



COUNCIL MEETING – 16 July 2024

Questions by Councillors under Council Procedure Rule 19.1

- Each questioner will have 2 minutes in which to ask their question.
- If a questioner who has submitted a question is unable to be present, the Mayor may ask the question on their behalf, or invite another Councillor to do so, or indicate that a written reply will be given and published on the website following the meeting. or decide, in the absence of the questioner, that the question will not be dealt with.
- Please note that following the response given by the Leader, a Cabinet Member or Committee Chair, the questioner may also ask a supplementary question which must arise directly out of the original reply.
- The **total** time allocated for Councillor questions will normally be limited to 40 minutes.
- Written answers will be published to questions submitted (but not supplementary questions) following the meeting.

	From Cllr:
1	Lee (1)
2	Warwick
3	Williams
4	White
5	Godfrey
6	Laming
7	Langford-Smith
8	Horrill
9	Brook
10	Miller
11	Cunningham
12	Lee (2)



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QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Lee (1)

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

“Hampshire Water Transfer & Water Recycling Project – concerns and missed opportunities.

There are many concerns about this project:

- Absence in the proposed 40km pipeline with c40m construction corridor of a comprehensive comparative analysis of the life-cycle environmental, community, traffic and landowner disturbance impacts, over an extensive period.
- The extremely high financial cost with other opportunities lost.
- Absence of a fully considered alternative option for a modern new technology renewable energy desalination plant, with fewer environmental harmful impacts in the Western Hampshire high water consumption area.
- The current route south of Wickham and Bishops Waltham to Otterbourne, lacks consideration of opportunities for: the emerging Winchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure (LCWIP) plans; Biodiversity Net Gain beyond statutory 10%; addressing poor broadband and mobile network coverage; Local Area Energy Plan grid enhancements for renewal energy connections, climate resilience and rising energy demands.

Can WCC take action to propose an improved project option with smaller environmental and community impacts with advocacy, if the planned route must go ahead, for relevant agencies [1] to consider the identified opportunities and wider benefits?”

[1] Examples - Southern Water, SSEN, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Trust, HCC for Local Nature Recovery, broadband and telecommunication providers, HCC and Active Travel organisations for LCWIP

Reply

“Winchester City Council is not the planning authority for this project – and so we are not in position to change the permissions or scope of what it being done.

The decisions are covered through the Planning Inspectorate as a National Infrastructure Project.

Since there are eight sections of pipeline which are all or partly within Winchester district, we are however statutory consultees and so have already prepared our response in preparation for the deadline for submission which is the 23rd July.

I won't rehearse the full reply here, but WCC's response includes specific references and requests for each section and each construction compound, and suggestions as to what should be covered in the ES Environmental Statement submission.

I am fully aware of the potential of a cycling route that we have discussed at LCWIP meetings and member briefings and this is requested in the response.

As some of this route is tunneled rather than dug, it is difficult to see how the other services you suggest could be incorporated without considerable additions to a cost constrained project.

We have noted that the draft order limits are flexible in some areas to allow possibility of change to the final placement of the pipeline following additional environmental reports due this summer.

Some of the points you highlight would be considered outside our area of competence and have already been decided by the relevant regulatory bodies.

The choice of a pipeline was approved by OfWat. Desalination was discounted due to the environmental impacts and the limited amount of water that would be generated.

River abstraction was discounted due to ecological impact.”



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QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Warwick

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

“How will the new government’s mandatory 1.5m housing target, review of previously turned down applications and planning policy reform impact on large housing site allocations across Winchester in our emerging Local Plan?”

Reply

“Thank you for your question, Cllr Warwick.

Based on what we know so far, we do not expect the government’s mandatory target to have any impact on large housing site allocations across Winchester in our Local Plan.

The target of 1.5million homes over the period of a Parliament is the same as the previous target of 300,000 homes per year.

Winchester City Council has never shirked from achieving the number of homes required by the Government so despite talk of targets becoming optional, continued to work against the Government’s standard formula.

In fact, it may help our housing numbers if those mandatory targets are satisfied in other districts too.

