



COUNCIL MEETING – 25 September 2019

Questions by the Public
under Council Procedure Rule 15(1)

QUESTION 1

From: Brian Sowter

To: The Cabinet Member for Environment (Cllr Murphy)

“I would like to add a couple of suggestions which would add to the already good work of reducing traffic in the centre. Park and ride, increasing public transport, clean air days etc. Efforts to promote the use of electric cars however could be increased by the following:

1. Provision of a small number of electric only car spaces in the central car parks in the same way as we have disabled spaces. Charge points are not necessary for this idea which is simply to get the message across that we need to minimise air pollution in the city centre. I think most shoppers would be charging their cars at home. The number needs to be small to start with and could be increased perhaps eventually to 100%.
2. Provision of signage at pollution hot spots asking people to turn off their engines instead of idling.
3. Provision of overnight slow charge points in permit parking areas. This can be done using bollards and lamp posts. 50 such charge points have already been provided in Portsmouth and many more in several London boroughs. The finances of this are not too horrendous particularly as these points produce a revenue stream.

It is essential that there is publicity associated with these actions. I believe that even the majority of motorists do not realise that city air quality is a problem for many of us.”

Reply

“Thank you for helpful suggestions which we will can consider in the wider context of our adopted Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy which was adopted

in January this year. We are currently looking at ways to implement this strategy with a report for Cabinet later this year.

We are also producing a new Car Parking Strategy which could consider some of these issues too, which follows on for the City of Winchester Movement Strategy we developed jointly with Hampshire County Council, which includes actions to reduce city centre traffic thereby cutting emissions and improving air quality.

On-street charging is a challenge which we can look at with our colleagues at the County Council as they are the highway authority responsible for Winchester's roads and footways where charging infrastructure would need to be provided."



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QUESTION 2

From: Dr Mike Warwick-Sanders

To: The Cabinet Member for Environment (Cllr Murphy)

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to ask these questions to the council. I would be most grateful if you could address the following:-

1. Why are all new dwellings in Winchester not required to have a zero lifetime carbon impact? Solar panels, home batteries electric heating/cooling and electric car charging are effectively cost neutral to install at time of development. Heating bills can be in the low 10's of pounds annually for homeowners (not £1000+). Builders and planners do not understand the technology available to heat and power homes sustainably. They build homes in the same way they always have done - seemingly because doing so doesn't affect their business model currently.
2. Why has Winchester Council not applied for funds from central government for on street parking infrastructure? All householders should be able to charge their car overnight even if they do not have an off street parking space. If Winchester City Council has declared a climate emergency but not used the funds available from central government to put charging points in the streets around the city, this could rapidly be remedied. Current charging infrastructure can retract into the pavement when not in use, not inconveniencing pedestrians.”

Reply

“All housing developments in Winchester should meet the policies set out in the adopted Local Plan regarding sustainability which, in turn, have to align with Government policy.

The City Council cannot therefore simply start requiring all new houses in the district to have a zero carbon lifetime impact. If we did this now, and refused

planning permission for homes that fell short of this standard, we would be likely to lose any subsequent appeals, which would be decided by a Government appointed planning inspector, as there would be no policy basis for imposing this requirement at the present time.

However, we are in the process of developing a new Local Plan and, as part of this process, we will be looking at how we can take the climate emergency agenda forward including the sustainability requirements for new housing.

On-street parking infrastructure is usually managed by Hampshire County Council as the highway authority. Providing on-street charging facilities is a challenge but we are happy to work with our County colleagues to explore options for Winchester.

On a broader note the Council is intending to take a report back to Cabinet by the end of the year to say how we are planning to address the Climate Change Emergency Declaration.”



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QUESTION 3

From: Ruth Wardell

To: The Cabinet Member for Environment (Cllr Murphy)

“I would like to ask a question related to where I live. I live at Micheldever Station.

There is currently a proposal that south west trains would like to buy some of the land that is currently a green field site and turn it into a car park. With your wish to improve the Environment and be more green, how is destroying the natural environment which is identified as an area with an important biodiversity logical.

