



COUNCIL MEETING – 9th July 2025

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	Warwick
2	Murphy
3	Horrill
4	Laming
5	Lee
6	Williams
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QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Warwick

To: Councillor Cramoysan (Cabinet Member for Recycling & Public Protection)

How many vehicles are licensed under the WCC Taxi (Hackney Carriage and Private Hire) and how many of these are ultra-low emission vehicles?

Reply

Councillor Warwick, thank you for your questions:

First, for the benefit of those who are not car emission experts the Vehicle Certification Agency currently defines ULEV's as any vehicle that emits less than 75 grams of CO₂ per kilometer (g/km) from the tail pipe. ULEV is not a metric that regulation requires the Council to track, nor have we tracked it for local policy reasons.

However, we do track Battery EV's which are ULEV, and Hybrid vehicles, some of which could be ULEV and some just above ULEV level. The remainder of vehicles are now all the lower emission euro 6.

Currently, we have 236 cars licensed vehicles of which 83 are Hackney Carriages and 153 are Private Hire. Of the total 82 – or 35% - are Hybrid or Battery Electric. The remaining 154 or 65% are the lower emission euro 6 petrol or diesel.



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QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Murphy

To: Councillor Thompson (Cabinet Member for Business & Culture)

This year we are celebrating 250 years since the birth of Jane Austen and are experiencing increased numbers of visitors in our City and district. While anyone living here will be aware of tourists being attracted to our District, both from within the UK and from abroad, the size of the contribution to our communities is much less visible. Can the Cabinet member tell us how tourism contributes to the local economy and the role it plays across our district?

Reply

Thank you for your question. I agree we are experiencing large numbers of visitors across our district in celebration of the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen. We are now halfway through the year but, even so, we have a number of exciting events to look forward to - a Regency Ball at the Great Hall, a Regency fashion show and the unveiling of a new statue in the Cathedral Close are just some of the events coming up.

Across our district we have been achieving phenomenal results for visitor numbers and spend and I think we sometimes forget that tourism plays a major part in the economic success of our district.

Over 8 million people visit the district every year, spending over £370 million in the local area. They are supporting over 5,760 jobs for local residents and those living nearby.

Our tourism sector is the second largest employer in the district making it one of Winchester's largest and most valuable industries.

Our tourism product ranges from our heritage city and beautiful rural attractions; themed trails and walks; outdoor activities to enjoy in unspoilt countryside; high quality local food and drink; a diverse range of accommodation, independent and boutique shopping and a thriving arts and cultural scene across the district.

Building on this and working with HCC, Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils, we have just gained Local Visitor Economy Partnership accreditation from VisitEngland. This will be a great opportunity to grow the district's visitor economy, attract new investment, create jobs and showcase the rich experiences our area has to offer.



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QUESTION 3

From: Councillor Horrill

To: Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Place & Local Plan)

On the 16th of April I sent an email to the portfolio holder for the Local Plan raising several questions about the Micheldever New Town. This email was never answered.

Can I therefore ask the portfolio holder to address the question I raised about the administration's position regarding the Popham proposal in the Reg 18 local plan consultation in Basingstoke & Deane.

Reply

Basingstoke and Deane has not started their Regulation 18 consultation. The Local Development Scheme for Basingstoke and Deane agreed in February 2025 indicates that this will not start before Autumn/Winter 2025.

We were opposed to the inclusion of Popham Airfield during their previous Regulation 18 consultation – and while, of course, we can't prejudge our response if the proposal has been significantly changed, if they submit the previous proposal, we would expect to do so again.

In answer to the part of your question about whether I would be open to discussing any draft reply with ward members, I would be more than happy to do so.

<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/LDS>



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QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Laming

To: Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Place & Local Plan)

While we are all pleased to see that the council is strengthening the Enforcement team, and enabling them to take actions as necessary, my residents are very concerned with cases whose resolutions have been long overdue.

One case, in particular, has been ongoing for twelve years. It concerns a building which was started without planning permission as it had lapsed. Since then we have had three retrospective applications which were all refused: and three inspectors' reports, each of which have upheld the council's position, but no outcome has yet been achieved.

Twelve months ago we had a meeting with all of the ward councillors, yourself and a senior officer, where we asked that the Council have a plan in place should the owner not comply with the inspector's report. This should have happened in November.

Here we are eight months later and, as yet, there has been no action to resolve the problem.

