

Questions and Answers

Executive
Thursday 17 January 2019

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Executive Meeting

17 January 2019

Questions and Answers

(Please note that the order in which the questions were taken at the meeting varied from the order set out on the agenda)



Public Questions as specified in the Council's Procedure Rules of the Constitution

(a) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste by Mr Adrian Abbs:

"What are the reasons behind the Planning Department allowing over 9 months for Bloor Homes and Donnington Homes to have their linked applications for the Sandford Park development to be determined? Especially given the original time frame given was 13 weeks and the delay is causing unnecessary costs and stress for nearby residents of the development?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste answered:

The applications relate to the proposals to develop land that the Council has already formally identified as appropriate for development, primarily for housing. However, the Council, acting on behalf of the local community, will not accept a development which is in itself inappropriate, or which would be fundamentally harmful to important environmental issues, or the future everyday use of the development and the wider area.

It is therefore appropriate that the necessary time is taken to negotiate and amend the applications that have been submitted, and that is happening at an appropriate pace to ensure the most acceptable long term outcome.

The Chairman asked: *"Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?"*

Mr Abbs asked the following supplementary question:

"The initial question hasn't actually been answered. The question was why has it been changed from the 13 weeks which was previously agreed to 9 months. You were just explaining why you were taking your time."

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing answered:

The reason it has changed from 13 weeks to an extension of the time is as I've explained. We want to work with the developer to ensure that we get an appropriate application and we would rather take time than rush it.

(b) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste by Ms Carolyne Culver:

"What is the total income from the garden bin charge since it was introduced?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste answered:

I am pleased to say that we have around 26,700 subscriptions to the garden waste collection service which has generated a total income of around £1.3 million.

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

There was no supplementary question.

(c) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste by Ms Carolyne Culver:

“What requirements does West Berkshire Council have for new developments in West Berkshire to provide their own onsite renewable energy?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste answered:

With regards to residential development none - as it is covered by the National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs - 151, 152, 153 and 154.

However, with regards to non-residential development, Policy CS15 Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency for the 2012 West Berkshire Core Strategy still applies.

This requires all new non-residential development to be BREEAM Excellent and that major development shall from 2019 be Zero Carbon.

This is of course unless it can be demonstrated that such provision is not technically or economically viable.

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

There was no supplementary question.

(d) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Culture and Leisure by Mr Lee McDougall:

“Why is the Council spending £88k to turn Newbury Football Ground from a venue that consultation has shown previously met the needs of the community (organised team football) into a facility that the community have not requested or been consulted on (turn-up and play any sport)?”

Mr McDougall was not present at the meeting and had asked Mr Morgan to ask the question on his behalf, however as he had not arrived by the point this question was put, Mr McDougall received the following written response:

The Council wants the site to be available for wider public use until the site is required for redevelopment. Continued sports use of the site requires the grounds to be safe and secure. The high barrier fencing needs to be replaced and the old clubhouse and ancillary buildings also need to be made robustly secure. The quoted figure is an estimate which will cover those works, along with mobile goal posts and installation of an electronic booking system for wider general public sports use.

(e) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services by Mr Lee McDougall:

“Can Councillor Boeck outline the table of events that could lead to the Newbury Football Ground being ready for development in December 2019, as he stated, given it is a protected green space within WBC’s own Core Strategy - The time table should include the procurement process for a developer, consultation with the public, Planning Application and a subsequent appeal and all relevant buoying regulation approvals”

Mr McDougall received the following written response.

Should the Council wish to proceed again with a development partner on the London Road Industrial Estate, including the football ground, it is possible within in a relatively short period of time for the Council to procure a new development partner and for that partner to have submitted an outline planning application on the Estate where the Council is the freeholder. Guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework allows local authorities to propose development. The successful determination of any such proposal will be dependent on the strength of evidence within an application demonstrating that immediate public loss is outweighed by a greater public benefit. In terms of consultation, the Council’s plans to redevelop the London Road Industrial Estate, including the football ground, have been publicly known for some time. Public consultation on any design proposals to be submitted to Planning will form a part of the standard planning process.

(f) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste by Ms Carlyne Culver:

“What is West Berkshire Council doing to encourage the retrofitting of social and private housing to improve energy efficiency?”