I understand the need for people to be able to park their cars to use the train. But there is already a car park and this is not the solution. Is there really a need for an addition 150 car parking space? I think this should be based on need and not greed. It doesn't make sense to encourage more people to drive their car to the station. I think that a more environmentally solution should be looked at. Such as a bus service. Or parking for car sharing. There are many proven ways to encourage people to reduce there carbon footprint without destroying our environment and replacing it with a car park.

I look forward to hearing your reply on this subject. We need to protect the environment for our children not destroy it.”

Reply

“I am aware that there have been historical issues with railway commuters parking on-street in Micheldever Station which resulted in the Council introducing waiting restrictions to deal with dangerous and inconsiderate parking. However, parking controls alone cannot resolve this issue.

My understanding is that South Western Railway is therefore looking at options to address residual problems associated with on-street parking connected to the use of the station by their customers.

I understand that any parking proposals on land in the vicinity of the station will need planning permission and this will provide the opportunity to consider any scheme in detail, including the local and wider impacts of the development being put forward, in relation to planning policy which seek to protect the environment of the district.”



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QUESTION 4

From: Patrick Davies

To: The Leader of the Council (Cllr Thompson)

“Why was the first meeting of the new Station Approach Open Forum arranged for 16 September, four days AFTER the scheduled Planning Committee at which outline planning permission was being recommended which would settle the size, height, scale and fundamental principles of development and therefore prevent any meaningful public involvement in the future of this area?”

Reply

“Open Forums have been established for each major project to widen participation and transparency around each project and we were keen to get the forums off the ground at the earliest opportunity.

Extensive public consultation had been conducted on the Station Approach project to create the scheme and formal consultation took place as part of the planning process which was the opportunity for planning matters to be considered.”



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QUESTION 5

From: Paul Andersen

To: The Leader (Cllr Thompson)

“Is the Leader of the Council, and any Cabinet Member, willing to explain to the Winchester electorate the reasons for their confidence in the statement below taken from Winchester City Council's documents for the proposed office development of Station Approach?”

‘The Economic Case for the development prepared by Grant Thornton in March 2019, submitted with the outline planning application, sets out that the total benefits generated by the scheme are estimated to be between £199,824,101 and £799,296,404. They estimated that the office space could deliver between 760-1234 direct annual FTE jobs and the retail space could deliver between 18-24 direct annual FTE jobs.’

Reply

“The council has considered the economic case for the Carfax office development in detail, and in particular through the outline business case which was considered by Cabinet (Station Approach) Committee on 25 March 2019.

In addition to earlier work undertaken by the EM3 LEP, Grant Thornton were contracted by the council as expert advisors and undertook considerable analysis work in accordance with HM Treasury Green Book methodologies to enable the council to fully understand the potential economic benefit of the development.”



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QUESTION 6

From: Beccy Read

To: The Cabinet Member for Environment (Cllr Murphy)

“The height of the proposed development on the Carfax site, agreed at the Planning Committee 12th Sept., will trap within Gladstone Street carbon monoxide produced by its air conditioning units and the queues of traffic waiting along the length of the Street for the City Road lights to change. The impact of this will be a significant increase in pollution levels in both Gladstone Street and other neighbouring residential streets.

My question is:

How can the new Lib Dem City Council justify the building of such a monolithic structure on the Carfax site, currently open plan, and the consequent removal of many carbon-consuming mature trees, having put the Climate Emergency firmly at the top of its list of urgent issues?”

Reply

“The nurturing and development of our local economy is a very important part of working towards a carbon neutral district. Focusing employment in more sustainable locations, such as next to a railway station in the city centre, will assist in reducing car journeys, and provide local employment to reduce commuting by residents out of the city. We will be looking to the development industry to come forward with innovative solutions to make the development of Station Approach – Carfax site carbon neutral to both boost our local economy and also lead the way in the development of a carbon neutral economy.

We will be bringing forward our Carbon Action plan by Christmas and I am conscious of the very important role trees play in the management of many air pollutants.”



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QUESTION 7

From: Ian Tait

To: The Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management (Cllr
Learney)

“Has any consideration been given to re-introducing a committee which can deal specifically with matters relating to the Council’s housing stock and New Build Program rather than any relevant items being dealt with through a variety of other committees?”