Our residents need an outcome. They are left with a building about which it has been said that it is better suited to an airfield than a residential road. No fewer than three inspectors concur with that statement.

Reply

Cllr Laming and I share our deep disappointment at the Inspector's decision. To overturn the previous Inspectors reports that this building was akin to an airport is devastating.

It was especially disappointing to read that the Inspector does not support removal of permitted development rights!! Or that building should have a completion deadline.

The only positive from the report is that conditions set will require the applicant to continue a dialogue on certain matters

We will be seeking advice as to whether we can challenge this Inspector's report.



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QUESTION 5

From: Councillor Lee

To: Councillor Tod (Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration)

Winchester City Council is one of 12 councils working on proposals for new Unitary Authorities. Residents are now being asked for feedback through an online survey and drop-in sessions. However, the questions on priorities are limited and neither residents nor councillors have been shown the data that underpins the three options.

Will the data that underpins the proposed options be made available to residents and councillors?

Reply

I sent Councillor Lee the full 129 page data set used to decide on the options where we would undertake further research on May 14th at 4.46pm ahead of the council leaders' options appraisal workshop on Monday May 19th.

This has since been further supplemented by a further 57 pages of data evaluating the split options in more detail which was used for the meeting on Tuesday that I referenced earlier in the meeting. I do not intend to require that residents are asked to read all 186 pages of material before completing the survey.

Importantly, also, the purpose of the questionnaire is not to seek residents' views on the data that led to the three options under consideration being chosen – but to understand their views on the wider issues of reorganization and our proposals themselves.

We're not asking the public to mark our homework. We're asking them what matters to them. This process is already too technocratic. The goal is to make it more human.

Does that mean that we won't be sharing a data-based case for the preferred option that this council is proposing to submit at the end of the process? Of course we will. It will build on the earlier data and the results of this survey. And this will include analysis of the options that we have chosen not to follow.

Once all the cases have been submitted, the Government will also run its own consultation on the different cases put forward by the different councils in Hampshire – where each option will be laid out and people will have a chance to respond.

But there is no intention to share publicly every single working paper that has been used by Chief Executives and Leaders to get us to this point. Some of them have been superseded. It is too late for them to be shared consistently across the entire county to ensure that the data set for any survey is consistent for every area. And it would add complexity and time to a process that is already too complicated and where there is no more time.



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QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Williams

To: Councillor Becker (Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities)

Can the Cabinet Member please update residents and myself on the progress of refurbishing the public toilets in Bishop's Waltham?

Reply

Following the refurbishment of Market Lane, Abbey Gardens and Chesil Street Multi-storey car park, the Bishops Waltham toilets are the latest set of Winchester City Council public toilets to be improved as part of our ongoing programme of work to implement the Public Toilets Improvement Strategy. The works to improve the Bishops Waltham public toilets commenced externally on 23rd June 2025, comprising roof repairs, replacement guttering, and external decorations. Internal works were paused at the request of the Parish Council due to the KidsTreat event which took place over the weekend of 5th-7th July (which was also supported by this Council). The internal works recommenced yesterday (8th July) and are expected to continue for the next six weeks – giving Bishops Waltham a much-improved set of public toilets.



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QUESTION 7

From: Councillor Godfrey

To: Councillor Learney (Cabinet Member for Climate & Nature Emergency)

I am increasingly concerned by the mounting pressure on local businesses of multiple cost increases on top of the underlying cash flow pressures associated with falling consumer confidence - down 5.4% last month. Local businesses are feeling the pressure with rising National Insurance costs, reduced business rates relief along with a 4% decrease in footfall in Winchester over Q1 compared to last year, in contrast to a national rise in footfall of 2% over the same period.

The Q1 BID report specifically refers to parking being an issue and suggests extension to park and ride capacity. This administration could and should relax early evening parking charges and increase the park and ride capacity - two things squarely in their power to protect Winchester's economy. Will you act now before it's too late?

Reply

We continually monitor footfall and the use of our car parks to balance keeping the town thriving with reducing City Centre congestion and pollution. The latest three months of publicly available BID statistics show a 2.5% year on year increase in footfall compared to a national increase of 2%.

Our own latest figures show an annual increase in use of 2% in the central car parks, 9% in the park and walk car parks and 5% in Park and Ride. We have over 1200 free evening and Sunday parking spaces in our Park and walk car parks which are being very well used and over 7,500 visitors per month are taking advantage of the free hour available in those car parks during the day. This shows our strategy encouraging visitors to come to the City, but if they come by car to park outside the centre is succeeding.