Ms Culver received the following written response:

WBC is in the process of investigating how we can best help vulnerable households take advantage of available grants to improve energy efficiency. There is funding available through schemes such as the Energy Company Obligation for fuel poor households, but households are often unaware of its existence or concerned that free/supplemented measures are a scam. We are looking at partnering with an organisation to promote such funding, provide advice and information to residents, providing some reassurance, and ultimately with the aim of reducing their energy use and bills.

(g) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Transformation and Property by Mr Steve Masters:

“What is the total area of roofing across West Berkshire Council buildings including schools?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Transformation and Property answered:

(A joint response was provided to questions g and k.)

The council has in effect 250,000 sq.m. of building area but does not record roof area on the property database. Additionally establishing the actual available roofspace requires specific surveys of the target buildings, basically each roof would have structures on there, may not be

usable and therefore to get the net usable roof space we'd need an independent survey on each property which is impractical to do.

However, as part of the overall aim of the council to find more efficient ways to operate, the Energy Management Team have been investigating areas of our own estate and those partners we have shared facilities with to assess the suitability of solar PV and because of the way technology has moved on with more lightweight solar panels and everything we have looked at more property as suitable than would have been feasibly consider a few years ago and this was looked at a few years ago. The early work on this is encouraging and, subject to suitable results from initial pilot sites, there is an aim to have multiple sites with a good proportion of their electricity supplied directly from solar power. This ties in with our other responses in relation to our carbon footprint and energy efficiency measures. As our knowledge in the sector grows (given the ongoing developments in solar and battery storage) we have ambitions to scale this up, but as always this will be subject to sensible financial planning and a robust business case.

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

There was no supplementary question.

(h) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services by Dr Julie Wintrup:

“In what ways does the Council’s Executive group plan to share with the public their learning – corporate and in terms of governance - from the mistakes made from the unlawful deal with St Modwens?”

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services answered:

The Council intends to create a ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ site which will be publicly available on the Council’s website and where issues concerning the London Road Industrial Estate will be recorded.

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

Dr Julie Wintrup asked the following supplementary question:

“Do you consider that adequate in terms of reaching out to members of the public that don’t casually look at the website?”

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services answered:

We do consider that adequate, yes.

(i) Question submitted to the Deputy Leader of the Council by Dr Julie Wintrup:

“When is the Council’s Executive going to apologise to the council-tax-payers of Newbury and West Berkshire, for wasting public money on agreeing an unlawful deal, while continuing to make financial cuts to public health services, some of which will cease to exist?”

The Portfolio Holder for Deputy Leader of the Council answered:

Firstly the Court of Appeal was very clear in its judgment that the Council did not deliberately avoid the procurement rules. Indeed the development agreement did not give rise to public works when it was signed. However the court interpreted the development agreement did give rise to public works in future. The judgment has provided a lot of clarity for similar deals being done up and down the country. The law on this point has not been clear. This is recognised industrywide.

St Modwen was appointed as development partner following a competition. An advert was placed in two major national estates journals and an evaluation was carried out, which resulted in the subsequent appointment. Amongst the 6 bidders for the project were Wilson Bowden, who were the principal, their bid also included working with Faraday Developments, who as far as I understand were mainly concerned with delivering the housing element of the scheme and not the regeneration of the industrial estate.

When St Modwen was appointed, Wilson Bowden, who as I have already stated, were the lead on their bid, accepted the decision and withdrew, as did the other unsuccessful developers. Faraday Developments decided to appeal and challenge this decision.

In common with other appeals, we as an authority sought to defend our position acting on internal and external advice taken from Queen's Council, which as you are aware, the High Court determined in our favour.

Faraday Developments appealed that decision. We again took external advice from Queen's Counsel and there was a further hearing in the Court of Appeal, who found in favour of Faraday Developments on one ground only: that the Council should have procured the development partner by running a competitive tender which accords with the EU directive on procurement due to the future works element.

At the High Court the two other grounds were non-procurement related, and we estimate that 75% of the High Court costs were attributable to that element.

I believe West Berkshire Council has acted in a responsible manner throughout the whole process. Indeed, the leading judge at the Court of Appeal made it clear than the Council acted in good faith and that, as we have said previously, was reflected in the penalty of £1.

Furthermore, the outcome of this case has been viewed with consternation by many other Local Authorities who have entered into similar agreements with partners on other regeneration schemes. West Berkshire Council is not unique in using this vehicle as it did, neither has it acted unlawfully. Rather the contract was declared ineffective for reasons already in the public domain which I don't intend to reiterate.