Reply

“The effective management of the Council’s housing stock and the delivery of new homes remains a key priority for this Council.

I consider it appropriate for key decisions on such important programmes to be taken by Cabinet. In the last two months, reports on a number of new build developments, the cleaning of communal areas, the Preventing Homelessness Strategy and establishing the Housing Company have all been considered by the whole of the Cabinet rather than by only three Cabinet members as was the case last year.

We do intend to introduce decision days for Cabinet members to consider a range of operational and policy recommendations and a specific decision day for housing issues will be arranged shortly. I will ensure TACT is directly involved in the decision day, as it is with decision making through Cabinet and policy review through the Business and Housing Policy Committee.”



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QUESTION 8

From: Bill Bullen

To: The Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing (Cllr Porter)

“Energy Efficiency in Homes

Winchester has a particularly high proportion of homes that have listed status. This presents a considerable constraint on the ability of residents to make their homes more energy efficient. I have recently had a planning application to improve the energy efficiency of my home turned down because it involved taking off plaster from the inside of the walls.

Whilst I understand the desire to maintain our heritage, I think this has to be tempered with ensuring that we have a housing stock fit for purpose in the twenty-first century. I think it is essential to change the guidelines on which planning applications for listed buildings are judged.

If you are serious about becoming carbon neutral, some difficult decisions need to be made, and they need to be made soon.”

Reply

“The Council welcomes proposals by householders wanting to take steps to improve the emergency efficient of their homes. In the case of listed buildings, this will need to be balanced by the Councils obligation to protect the specialist interest of the building.

Historic England and The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings provide guidance on energy efficiency of historic buildings and our team would be happy to continue a dialogue to explore available options.”



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QUESTION 9

From: Iona Maclean

To: The Cabinet Member for Environment (Cllr Murphy)

“Is there scope to introduce community composting schemes, especially for residents without access to a private garden?”

Reply

“We are currently developing our Climate Emergency Action plan and this suggestion can be added to the list of project ideas that have already come forward for consideration on how they might be delivered, evaluated and assessed for cost etc.”



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QUESTION 10

From: Alison Dudgeon

To: The Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing (Cllr Porter)

“Will your new Local Plan ensure that local residents are more important than students? And pending the outcome of the review, will you suspend any further expansions in student accommodation developments? ”

Reply

“National Planning Policy requires local plans to assess their housing need for all the different groups in the community and for these to be reflected in planning policies. National guidance suggests that groups include, but are not limited to: those that require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers etc.

The Council is currently collating the necessary evidence to inform the local plan and this will include any specific housing requirements for all our communities including student provision. It is anticipated that the local plan will include a number of housing related policies that respond to requirements identified such as student accommodation, this will ensure that future proposals and any specific matters will be assessed as part of the planning application process.



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QUESTION 11

From: Rupert Pitt

To: The Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management (Cllr
Learney)

“Winchester City Council says that that it will build right homes in the right places. Good, but I feel there is something profoundly wrong with the housing market. Would not the City Council be better off considering the state of the housing market generally as well as building council houses.

Below is a letter I am just about to send off to the Chronicle which outlines an analysis of the housing market, I hope you can read this to consider reforming the housing market as well as building council houses. They are all interrelated.”

Dear Mr Sutter

There are important areas of our lives involving necessities which are making the rich richer, and the poor poorer.

In the Times Aug 20 this article appeared “House price growth is slowing but buying still beats renting”. To quote

“The monthly cost of paying the interest on a new mortgage is now 62 per cent lower than renting, according to Capital Economics, a research consultancy. It found that the average monthly rent for a property was £859, compared with the £323 average monthly interest on a new mortgage.

In comparison, between 2010 and 2018, the average interest on a mortgage was 55 per cent lower than the average rent. Paying the interest on a mortgage in the 2000s was only 27 per cent cheaper than paying the rent.”

There is something wrong in this. If you are rich enough to buy a house it is cheaper than renting, and you will receive your money back on the sale of the house. However if you cannot afford to buy a house you lose the money you pay in rent. In Winchester the average cost of renting a room is from £400 to £500 a month so you lose approximately £6000 a year. This is grossly unfair on those who are not rich enough to buy a house.