Many of the announcements made are actions we are already proposing:

- using brownfield land first
- making homes energy efficient
- generating power at every household
- reducing water use

The Kings Speech is tomorrow, and we are promised a revised National Planning Policy Framework by the end of July.

Our Strategic Planning team has prepared a risk assessment of the changes and this will be published with the Scrutiny papers later this week.

The greatest risk is not having a Local Plan. With this plan – and even with the move to mandatory targets - we can demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, and set out the areas which can be developed to deliver the housing number required. Within this a number of larger sites are already identified. Our Local Plan remains on target to be delivered for inspection before the June 2025 deadline.”



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QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Williams

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

“The Cabinet members will know how since being elected I have spoken about the urgent need for refurbishment of the Bishop’s Waltham public toilets. At a time when other local authorities look to close these essential public facilities, I am very pleased that the Liberal Democrat administration in Winchester has committed to investing in these facilities right across the District. That said, can I ask to when residents and visitors to Bishop’s Waltham can expect their public toilets to be refurbished so that they can enjoy a more modern facility?”

Reply

“After being delayed by difficulties in obtaining a contractor, the programme to refurbish the districts public toilets is now well underway with Market Lane complete and Chesil Street car park toilets due to be finished in the next week. It is intended to complete one of the Park and Ride facilities and are currently working on the specification of the works needed to enable a start on Bishops Waltham in the Autumn.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Bishops Waltham Parish Council for their constructive engagement with the City Council over the future management of toilets which is helping us to move forward with this much needed refurbishment.”



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QUESTION 4

From: Councillor White

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

“Guidance on minimising waste and recycling for local community event organisers.

Organisers of a recent, well-attended local fete in Newtown in the Meon Valley were very motivated to reduce waste as well as recycle as much as possible. However, although it seems that larger festivals and events are well-catered for with sustainable events advice and commercial companies that will manage and recycle the waste, many local fete organisers have found very little help for this smaller, community event.

Is there a toolkit or guidance from the Council, specifically aimed at minimising waste at these local events or help provided for fete organisers to recycle the waste generated, especially the hard plastics?”

Reply

“Every event is different and will create different waste issues depending on purpose, size, location, catering offer, level of control by the organisers and availability of waste disposal facilities. Event waste is commercial and not part of the City Council’s household waste stream which is our priority but we are keen to encourage waste minimisation and recycling across the board.

As part of Project Integra we work across with the County Council, Hampshire Unitaries and other Hampshire Districts to provide public information on waste and new school and community guidance is included in the work of the Project Integra communications group. However, we are operating in a rapidly changing environment. The ban on single use plastics which came into place last year has dramatically increased the availability of more sustainable alternatives for takeaway catering. The future introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is affecting how items are packaged and the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) will reduce drinks packaging in the waste stream and change the incentives for recycling. While these changes are very much welcomed, it is making simple guidance more difficult to provide as the waste system evolves but we will be encouraging this to come forward as soon as possible.”



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QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Godfrey

To: Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management (Cllr Martin Tod)

“It is now halfway through the 5-year period agreed for the University of Southampton to develop and share their proposals for the River Park Leisure Centre site. There has been no public indication of these proposals, even during the listening event at the beginning of last year. Given how long public engagement and planning development on such important sites takes in Winchester, when does the Portfolio Holder expect a clear milestone plan to be published leading to the submission of a planning application?”

Reply

“I met the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Southampton in May at their annual event to mark the progress of the university’s civic partnerships over the last year. We agreed to meet again in September to discuss next steps on the University of Southampton’s investment plans in Winchester.”



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QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Laming (1)

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

“Will the local plan be delayed due to the change in Government and possible changes to National Housing Policies?”

Reply

“Based on what we know, the Local Plan will not be delayed due to the change in Government. Throughout the process, officers and I have met with the Planning Advisory Service to ensure the Plan is on track as new issues emerge, these have been addressed.

At the time of the Inspection, the plan must be compliant with the NPPF in its agreed form.

At this time, we have no idea of what changes to the NPPF will be made, but if changes are made in the next month as is implied, WCC will have time to address them in our Local Plan process.”



