- Police patrols in affected areas
- Sharing graffiti records between council services and external partners to try and identify patterns of behaviour and individual perpetrators
- Increased cleaning working with the Winchester BiD and via our own Special Maintenance officers.

Our CCTV system is being upgraded this month which will improve our capability and flexibility, enabling an improved service – and we are looking at how to extend coverage and monitoring in areas with a particular problem.

We have also been corresponding other bodies – such as BT Openreach – to find further opportunities for a more joined up approach.”