The housing market is not a free market unlike say Computers, cars or clothes where you can usually buy what you can afford. The housing market is a rigged market as supply is limited by planning laws.

What is needed are stable house prices and I believe that Professor Danny Dorling of Oxford University has written a paper showing the prices in Berlin did not rise for 30 years.

There should be a tax on the gain in house prices, it has not been earned, as the seller of the property has not earned this money, he has relied on the purchaser borrowing more money. There is already a tax to pay on the gain in share prices, why not on property?

The money raised should be spent on social housing so those who are not rich enough to buy a house do not lose their earnings in paying rent.

Reply

“As well as building new council houses, the City Council is actively exploring ways to assist those residents who are struggling to access the housing market locally.

We are establishing a wholly owned Housing Company which will focus on “sub market” and intermediate housing options and improving the rented offer in Winchester.

We are also piloting innovative approaches to shared ownership through the Council’s “Partnered Home Purchase” initiative which provides direct help to young people looking to buy their first home in the Winchester district.

Unfortunately, reforming the housing markets through measures as set out in your letter is beyond the control of the City Council and would represent a fundamental change in national housing policy.”



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QUESTION 12

From: Elizabeth Harrison

To: The Cabinet Member for Environment (Cllr Murphy)

“As part of your Greenest campaign, please can you consider banning the use of LEAF BLOWERS? They blow leaves about into piles but the wind does this. Leaf gathering is an excellent form of exercise.... & can even be fun if done with others! Finally they use unnecessary energy whether rechargeable electric (originally from fossil fuel) or directly fossil-fuel powered.

For larger amounts of leaves, I believe that the council uses vacuum-bag type leaf-gatherers (e.g. Billy Goat) which at least end up with the product achieved.”

Reply

“We appreciate any efforts residents make to keep our district tidy and although I appreciate your point about leaf blowers this is not something we could insist on.

As you point out, during leaf fall, we do make efforts to collect leaves. Some unfortunately are so contaminated with litter that they cannot be composted but where possible we aim to compost those leaves. We do use mechanical blowers due to the high volumes involved but will consider whether electric powered models are available.



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QUESTION 13

From: Jaimie Mills

To: The Cabinet Member for Environment (Cllr Murphy)

“I live in Teg Down and am often caught in the terrible traffic around Stockbridge Rd and Chilbolton Avenue. I am still somewhat surprised that the planned changes to Andover Rd were signed off, the partial closure/diversion through the new estate and also the reduction of the speed limit on that diversion to 20 mph (if I have understood the proposals correctly). I do not understand why one of the major arteries in and out of the City will be purposefully changed to create a bottle neck. The traffic along that road is already horrific and this will just make it worse. Especially given the crazy number of houses being built in Barton Farm, as this will mean an influx of an equal amount of new cars in the area (2,000 plus maybe)?

What I suspect may happen is it will just encourage more people to clog up the Stockbridge Road route, as people try to bypass the changes and head out to the A34 via Littleton/Harestock. So rather than improving traffic in and out of the City, it will inevitably be made worse.

I do understand the idea of the closure is to encourage the people of Barton Farm to integrate and be part of Harestock and Fulflood. Encourage people to walk their children to school etc but I think it is poorly considered. The distance is just a little too far, especially given the weather in the UK for half of the year. We have friends in Barton Farm and they drive most everywhere, with no plans to change.

I appreciate the plan is to build another out of town car park/bus service there but I would suggest that most people in this day and age live such a rushed life they will inevitably prefer to drive. Myself as an example, on a Tuesday and Friday I drop my children at school (Western) and then have to get into Basingstoke for 9:30. I would love to be able to walk them to school, walk home and then make it into work but it is simply not possible.

Then also imagine my horror, reading the plans to add another huge influx of housing, after the closure of the nearby army base, and all the additional traffic that will bring too. I appreciate we need more housing but it needs to be more considered and the infrastructure improved alongside of it. If this is not possible, doesn't that suggest the number and scale of housing is not appropriate – this type of building approach will kill what makes Winchester such a lovely place to live.