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QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Langford-Smith

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

“People in Denmead are very concerned about unapproved development that is changing the face of our countryside. Despite reporting issues to WCC Enforcement Team, there appears to be no action and cases disappear from the radar. How can you assure residents that enforcement has teeth in Denmead?”

Reply

“Thank you for your question Cllr Langford-Smith.

Winchester City Council is committed to rigorous enforcement, but we have to prioritise the list of reported breaches for environmental harm and unfortunately some reports may not be considered a breach of planning.

All Parishes are invited to meet with the Enforcement team to go through their priorities for enforcement action in their Parish, and of course, City Councillors are welcome to join them.

The enforcement team has had success taking cases to planning and successfully winning enforcement cases heard by Planning Inspectors:

- Dradfield Lane in October 2023,
- Stratton, Highways Road October 2023
- Carousel Park April 2024

Just before the General Election was called, Officers and I met with a fellow Parish Councillor regarding one specific site in the ward. We worked through the breaches and the risks of the case. Officers were happy to do this for any site. I will join if you wish.

But, Winchester City Council always want to do better.

Following a well-attended Parish Councillors workshop on this subject in late 2023, WCC has drawn up a revised its enforcement policy.

We will be briefing City Councillors as part of the consultation towards its adoption this Autumn. I encourage you and any City Councillor to contact the Enforcement team direct for a briefing on the cases in your ward, and to attend the briefing when advertised.”



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QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Horrill

To: The Cabinet Member for Housing (Cllr Chris Westwood)

“The Government has recently introduced new legislation for our Council homes to ensure appropriate levels of tenant representation and satisfaction and KPIs which the Council will be measured on.

Given this is a significant change and one which will impact most Councillors who represent wards with Council properties, why has the portfolio holder not arranged a member briefing to bring all Councillors up to speed?”

Reply

“Thank you for your question, Cllr Horrill.

The report on how this council will meet the needs of the Social Housing Regulation Act was presented and agreed in public at the Cabinet Committee Housing meeting discussion of our Housing Engagement and Communication Plan held on 5th February 2024.

This followed the earlier discussion of the forthcoming Act and associated White Paper at the Business & Housing Policy Committee on 28th February 2023.

All members had the opportunity to read the papers and associated recommendations prior to those meetings, and also had the opportunity to attend the meeting in person or join the live stream of the meeting or watch the recording after the meeting.

As agreed with Business & Housing in 2023, the primary focus of our engagement has been with tenants, but I had previously made it known to Cllr Horrill that I intend to hold a member briefing on Housing this calendar year. This has been delayed due to the General Election and is now scheduled for 8th October.”



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QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Brook

To: The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance
(Cllr Neil Cutler)

“There is frustration on all sides, with the lack of specificity and relevance regarding the current KPI’s that are set by the administration in relation to the strategic objectives of the council. Will the administration agree to an all-party task and finish group be set up to discuss the KPIs and the delivery of contracts to achieve the administrations key objectives to ensure they are monitored and delivered on time and in line with the desired outcomes?”

Reply

“Thank you, Cllr Brook for your question.

The Scrutiny Committee on 6th March asked Cabinet to consider a full review of the full set of KPIs presented in the quarterly monitoring reports. I provided my response at Cabinet on 14th March, which was that the current strategic KPIs were agreed by Cabinet in December 2022 and were tailored to the refreshed Council Plan. It was considered inappropriate to instigate a full review of the KPIs with just one year left of the current Council Plan. However, I agreed to the Scrutiny Committee’s request to include the fly tipping clear-up rate as an additional KPI, and also agreed to consider any other specific variations submitted by members. This was communicated to Members in the Democratic Services update on 15th March. No submissions were received and the Strategic KPIs for 24/25 were adopted unchanged save for the addition of the fly tip clear-up rate, at the Cabinet meeting held on 22nd May

The current Council Plan runs to the end of this municipal year, and work will begin on a new 5-year Council Plan later this year. It would be appropriate to run a full review of Performance Indicators in parallel with the development of the new Council Plan, to ensure that we have a robust and relevant set of indicators to monitor the progress of the new plan. I am happy to discuss with you, as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, the process for doing this.”



