



## **COUNCIL MEETING – 14 January 2026**

### **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.

	<b>From Cllr:</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Warwick</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Lee</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Horrill</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Bennett</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Cunningham</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Tippett-Cooper</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Bolton</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Chamberlain</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Langford-Smith</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Morris</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Godfrey</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Batho</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Lee (2)</b>



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**Question under Council Procedure Rule 19.1**

**QUESTION 1**

From: Councillor Warwick

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

What assessment has been made of the deliverability of a mixed-use scheme at Bushfield Camp within the context of the current economic climate and the timeframe of the emerging local plan?



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**QUESTION 2**

From: Councillor Lee

To: Councillor Becker (Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities)

The withdrawal of the UK telecommunication landline (PSTN) and the shift to digital voice services have exposed significant weaknesses in emergency communications during prolonged power outages, particularly in rural settlements. Broadband-based VoIP remains dependent on powered networks and short-duration household back-up. Patchy or non-existent 4G/5G coverage limits alternative telecom access inc. to emergency SMS. In practice, all these services rely on powered networks, which are unlikely to be available during area-wide outages.

Satellite services (including LEO) and battery-powered radios offer partial alternatives, but the fundamental vulnerability remains - the loss of local power to all ground-based equipment during extended outages. There is of course an affordability issue for these alternatives.

Community resilience hubs could help alleviate some community anxiety, but only if equipped with suitable communications equipment, resilient local power back-up, and clear arrangements to support households—particularly vulnerable residents and those in telecoms “not-spot” areas. No access to blue light services or contacting family is the key anxiety.

While councils can support parish telecoms resilience planning, sustainable solutions may require some dedicated funding and technical expertise that most parishes do not have. Member briefings alone will not address the telecommunication resilience challenges.

**Can the Council prioritize a practical way forward for parishes to establish emergency telecommunications resilience measures for extended power outages especially in high-risk telecoms ‘not-spot’ areas for residents?**

Of course, statutory multi-agency partnership responses to major emergencies and civil contingencies would also of course benefit from solutions that can be delivered for the above.

<sup>1</sup> Telecommunications ‘not-spot’ areas = where mobile and/or broadband coverage is poor or absent

<sup>1</sup> [Pioneering place-sensitive nature recovery at the hyper-local scale: a multi-tier, multi-directional governance approach](#)



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**QUESTION 3**

From: Councillor Horrill

To: Councillor Reach (Cabinet Member for Good Homes)

As of December, there were more than 1600 residents on our Hampshire Home Choice register. Winchester is one of the most expensive places to live with an average house purchase price of £593,926 (source: Rightmove, 2024). Our tenants are supportive of building new council properties.

Can the portfolio holder therefore say why the Lib Dems have walked away completely from a commitment to build new Council homes from 2032?



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**QUESTION 4**

From: Councillor Bennett

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

The Aquind Interconnector scheme has been in limbo since a judicial review overturned the previous government's refusal of planning permission.

The scheme would cause considerable disruption to the residents of Denmead Ward and the surrounding area.

What is the council's view on the scheme and what action can the council take to encourage a final decision to be taken as soon as possible?



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**QUESTION 5**

From: Councillor Cunningham

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

What submission is WCC making during the current public consultation on the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Local Plan Draft Spatial Strategy, particularly in relation to the proposal to allocate land for a new town of 4,250 new homes on Popham Airfield and its impact on Micheldever railway station, the settlement and infrastructure?



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**QUESTION 6**

From: Councillor Tippet-Cooper

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

Under the Liberal Democrats, Winchester City Council's has earned recognition as one of the top-rated councils for climate action. Can the Cabinet Member update Council on the impact on the Council's overall recycling performance as a result of the implementation of food waste collection across the district?



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**QUESTION 7**

From: Councillor Bolton

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

Will Councillor Tod please explain why he and Cabinet decided to only announce the suspension of the Station Approach project in the November scrutiny papers without any explanation or other public announcements on such an important project?





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**QUESTION 8**

From: Councillor Chamberlain

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

With work already underway on the next Local Plan (2040 onwards), what steps will the City Council be taking to ensure that a situation such as the one with the proposed development at Southwick Road and School Road, Wickham, does not occur again - specifically that our residents are better informed if we (WCC) are simultaneously i) preparing to argue against the development at appeal ii) making offer to the developers to buy affordable homes within the proposed development and iii) negotiating a draft Section 106 with the developer for the proposed development. I ask as there was significant frustration within the Southwick and Wickham Ward when, at the last minute, WCC decided not to defend its decision on the appeal hearing associated with the development - leaving residents little to no time to react and respond ahead of the appeal hearing on the aforementioned development.



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**QUESTION 9**

From: Councillor Langford-Smith

To: Councillor Becker (Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities)

This administration has provision of Public Toilets across the district. These are an important resource for residents and visitors to the area and, for Denmead, are vital to the sustainability of the village centre shops. Can the administration provide assurances that this provision will not be withdrawn if the Parish Council does not take full financial responsibility of the toilets?



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**QUESTION 10**

From: Councillor Morris

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

Given that the social media application known as x and formerly known as twitter has introduced a facility that it is understood has been used to modify photographs of minors into CSAM (child sexual abuse material) can you confirm that it is WCC's policy not to upload or share any photographs of minors to that social media site?



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**QUESTION 11**

From: Councillor Godfrey

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

Following the announcement last month from the MHCLG that the inaugural elections to select a Mayor for the new Hampshire Mayoral Combined Authority would not take place until May 2028, can the Leader kindly inform me what response has been made to the Government by the City Council either directly or with other council leaders in Hampshire?



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**QUESTION 12**

From: Councillor Batho

To: Councillor Reach (Cabinet Member for Good Homes)

Following Winchester City Council's self-referral to the Regulator of Social Housing in January 2025 and the Judgement issued in April 2025 can the Cabinet Member give members an update on progress to address the issues identified?



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#### **QUESTION 13**

From: Councillor Lee

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

Ahead of the Government's March decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, it is widely recognised that reorganization must go beyond an administrative exercise. Experience elsewhere shows new councils can take years to bed in, underlining the need for early preparation ahead of shadow and new authorities.

There is also growing recognition that hyper-local leadership alone is no longer sufficient to address the combined challenges of LGR and an expanding legislative framework. This reflects findings from British Academy and the Institute for Government, which identify systemic weaknesses in parish capacity nationally.

Key risks arise from:

- a shift to larger, more remote unitary authorities with fewer councillors and officers;
- limited parish-level capacity and expertise to meet new requirements such as LNRS, BNG, the Environment Act, NPPF and planning reforms;
- inconsistent national support structures and uncertainty over future governance roles; and
- a widening gap between national environmental ambition and local delivery capability.

Together, these risks disproportionately affect small parishes and weaken community plus environmental resilience. Raising these issues now is not resistance to change, but essential to ensuring the best reforms work for our communities and staff. It is inappropriate to leave all these challenges to shadow and new unitary authorities.

**Can Winchester City Council, alongside its LGR Programme Board, prioritize in early 14 January 2026 the development of additional support mechanisms for Parish Councils to future-proof their governance, strengthen environmental leadership and enhance community resilience for the coming challenges.**

This approach would also help future Shadow Councils and then our Unitary Authority avoid the prolonged bedding in process of previous LGRs supported by strengthened Parish Councils with improved local capability to deliver and work in any new processes.

<sup>1</sup> [Reorganising district councils and local public services - challenges and options](#)