We are working to introduce park and ride to the north of the City at St John Moore's Barracks and at Kings Barton, With the opening of the Barfield Phase 2 car park, the park and rides remain both well used and well within their capacities on a day-to-day basis outside the Christmas peak.

Unfortunately, the complaint by businesses around parking referred to in the BID report of aggressive and over officious on-street parking wardens making

deliveries and pick-ups in the City Centre difficult is now out of our control but I am happy to make representations to the County Council about the problems this is causing for businesses.



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QUESTION 8

From: Councillor Latham

To: Councillor Learney (Cabinet Member for Climate & Nature Emergency)

I offer my congratulations to the Portfolio Holder, and indeed the entire Council, for the recent announcement by Climate Emergency UK that Winchester City Council is the best performing District Council in the country for action on climate change.

Drilling into the details though, whilst we receive the highest marks in the 'Buildings & Heating' and 'Planning & Land Use' categories, our lowest score - and in fact the only category where we score below the national average - is for 'Waste Reduction & Food'. In the interest of continuing with our goal to Go Greener, Faster can I ask what we will be doing to improve our score still further in this category?

Reply

Thank you Councillor Latham, It is very gratifying to see the hard work of staff across the Council in response to the greener, faster agenda set by members recognised in this way.

The principal reason we scored poorly in this section is our recycling system. While Winchester is one of the top performing waste recycling authorities in Hampshire, Hampshire as a whole has gone from a leader in recycling to one with an aging disposal infrastructure which cannot deal with the range of recycling available in many other areas.

The introduction of weekly food waste recycling this Autumn will make a significant impact on our performance – improving our service to residents, our recycling rate and the districts carbon footprint.

Reducing the amount of residual waste further however will have to await Hampshire County Councils construction of a new materials recycling facility which was granted planning permission in 2022 but has since been beset by indecisiveness. This is now not due to be operational until the end of 2027 at the earliest. Despite this, this Council is already preparing to implement the new system which will include the recycling of plastic pots, tubs and trays at the earliest opportunity.



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QUESTION 9

From: Councillor Cunningham

To: Councillors Tod (Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration) and Becker (Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities)

In recent presentations on Station Approach and River Park Leisure Centre there has been little or no regard to the fact that these are assets of the entire Winchester district.

It seems that the consultations on both do not seem to mention getting value for money for the whole district from these sites.

Like all consultations you only get answers to the questions that are asked. How are the views of the whole district being taken into account in these consultations?

Reply

It's always worth reading the cabinet papers that sit behind any presentation and these are all crystal clear on the importance of considering all redevelopment opportunities are considered within the context of TC25 and potential budget deficit that we face in 2028. As the most recent paper on RPLC states:

The council is facing a significant budget deficit by 2028, and as part of the Transformational Challenge 2025 (TC25) 'Asset Challenge' workstream, it is critical that all redevelopment opportunities are considered within this context and only those that are affordable and financially sustainable are approved.

In addition, on Station Approach, the Strategic Outline Business Case agreed in July 2023 as a condition for proceeding to master-planning made it clear that the next stage in the process – the Outline Business Case – was required to explore the affordability and funding requirements of scheme options alongside the potential economic benefits; commercial viability; strategic fit and deliverability.

But it's not just about money. It's important also to remember that, in both cases, we expect any redevelopment to deliver tangible benefits to people who live outside the city area – the Station Area is heavily used by people coming into the city from the rest of the district – and wider beyond – and, similarly, we expect any new use of the RPLC site to provide direct benefits for people outside the city as well.



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QUESTION 10

From: Councillor Lee

To: Councillor Tod (Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration)

There appears to be no comprehensive assessment of the carbon, biodiversity, or wider sustainability considerations and impacts in the Local Government Reorganisation options. Relying on general Net Zero or Nature duties/impacts later is not enough, as it will be too late to influence the structural choices now being made.

Will the Council press for a full environmental impact assessment of the options before any final option is chosen, to ensure climate, nature and sustainability concerns properly shape the critical decision?

Reply

It's a top priority for the council to fully integrate environmental considerations into all its work, but unfortunately this is one of the rare situations where government policy means that we are unable to do so. The Government has set the criteria which are to be used to assess different Local Government Reorganisation options and these do not include climate, nature and sustainability. They are bound by the criteria that they have set and so are we.

And – as is sadly the way - if we don't answer the government's exam questions, we will fail the government's exam.