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QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Miller

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

“When will the council administration listen to residents and businesses about the impact of parking charges at weekends and evenings? They are driving customers away from the city and thus impacting the viability of businesses and social and leisure activities.”

Reply

“As promised when we introduced evening charges and changed Sunday charges to match the rest of the week we continue to monitor the vitality of the town centre and will keep parking charges under review.

Free car parking remains available on Sundays and in the evenings a short walk from the town centre and for the rest of the week we have kept down charges for Park and Ride and Park and Walk car parks. For those with a blue badge parking is free at all times in our Pay and Display car parks including those in the central parking area.

The facts are clear, the latest independent figures provided by Winchester BID show that despite the wet spring footfall is up 5.5% in the year to May on the same period last year with May footfall up 8.5%.

For times we don't charge we don't have figures on the number of those parking in the park and walk car parks but as a resident of the town who regularly travels through Worthy Lane car park, I have seen much higher use in the evenings and on Sundays and I am hearing the same with respect to Chesil car park. The encouragement of edge of town parking rather than central car parks is a key part of the Winchester Movement Strategy. As a Council we agreed to take action to improve air quality and reduce traffic in the town centre and are seeing the behaviour change that is needed to make that happen without a drop in town centre footfall.

The principal parking issue currently being raised with me as the cabinet member responsible for transport by businesses is the difficulty for our small businesses and other organisations receiving deliveries and drop-offs caused

by heavy handed on-street parking enforcement we are seeing from the County Council.”



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QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Cunningham

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

“What is the cut-off date for the decision to be made about buying carbon credits, in order not to miss the 2024 target on carbon neutrality?”

Reply

“The Winchester City Council Offsetting Policy agreed in 2022 makes the purchase of carbon credits an option for the Council and supporting the generation of local carbon credits is a pathway in the current carbon neutrality action plan for achieving carbon neutrality. However, no decision has been or needs to be made about the purchase of carbon credits.

The Council has been making excellent progress towards the 2024 carbon neutrality target and we maintain the goal of achieving carbon neutrality without the use of external carbon credits. Consultants Arcadian have been commissioned to investigate how we can increase carbon sequestration on City Council land and we look forward to their report.”



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QUESTION 12

From: Councillor Lee (2)

To: The Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management (Cllr Martin Tod)

“Green Economy Development and Sustainable Prosperity in Winchester district.

Our neighbouring M3 & Solent Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are now being integrated into local authorities. M3 LEP into Hampshire and Surrey County Council. This split seems to be unhelpful at a pressing time for best transboundary coordination for sustainable economic development. It is hard to identify many disadvantages of the previous arrangements for local economic development following the abolished Southeast Regional Development Agency (SEEDA). Moving to even more hyper local arrangements at a critical time for accelerating joined-up green business transition and development seems unhelpful.

What steps are being taken to ensure this fragmentation of LEP processes/governance will not be allowed to undermine Winchester District's greener faster economic development and well-being during the current economic, climate and nature crises?”

Reply

“As announced at the beginning of the meeting, I am one of the three district leaders represented on Hampshire’s Prosperity Partnership Board – and raised the issue of ensuring strong collaboration with Hampshire’s neighbours at every meeting of the shadow board before the formal board’s establishment and have raised it at every meeting we have held since.

Similarly I have raised the question with the Leaders of both Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council. I’ve also been working closely with the Leaders of Hampshire and Test Valley to see how we can find a way forward.

If it’s not possible to create a single organization, one option I have proposed is exchanging board members or putting observers on each other’s boards.

The previous LEP arrangements were by no means perfect. Winchester was required to choose between the Enterprise M3 LEP and the Solent LEP – and while we made the right choice in partnering with the EM3 LEP, the tight linkage of our economy with the Solent as well as areas to the north meant this also wasn't a perfect solution.

I have seen a copy of the letter which the Deputy Prime Minister wrote to upper tier authorities and unitaries earlier today – and it is likely that there are going to be further changes to the arrangements for economic development. I will report back to council as discussions develop.”