Apologies if I rambled slightly, getting to the point, what is the chance of the road closure being reflected on? Could a bridge be a better solution? Is it really necessary to slow/restrict traffic out of a major road?"

Reply

"Kings Barton was carefully planned to allow the residents of Winchester's newest suburb to easily use the services and facilities of the city. The existing Andover Road creates a barrier to this and the creation of a new route helps to make greater integration possible. This approach does not assume that car use should be the defining principle of new development as encouraging people to shift away from using their cars, especially for short journeys, is a vital part of our approach to reducing carbon emissions across the district.

The new road through Kings Barton has been designed and approved to carry the type and volume of traffic which currently uses the Andover Road. Occasions when the road is overwhelmed by traffic diverting off the A34 to avoid traffic queues caused by accidents or breakdowns on the roads around Winchester will still arise – but these are not caused by the Andover Road as it is now, and they will not be caused by the amended layout.

As we progress the implementation of the Movement Strategy, the City and County Councils will keep the operation of the Andover Road as a live issue and consider its role and use to best serve the needs of the city. The new Local Plan on which the Council is about to start work will address the issue of additional development needs in the district and how they relate to the infrastructure we need to serve them."



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QUESTION 14

From: Steve Pagani

To: The Cabinet Member for Environment (Cllr Murphy)

“Mine is simply on recycling. We in Winchester seem to recycle far less than other parts of the country. For example, our friends who visit from North Wales -- a far less affluent area -- are amazed that we cannot recycle yoghurt containers, and Tetrapak juice or milk cartons, among other things.

Can we make some more progress on this please -- time is of the essence.”

Reply

“I can not agree more and we have introduced kerbside glass collection with our new waste collection service. We are part of a county wide scheme ‘Project Integra’ which provides sustainable and cost effective disposal for a range of recyclables. But I am sure there is more we can do and I will be looking at all possible options for our new contract.”



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QUESTION 15

From: Lesley Cranham

To: The Cabinet Member for Local Economy (Cllr Weir)

“I would comment that Winchester is just managing to look well tenanted shop wise. It would be crazy to introduce any further retail premises, as empty shops would make the city look depressing like so many other cathedral towns appear these days.

Building residential property would make sense.”

Reply

“The Supplementary Planning Document is at the centre of our ambitions for regeneration in central Winchester.

We aim to deliver a vibrant, mixed use scheme and one of the objectives in the SPD is Housing for all so we are looking at all options for residential development on the site.

The intention is very much for this new quarter to complement our High Street and not detract from it.”



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QUESTION 16

From: Don West

To: The Cabinet Member for Environment (Cllr Murphy)

“What plans does the council have to make the city cycle friendly?”

Reply

“I think that there is potential to make Winchester a more attractive place for cyclists and this was recognised in the City of Winchester Movement Strategy which was joint piece of work undertaken by the City and County Council working together.

One of the actions in the strategy is therefore to promote sustainable modes of transport by producing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan which will identify a prioritised list of improvements for those travelling on foot or using their bike.

We will be liaising with County colleagues to take forward this element of the strategy over the coming months.”



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QUESTION 17

From: Gordon and Julia Clyne

To: The Cabinet Member for Sport Leisure and Communities (Cllr Prince)
and Built Environment and Wellbeing (Cllr Porter) and Environment
(Cllr Murphy)

- “1. Please do not close the river park leisure centre when the new one at Bar end opens. There is more than enough demand for both.
2. Please allow solar panels on grade 2 listed buildings especially if they can not be seen from the ground (e.g. princess court at the end of St peter street) allowing a case by case basis is a good idea, not a blanket ban.
3. The weeds on city centre streets are making the city look shoddy, especially parchment st, upper brook st, middlebrook st, and around friars gate, (understand it is to be renewed but when!!)
4. Do we have enough police on the streets?, especially late at night when the late clubs spill out and the drunks kick over bins and basically know they can break things for fun at that time of night.
5. Drugs and begging. We all know the usual suspects here begging on the streets, and then using their mobile phones to arrange drug deals. As a tourist destination, Winchester needs to do better to police the spots in town like the passage from the butter cross to the cathedral, the wall between Raymond Blancs and the discovery centre, and a few other choice places.
6. Loose paving stones. All over the city there are loose, cracked and wobbly trip hazards especially inside the one way system area, and many of the curbs at some of the tight turns like the left turn at the top of St george Street, and the right turn from jewry st into north walls where heavy trucks have minced the pavements are a menace to our visitors.”