The savings on public health services were consulted upon as part of the budget proposals, and we are currently evaluating the consultation responses.

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

Dr Julie Wintrup asked the following supplementary question:

"I don't know if you answered my question. Are you sorry that you have wasted this money and you are simultaneously having to make cuts to vital services".

The Deputy Leader of the Council answered:

I have just said, you obviously weren't listening, that I believe West Berkshire Council acted in a responsible manner throughout the whole process and I also said that the savings on public health services were consulted upon as part of the budget proposals, we are currently evaluating those consultation responses and that evaluation will be made known in due course.

(j) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Transformation and Property by Dr Julie Wintrup:

"Would the next phase of £300k proposed cuts to health and care services "that will impact the public" be unnecessary had the council not spent £363k in legal expenses unsuccessfully defending in court their unlawful deal with St Modwens?"

Dr Wintrup received the following written response:

Councillor Cole gave a comprehensive answer to a very similar question item 4i at the meeting, explaining the due process we needed to take in response to being legally challenged. That question was answered at the meeting and a copy of the transcript should be available later this week.

The services you refer to are still awaiting analysis from the public consultation, and no decision will be made regarding these until the Council has thoroughly reviewed the submitted comments and taken them into consideration within its budget setting process.

(k) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Transformation and Property by Mr Steve Masters:

"Taking into account suitable orientation requirements, what percentage of West Berkshire Council roofing are utilised for solar power generation?"

(Please see the response to question g)

(l) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport by Mr David Marsh:

"What action is the council taking to follow the advice of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence that, for public health reasons, new and upgraded roads should prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport over motorised vehicles?"

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Communications, on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport answered:

This Council joins the almost unanimous welcome given to the draft quality statements from NICE.

We at West Berkshire Council have consistently worked to encourage more people to walk, cycle and use public transport. As a previous portfolio holder with the public health portfolio I can certainly attest to that. Active and smart travel are a foundation of our current Local Transport Plan and will be even more embedded in the next, which will explicitly reference NICE guidelines, which I hope you will support.

Our 'action', therefore, will be to continue to do what we are already doing in reference to those guidelines explicitly – which is a great deal.

As is the case for most of the country, 'new' roads in West Berkshire are mainly in developments. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Council's Core Strategy we encourage sites which accommodate more sustainable transport use. Indeed sites that cannot adequately accommodate pedestrian and cycle facilities are explicitly rejected.

But we go beyond that.

We invest across the District in sustainable transport and here are a few examples:

- improved connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between Aldermaston Wharf and Aldermaston Village
- the million pound + leisure and commuter cycle route linking economic centres from Newbury to Calcot and beyond
- well thought-out provision for pedestrians and cyclists in our latest road improvement scheme at A339 – Cheap Street – Bear Lane
- the new cycle hub at a cost of almost half a million pounds at the re-vamped Newbury Station
- our prioritisation of public transport: we have a new bus station, the upgrade of Newbury Station is beginning, we're improving Newbury Racecourse Rail station, we have advanced plans to better Theale, Mortimer and Pangbourne stations and we support public transport operations too, including services provided by our expert in-house team and in partnership with parishes and private and community providers.

And as well as providing such sustainable infrastructure, we work hard across the Council to inspire people to get active and use these facilities, especially promoting healthy habits in our young people through working with schools.

And a report in the Reading Chronicle last September based on figures from Government demonstrated that our efforts are getting results - as West Berkshire came out as TOP Berkshire authority for residents' walking and cycling activity.

We have a very good record here in West Berkshire.

However, Councillor Clifford wishes to be very clear. Giving priority to cycling, pedestrian and people using public transport does NOT mean we ignore the needs of people who choose or have to drive private vehicles. We also invest a huge amount in our road network in West Berkshire, as our residents expect us to, and it is a source of pride to us that during the four year term of this council we will fulfil our manifesto promise to resurface a full 145 miles of our road network.

So to sum up, NICE is right – we could have written its advice ourselves.

But we're not zealots – we're a practical, balanced, realistic administration that will continue to invest in developing and maintaining infrastructure for ALL our residents however they choose

to travel and that includes cyclists, pedestrians, bus and train passengers – and yes, motorists too.

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

There was no supplementary question.

