



## COUNCIL MEETING – 2nd June 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>Lee</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Batho</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Laming</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Cook</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Tippett-Cooper</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Lee</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Tippett-Cooper</b>



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### Question under Council Procedure Rule 19.1

#### QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Lee

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

Concerns have been raised [1] regarding alleged inadequacies in Southern Water's consultation on the Hampshire Water Transfer & Water Recycling Project, including the 2021 selection of effluent recycling via Havant Thicket Reservoir and the subsequent transfer of water to Otterbourne Water Treatment Works for treatment to drinking-water standards. It is argued that the project may not have been fully assessed or consulted on in relation to the most sustainable and public health-focused alternatives, potentially raising questions about compliance with statutory consultation and alternatives-appraisal requirements.

*Given the potential impacts on Winchester residents and the environment, will the Council challenge Southern Water over the apparent inadequacies in consultation and alternatives appraisal before the relevant Development Consent Order/Planning deadline for representations and objections?*

Refs:

1. Havant Water Matters- *Inadequacy of Consultation Report - Hampshire Water Transfer Water Recycling Scheme*. Inc in email letter to Leader and Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan - May 2026.
2. Water for Life Hampshire Consultation Brochure 2021
3. Water for Life - Hampshire Consultation Feedback Report, September 2021
4. [Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Project - Project information](#)

#### Reply

Winchester City Council is fully committed to high quality, consistently supplied, potable water for our residents whilst caring for the environment created by our chalk streams. WCC is not the lead authority on this project: it is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project directly managed through Central Government.

As part of the validation of the application, all local authorities are asked if the consultation has satisfied three tests. These can only have simple yes/no answers. We have looked at this carefully. The questions relating to adequacy of consultation.

We were asked whether Southern Water had fulfilled

- S42- the Duty to consult
- S47-carried out consultation of local authorities and the community
- S48-publicised the plan

These were yes/no answers. WCC said yes to all three.

In addition, Southern Water made a statement in October 2025 stating they had reached the 'Adequacy of Consultation' milestone. A targeted consultation with landowners was also carried out in Autumn 2026. The NSIP application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) was submitted to the NSIP website on the 21<sup>st</sup> May. On the 28<sup>th</sup> May, SW sought to make an addition. This has since been added to the NSIP website.

The details have not been published and the Government website explains that the decision whether to accept the application will be published on the 18<sup>th</sup> June. There is an opportunity for any member of the public to participate in the NSIP process. To do this all councillors and residents can register to be 'an interested party'. This gives you the right to comment before and throughout the public inspection of the application. Details are on [www.hampshirewtwrp.co.uk](http://www.hampshirewtwrp.co.uk)

When the application has been validated by the NSIP inspectorate, WCC will put a link to the application on our WCC website for easier access and information for residents. After all, it is not always easy to find this information on the .gov website.



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**QUESTION 2**

From: Councillor Batho

To: Councillor Reach (Cabinet Member for Good Homes)

Recent legislation has significantly improved the protections for renters, with Awabs Law and the Renters Rights Bill. These apply to Winchester City Council social housing and Registered Providers affordable housing. Does this protection extend to residents who are in military supplied accommodation, for example at Sir John Moore Barracks or Worthy Down Camp?

Reply

The Renters Rights Act 2025 does not apply to military accommodation, as military accommodation are tenancies of the crown and not civil tenancies, but the MOD are required to assess serving family accommodation annually and report against the Decent Home Standard.

Awaab's does not legally apply to military/service family accommodation (SFA) but the defence infrastructure organisation (DIO) has committed to voluntarily uphold the same high standards and adjusted their response times for damp and mold to mirror the law.



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**QUESTION 3**

From: Councillor Laming

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

We are all concerned with Phosphates and Nitrates pollution. It is becoming clear that developers are increasingly looking at on site water treatment units. This discharge clean water but still include the nitrates and Phosphates directly into the aquifers which leads to the Pumping station supplying our drinking water or Chalk Streams. This is highly relevant to our county as for example the Popham Development propose this as well as Bushfield Camp.