It is also the case that the extremely tight deadlines and limited resources available mean that there is now no time or resource to do so before the deadline.

I don't know the full basis for their reasoning, but I suspect it is likely to be because they wouldn't inherently expect huge differences between the various options, since the policies adopted by successor councils – which will all be sovereign bodies and not automatically bound by previous councils – will have far greater effect than any decision about the footprint and scope of the unitary councils in Hampshire.

In the work for a new Combined Authority, environmental considerations *can* be included and Winchester is the lead district council on that work with the upper tier authorities.

Aside from our work to influence the new combined authority, there are opportunities for us to set some policies now that will bind our successors until such time as they

produce their own policies to supersede it – most notably via the Local Plan. I explained our approach to embedding our policy priorities – including on carbon, biodiversity and sustainability - at Full Council in March and we will continue to work on that basis where possible.



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QUESTION 11

From: Councillor Laming

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

Hampshire County Council (HCC) have recently sent out a consultation about the Oliver's Battery Primary School catchment area. It is stated that HCC is looking to extend it because of the likely increase in demand as a result of proposed development in the area. This proposed development mentioned is not included as an allocation within the local plan

Is the Cabinet member aware of this and would she be able to challenge HCC's basis for the consultation?

Reply

Winchester City Council makes it clear that that South Winchester Golf Course is not included in its current Local Plan or the future Local Plan 2040.

I am grateful to Cllr Laming for making me aware of this consultation.

Yes, I have challenged HCC's basis for the consultation about Olivers Battery School.

I believe it sets a dangerous precedent and sends out a misleading message to residents and parents.

WCC has not asked for this information for this specific site. We know that HCC Highways has had pre-application conversations with the applicant.

I have written to the County Council and received a response.

I have now challenged that response.

HCC has agreed that they will conduct an internal review of their processes and our officers have offered to support them in that work.

I am very surprised that the County Councillor for that area, who is also the Deputy Leader at HCC, wasn't aware of the decision to go out to consultation on this matter, especially knowing the confusion and consternation this would create in her division at this time.

Changing the catchment of one school is a serious matter and may risk the viability of another school.



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QUESTION 12

From: Councillor Godfrey

To: Councillor Learney (Cabinet Member for Climate and Nature Emergency)

What steps have been taken to ensure that all solar panels, battery storage and associated infrastructure for installation on council properties are supplied from ethical sources?

Reply

All procurement is undertaken under our sustainable procurement policy which focuses on integrating environmental and social considerations into our purchasing decisions, aiming to improve the efficiency of our commercial spend while delivering positive social and environmental outcomes.

This includes guidance that “all contractors and subcontractors must operate in an ethical and environmentally sound way. As a minimum requirement the contractor must adhere rigorously to all relevant human rights, equality, labour, social values and environmental laws.”

As required by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero the solar panel retrofit program is governed by Public Available Specification 2035 and the supplier will be MCS accredited.



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QUESTION 13

From: Councillor Lee

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

Council inspectors and private Approved Inspectors both certify building work, but Council inspectors are valued for their local knowledge, which usefully supports our residents, small builders, and our environmental standards. Local builders have raised concerns to me that non-reputable builders bypass standards, risking poor-quality and unsustainable construction.

What is the breakdown of building projects in the District using Council inspectors versus private Approved Inspectors, the problems identified with private inspections, and type/number of remediation actions Council has taken to uphold standards, support reputable builders and residents in delivering high-quality, sustainable construction?

Reply

Cllr Lee, you have asked several questions rather than one, but I'll reply briefly to the points you make as I think they will be of interest to all councillors. This is a bit acronym heavy, so please listen carefully!

WCC handle 62% of the work.

Private and commercial companies, called Registered Building Control Approvers, RBCA's handle the 38% remainder.

WCC surveyors work closely with local builders to ensure building standards are maintained in accordance with legal requirements, which includes building standards.

WCC is a member of LABC (local authority building control) who offer professional guidance and support to the LA sector.

We do not oversee RBCA's who work autonomously and are accountable to the Building Safety Regulator the BSR.

The RBCA's *not* WCC are themselves legally responsible for delivering to the same standards.

If a member of the public complains about a private inspection, they do so to the BSR

WCC has no role in that.

The only time that occasionally, WCC is called upon to pick up the work of the RBCA's work is where they have gone bankrupt or are unable to deliver on the work they have taken on. These are called reversions.