(m) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Culture and Leisure by Mr John Stewart:

“The large spectator stand at Newbury's main football ground in Faraday Road has been there for 25 years, so when the council states that it has always been a tenant fixture, how did it pass through 2 defunct tenants to the last tenant when none of these clubs co-existed while the council owned the property all that time?”

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Culture and Leisure answered:

Evidence of ultimate ownership of the stand is unclear, though the Council has always treated it as a tenant's fixture. All of the ground's tenants, throughout its history, maintained the stand and had responsibility for it. The Council has had no use of the stand. NFC, as the last tenant, prior to vacating the premises, agreed unilaterally to pass the stand to Hungerford Town Football Club.

The Council was not involved in that process beyond ensuring that the removal complied with planning and building control, but welcomed the stand continuing to be for community use, i.e. recycled rather than simply demolished. The removal also avoids the need for the Council to expend monies arranging removal of the stand and is therefore of benefit to council tax payers.

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

There was no supplementary question.

(n) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Culture and Leisure by Mr Jason Braidwood, asked on his behalf by Mr Jack Harkness:

“In October's Executive meeting, Councillor Fredrickson stated that the Playing Pitch Strategy would be approved and adopted by the Council and published on the Council website in early January. Can you provide a progress and status update please including confirmation that the recommendations will be adhered to by the Council?”

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Culture and Leisure answered:

We have, it's true, experienced some delay in developing the Playing Pitch Strategy which was originally aiming for a January timeline. That is because the supply and demand assessments from the partner National Governing Bodies of Sport were not received in time for the previously stated January timeline.

This assessment process follows the Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance published by Sport England, and included consultation with local sports organisations.

Sign off for the supply and demand assessment was received from the four sports bodies not until at the end of 2018 and an update document circulated on January 4th this year.

A meeting took place on January 9th between officers of the Council, Sport England and the consultants to review the anticipated timetable to developing recommendations. We now believe that the draft recommendations will be submitted by the end of February 2019, these will then require sign off from all of the partners, I'll explain who they are in a second, involved with the aim of completing the process by March 31st 2019, the document will then be submitted for approval and adoption by Members of the Council.

The last stage of the strategy, Stage E, is the ongoing monitoring and review – this we will do at least on an annual basis. Football will be represented in the process by the Football Association, through the Berks and Bucks FA (as the representative body for football in this area) – they will bring to the table any changes in requirements they identify within their sport.

Partners that were involved in the process are:

- Sport England
- The Football Association (FA) – through the Berks and Bucks FA.
- The Football Foundation
- The Rugby Football Union (RFU)
- English and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)
- England Hockey (EH)

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

Jack Harkness asked the following supplementary question:

“The supplementary really is the last part of the question, whether the Council will actually confirm the recommendations of the report will be adhered to”.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Culture and Leisure answered:

We are a key signatory of the report and we won't sign a report we are not going to follow so we will look at the recommendations, we will look at our ability to fulfil them and that will obviously go for approval.

(o) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Community Resilience and Partnerships by Mr Steve Masters:

“How does West Berkshire compare to other South Eastern Local Authorities in regards to the amount of CO2 emissions per Capita?”

Mr Masters received the following written response:

As a Council West Berkshire has supported a number of projects to reduce its carbon footprint and invested in digital monitoring equipment to inform our understanding about consumption

trends. We do not routinely benchmark ourselves against other authorities in the South East but look to ensure we have a financially sustainable estate with appropriate controls to reduce carbon emissions.

For West Berkshire, as an area, our priority is to ensure that we encourage households and businesses to consider their own carbon footprint and help signpost them to the huge volumes of energy efficiency guidance available. We have often included this type of message in previous exec questions and publications issued by the Council across such subjects as planning, housing and air quality.

(p) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services by Mr Paul Morgan:

“Following the Appeal Court ruling with respect to the legal challenge against the Development Agreement (DA) between West Berkshire Council and St Modwen Developments Limited who in the Council will be responsible to ensure that the necessary governance is put in place to ensure that “the unlawful direct award of contracts” cannot and will not happen in the future?”

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services answered:

The Council has robust governance in place to ensure that its processes and procedures are appropriate and lawful.

If you would like further details relating to the actual processes, I would refer you to the Council’s Constitution which is readily available and accessible via our website, and in particular Part 11 which deals with the Contract Rules of Procedure.

The Council’s Constitution is regularly reviewed and is done so in accordance with guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA).

The Council also undertakes an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework the details of which are published, and these systems are also subject to both internal and external audit.