What action does the council propose to take to safeguard our drinking water and Chalk streams which are internationally recognised.

**Reply**

We are absolutely committed to our chalk streams in Winchester and strongly support the treatment methods which remove most of the nutrients: whether they are done via private or public water treatment means. That is removing nitrogen and phosphorus from the wastewater in the treatment process.

Present legislation states that only development resulting in overnight accommodation requires mitigation, but subject to what can be legally enforced at present, WCC will do everything in our power to ensure that developers satisfy the legal requirements for the whole site.

The two cases to which you refer are current applications and negotiations are ongoing, one is not to be decided within our authority so I cannot comment on these specifically.

We will do everything in our power to ensure that developments mitigate against these nutrients going to ground, then to aquifer or to river.



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#### QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Cook

To: Councillor Cutler (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation)

The increasing use of artificial intelligence in local government presents both significant opportunities and important risks — from improved efficiency and service delivery to challenges around cybersecurity, data protection, governance, energy use and carbon emissions.

What steps has the Council taken to adopt AI technologies responsibly, while assessing and mitigating the associated operational, environmental and security risks?

#### Reply

The Council has adopted a controlled and risk-aware approach to the use of AI, currently focused on approved Generative AI tools such as Microsoft Copilot.

A formal 'GenAI' policy has been adopted, setting out the expectations for safe, ethical use, aligned with our existing data protection and information security frameworks. Staff have all been briefed on the safe use of AI as a tool, with access to Power Automate limited to those who have undergone training

Safety measures such as educating staff not to use, for example, ChatGPT for council business and only using the enterprise version of Copilot, which is integrated with our Microsoft 365 environment, have been communicated.

The environmental impact of AI usage is well documented. Microsoft have committed to being carbon negative, water neutral, and zero waste by 2030, as part of their wider corporate commitment to sustainability; we continue to monitor their performance towards achieving this.

All new AI tools are subject to established governance and approval processes, including IT Security and Data Protection Officer (DPO) review. Staff have received training and reference materials to support safe use are available on the intranet.

These measures ensure operational, security, and compliance risks are managed, while environmental impacts are considered as part of the council's broader sustainability commitments.



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**QUESTION 5**

From: Councillor Tippett-Cooper

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

Can the council provide an update on the situation with the electrics at River Park that are required to get the toilets and skatepark lights working again?

Reply

*(Response from Councillor Becker - Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities)*

As you know, high-voltage cabling was vandalized and stolen from the SSEN substation that served the former leisure centre, so SSEN disconnected it for safety reasons. This vandalism affected the street lighting at River Park, which has not worked since this damage took place – and also affects the toilet block and skate park.

On our behalf, Cardo has installed new cabling to connect the skate park lights, car park lighting and pay machines and toilet block which is now completely separate from the old SSEN substation at the rear of the former leisure centre.

SSEN now need to come out and provide the new supply. Cardo sent a request to SSEN on 30<sup>th</sup> April and SSEN said they would decide on the level of supply and come out by the 20<sup>th</sup> May but they still have not done so.

I have been corresponding with them regularly, as I know you have too (and the Leader), expressing frustration at the length of time this is taking without resolution and seeking a solution as soon as possible. I have written again and spoken to SSEN today and will continue to do so until the lights are back on. The toilets have been cleaned and supplied with toilet roll and will be open as soon as the power is restored.



## COUNCIL MEETING – 2nd June 2026

### Question under Council Procedure Rule 19.1

#### QUESTION 6

From: Councillor Lee

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

Winchester City Council operates a refuse and food-waste collection fleet largely fuelled by Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), alongside one electric refuse collection vehicle. Other UK local authorities are already deploying vehicle-mounted ultra-thin solar mat technology to reduce fuel consumption, emissions, onboard power demand and maintenance costs, while improving operational efficiency.