Reply

1. "It will not be possible to operate the River Park Leisure Centre in its current form once the Winchester Sports and Leisure Park opens in 2021. The future use of the site is currently under review.
2. The Council welcomes proposals by householders wanting to take steps to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. In the case of listed buildings, this will need to be balanced by the Council's obligation to protect the specialist interest of the building.

Historic England and The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings provide guidance on energy efficiency of historic buildings and our team would be happy to continue a dialogue to explore available options.

3. Hampshire Highways are responsible for maintaining the public highway therefore any concerns about loose paving slabs or general trip hazards should be reported to them by phone, e mail or via their Portal on the main HCC website.

Spraying for weeds on the public highway is the responsibility of Hampshire Highways, concerns can be reported to them by phone, e mail or via their Portal on the main HCC website, they currently spray for weeds once a year.

4. This is a question for the local Police Commander and we will forward on your question.
5. We work with many other agencies to support those who may find themselves homeless. We signpost to support services and refer to housing outreach along with more direct approaches if criminal activity takes place.
6. The maintenance of highway paving is the responsibility of Hampshire County Council Highways team. Your concerns have been forwarded to the relevant officers for their attention."



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QUESTION 18

From: Sarah Gooding

To: The Cabinet Member for Environment (Cllr Murphy)

“I would like to ask about reducing carbon emissions from transport in the district:

The Winchester movement strategy fails to go far enough to tackle the climate emergency and has not yet been implemented. What steps are being taken to reduce overall carbon emissions from transport within the city and in the wider district and by how much will emissions be reduced in the next 3 years? In particular, what concrete measures are being taken in the next 12 months to ensure a shift in the number of journeys under 3 miles made by public transport, on foot and by bicycle; how many miles of segregated cycle lanes are being built; how many pedestrian schemes will be undertaken; and how will you ensure that residents in the district are able to use public transport every day of the week to get to work, school and for leisure purposes?”

Reply

“The City of Winchester Movement Strategy is intended to improve how the town works from a transport point of view over the next 20 to 30 years.

The strategy sets out a series of interventions which we will develop with the County Council and others in the coming months and years which are intended to reduce city centre traffic, support healthier lifestyles choices and provide investment in infrastructure to support sustainable growth.

The measures of the strategy are designed to promote sustainable transport, from walking and cycling to bus travel, which will help to reduce transport related emissions in the centre and to improve air quality. This is a long term plan and we are now working with our County Council colleagues to take this forward.

However, the strategy is focused on improving transport movement in Winchester and will not tackle the wider issues across the district. We will therefore be bringing back to Cabinet a report before the end of the year which will set out how we intend to achieve our ambitious targets of being a carbon neutral council by 2024 and district by 2030.”



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QUESTION 19

From: Giles Gooding

To: The Cabinet Member for Environment (Cllr Murphy)

“Since Winchester City Council has declared a Climate Emergency the environment should be top of every agenda and central to every decision the Council makes. Can you confirm that every time a decision is made the council will evaluate the environmental cost and how they will mitigate that cost?”

Reply

“Cabinet reports include a paragraph where recommendations must provide details of ‘Environmental Considerations’ e.g. impact on air quality, climate change, ecology or sustainability matters, in relation to the decision.”



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QUESTION 20

From: Edward Mills

To: The Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management (Cllr
Learney)

“How will a Winchester Housing company solve the housing crisis in Winchester and not build more unaffordable homes that people who have been born and raised in Winchester can buy or rent?”

Reply

“The proposed Housing Company is a really positive initiative that will offer an improved option for residents struggling to access private rented homes in the district.

It will act as an “ethical landlord”, offering greater security through longer term tenancies and “sub market” rents.

It will form only part of the Council’s intervention in the local housing market and initially will aim to provide approximately 50 homes for residents with a connection to Winchester.”