The Council’s Audit Manager reported to the Governance and Ethics Committee in July 2018 that reasonable assurance could be provided that the Council’s governance, risk management and control framework was robust.

The Council’s Internal Audit Service was subject to an independent external review in 2018, which was undertaken by CIPFA. This confirmed that the Council’s Internal Audit Service ‘generally conforms’ to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the CIPFA Local Government Application Note. It should be noted that in this context that ‘generally conforms’, is the best standard of conformity that is awarded on such inspections.

In respect of the external audit, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires that our auditors be satisfied that the Council has “made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.” The overall criterion for assessing this, as stated by KPMG in the Audit Plan for 2017-2018, is that: **“In all significant respects, the audited body had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.”**

In August 2018, KPMG issued the annual audit letter with “**an unqualified conclusion on the Authority’s arrangements to secure value for money (VFM conclusion) for 2017/18 on 31 July 2018. This means we are satisfied that during the year the Authority had appropriate arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources.**”

Full details of the annual audit report, the external review of internal audit and the external auditor’s letter have been published in full, and details can be found on the Council’s website. For assistance, I confirm that these matters were considered by Governance and Ethics Committee at its meetings on the 23rd April, 30th July and the 26th November 2018.

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

Mr Paul Morgan asked the following supplementary question:

“Have you learnt any lessons at all and how will you make sure this doesn’t happen again?”

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services answered:

The question was clearly what governance is in place to ensure that similar events won’t happen again in future. The governance we have in place will ensure that and we have regular annual reviews of our governance to ensure that we are dealing with all our letting of contracts effectively.”

(q) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by Mr Paul Morgan:

“Would it not make sense to allow Newbury Community Football Group (NCFG), a legally recognised Community Interest Company (CIC) to run Newbury Football Ground on behalf of the community as a bookable facility for organised football teams for the community to hire at no cost to the public purse and as a not for profit operation, until the outcome and timing of either planning applications is determined?”

Mr Morgan received the following written response:

Any individual or organisation is free to make an application on land not in its ownership. Any such application will be determined at Planning on its own merits. In this instance the applicant has submitted a scheme to Planning knowing that the Council as land owner has clear intentions to develop the land for its own purposes, subject to planning.

Reference future management of the grounds until they are needed for redevelopment, the Council has made it clear it will not be entering into any new 3rd party occupation agreements. By managing the grounds, the Council will retain maximum freedom of action to incorporate the area into any redevelopment as and when such development comes forward, again subject to Planning

(r) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste by Mr Tom Tunney, asked on his behalf by Louise Harriet Coulson:

“With the council estimate of rough sleepers from October at 26, what is the figure now and is there sufficient provision for those numbers once SWEP is active?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste answered:

Prior to the official rough sleeper estimate which takes place in a set date in November, the number of rough sleepers was approximately 26. However, the number changes on a daily basis. The official estimate figure was less than that figure and is now 15 (10 January 2019). The number has been reduced by preventative work and by assisting people to move on from Two Saints, thereby vacating rooms.

The Council has funded a winter provision at Two Saints for rough sleepers with Bed and Breakfast considered if there is insufficient capacity. This is for people with a local connection. The SWEP is a statutory requirement and is triggered in extreme temperatures (high and low) and provides shelter for all rough sleepers. Again, there has been sufficient provision when this has been triggered.

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

Louise Harriet Coulson asked the following supplementary question:

“What happens to those without local connections?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste answered:

The people without local connection will be guided back to the area from which they first came.

(s) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste by Mr Tom Tunney:

“How has the council spent the £210,000 rough sleepers grant received in June?”

Mr Tunney received the following written response:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) grant of £211,000 has been allocated to a number of projects:

- A Rough Sleeper Initiative Co-ordinator
- An additional Outreach worker
- A “Make it Happen” fund to assist with any relevant expense to avoid homelessness or assist people into housing.
- A “Move on Fund” to help people to move on into permanent housing
- A dual diagnosis worker
- A health facility
- Housing First project. This is a scheme where rough sleepers are offered accommodation and intensive support is provided to help the tenant to sustain the tenancy.

(t) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste by Mr Tom Tunney:

“With the Commitment by the council to spend £80,000 on the football club, would it be protecting the campsite from eviction during any construction works?”

Mr Tunney received the following written response.