Even with an HVO-fuelled fleet, there appear to be clear benefits. Indicative evidence suggests relatively low installation costs, short payback periods, annual savings of c.£14,000–£33,000, and associated carbon reductions, making early investigation a low-regret opportunity aligned with the Council Plans, 'Go Greener Faster' ambitions, future fleet replacement planning, and Local Government Reorganisation considerations.

*Given the operational, financial and carbon-saving benefits already being demonstrated by other UK councils, will the Council undertake an assessment of vehicle-mounted ultra-thin solar mat technology for Winchester's refuse collection fleet, with a view to early implementation if found viable?"*

#### Reply

Thank you for sight of the draft motion a week or two back which you were considering bringing to this council. And for the "collegiate" conversation we had. I always enjoy our discussions about how to do things differently.

And thank you for the opportunity to remind us all that last summer Winchester was acknowledged as one of the top two Councils in the country for Climate action, ahead of all Green Party-led councils. As you know since then we have rolled out Food waste Collections across the whole district while neighbouring councils have failed to meet the timelines and one failed to even order the trucks needed despite government funding being available.

As it turns out, the Warwick Council example cited in the paper is an authority that uses Biffa. We asked officers to liaise informally with Biffa to establish what Biffa have learned about this project and whether the benefits, cost and carbon saving, would be transferable to Winchester.

I had prepared a longer answer to give a bit of insight in public into how we properly and fully consider ideas such as this one versus other opportunities to make an

impact. But mid-afternoon I received a response from officers which caused me to scrap that response. Probably to much relief from our colleagues and officers.

I have been in and around technology products and services & business process improvement for most of my over 35 years private sector career. I doubt anyone would refer to me as a "green intern" when it comes to assessing "back of an envelope" business cases such as in this question and in your draft motion. I've learnt that if 1 in 10 ideas get implemented, you're doing really well. My benchmark for such business cases is that if payback is more than 1 year, it is highly unlikely that it will be strong enough to survive contact with reality. So, I was sceptical, but open to what Biffa had to say.

If I may quote our Corporate Head of Service, "I've just had some feedback from our colleagues locally at BIFFA who have been in contact with the BIFFA team in Warwickshire, who have tested this technology, and measured its effectiveness with detailed figures on mpg. Their view was that in their experience it wasn't an effective solution and provided negligible savings in terms of fuel mileage. Informally, I've heard that the tech vendor who put this together is no longer in business. We have not validated that, but I have no reason to doubt the source.

What this demonstrates is one of the advantages of working with a national partner. A partner who has eyes on possible opportunities to lower their costs, and Carbon impact, and can try things out in one area and will take a hardheaded approach to assessing these before they scale out.



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**QUESTION 7**

From: Councillor Tippett-Cooper

To: Councillor Becker (Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities)

With record breaking temperatures at the end of May last week, it can be assumed that we will also see a further very hot summer as the impacts of climate change hit, are there measures this council can take to help residents affected by very hot temperatures this summer?

Reply

The record-breaking temperatures we saw last week are extremely concerning, particularly to occur so early in the year – another example of the frightening speed at which climate change is becoming apparent. In respect of residents this is an issue that I have asked be discussed at our next Community Buildings Forum (which is taking place on 25 June) and asking guardians of our district's community buildings if they would consider hosting a 'cool space' – similar in nature to the warm spaces we've seen pop up in cold weather. That is, somewhere to go that is relatively cool with cold drinks available.

In respect of our vulnerable residents who sleep rough, we offer outreach support everyday, inclusive of the weekend, where water and suncream is offered and respite is available on the day at Trinity. We also activate our Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) in times of hot weather. We activated it for two days last week and will do so again, as necessary throughout the summer.

If any residents require advice on how to keep their homes cool in summer, our wonderful housing team are happy to provide such advice.