- The Council intends to evict the illegal occupants of the encampment to the rear of the football club. However, housing services are involved in ensuring that housing offers will be available to align with the enforcement action.

(u) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste by Mrs Amey Tunney:

“What is the councils strategy for increasing the percentage of plastics that can be collected and recycled such as trays and yoghurt pots?”

Mrs Tunney received the following written response:

West Berkshire Council does not currently have any plans to change plastic recycling collections.

Over the past few months recycling collections have hit the headlines with some councils reducing the collections of plastics such as yogurt pots, tubs and trays. This is due to the rising costs of recycling the materials and the lack of a market for the plastic.

In West Berkshire only plastic bottles can be recycled - it is one of the most common types of plastic waste and can be recycled in kerbside collections or at one of the recycling centres. Plastic bottles are made from high quality plastic and are easy to recycle into new products. The market for this plastic remains strong across the globe - West Berkshire's plastic is recycled here in the UK.

Plastic tubs and trays are not recycled in West Berkshire because they are made from lower-grade plastics. There are limited recycling options and there is very limited demand for the recycled material. These items should be put into the black bin with waste sent to an energy from waste facility where it will be turned into power for the National Grid.

We are also working with industry groups such as Waste and Resources Action Programme, the National Association of Waste Disposal Officers and the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee to help increase the amount of waste we can collect as recycling and to encourage manufactures to make it easier for products to be recycled.

(v) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste by Mrs Amey Tunney:

“Compared with the same period of 2017, has there been an increase in the amount both on weight and cost being sent by west Berkshire to landfill?”

Mrs Tunney received the following written response.

Approximately 85% of waste collected in West Berkshire is diverted away from landfill.

Waste is measured using financial years, we are projecting landfill to be about the same in 2018/19 as it was in 2017/18.

Landfill Tonnes	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2017/18	2023	1635	721	445	909	1600	601	492	684	766	462	1459	11796
2018/19	800	804	808	546	834	431	718	621*	870*	2316*	1062*	1935*	11746

* to be audited / projected

We spent around £1.32m on landfill in 2017/18, due to inflation and landfill tax increases this year's spend (18/19) is projected to be slightly higher, the budget for this year is £1.37m

Members' Questions as specified in the Council's Procedure Rules of the Constitution

(a) Question submitted to the Deputy Leader of the Council by Councillor Lee Dillon:

"Does the Leader of Council agree that to ensure complete transparency in the LRIE Review, no Member that has been directly involved in any decisions regarding LRIE should chair the investigation?"

The Deputy Leader of the Council answered:

It is down to the Monitoring Officer to decide and ensure that all Members involved in this review declare an interest. It is also worth remembering the decision to select St Modwen as a development partner was taken in November 2014 and it was a cross party decision. So it is self evidently appropriate that the Monitoring Officer decides on such matters

The Chairman asked: *"Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?"*

Councillor Dillon asked the following supplementary question:

"Would you agree that in order for us to have a full account of why the Council acted in the way it did in making the decision that the investigation should happen before the elections so that Members who are intending to retire in May can actually be held to account by the Council while they're still Councillors?"

The Deputy Leader answered:

I find it absolutely outstandingly staggering, Councillor Dillon that you should ask that because any review will hold anybody to account irrespective of whether they are District Councillor. Indeed one of the Members who was one of the cross party Members is no longer on this Council who was a Liberal Democrat and I'm sure they will also be called to account. So no I don't agree with you, I think it will be a stringent review and it's not down to me to determine when the review's taking place because it's been referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission who will decide on their timetable.

(b) Question submitted to the Deputy Leader of the Council by Councillor Lee Dillon:

"Can the Leader of Council outline what service areas have had an impact assessment completed in the event of a no deal Brexit and when will these be made public?"

The Deputy Leader of the Council answered:

The Council has and is continuing to look at the potential implications of a No Deal Brexit both within the Council and across West Berkshire as a whole. A full report will be produced in due course based on the outcome of the vote on the 29th January.

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

Councillor Dillon asked the following supplementary question:

“It seems to be a bit of a theme this meeting and in previous meetings, it was ‘what service areas have had an impact assessment completed, so is the answer ‘none’?”

The Deputy Leader of the Council answered:

I said we were looking at the potential implications of a no deal Brexit.

Councillor Dillon commented:

“But the question asked ‘what service areas have had an impact assessment completed?’”

The Deputy Leader of the Council answered:

I don't know, I'll get you a written response.

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