

# Questions and Answers

## Council

**Thursday 12th September 2019**

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# **Council Meeting**

## **12 September 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)



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

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**(a) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing by Mr Lee McDougall:**

*“Who will foot the bill for the Councils own estimates of costs of £1m (excluding land) to build a replacement step 5 facility to replace the community football ground in Faraday Road (should the Council eventually obtain planning permission to build flats on the site of the community football ground)?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing answered:**

Good evening Mr McDougall.

As I said last week, in an answer to a question from Mr Miller, the Council will leave the analysis of need set out in the playing pitch strategy, which is to be covered shortly, to work out the demand for playing surfaces and ancillary facilities for all field sports and for all ages.

We are aware of trends in football, for instance male football is declining in popularity slightly, whilst junior football, ladies football and even walking football are similarly increasing.

As we develop our upcoming leisure strategy, we are conscious that there are gaps in provision, there are issues with access and there is a shortage of 3g pitches, for both matches and for winter training.

We will endeavour with partners, the sporting bodies, town and parish councils and the sports clubs themselves, to ensure that provision meets demand and that must concentrate on future requirements, not to try and recreate the past.

As we prove local demand and follow the agreed strategy we expect the Council and the partners will access grant funding from national governing bodies and together we are confident that if and when a step 5 facility is needed, it must be made financially sustainable.

**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 Lee McDougall asked:**

*“Are you aware there is a current planning application, that’s been running for 18months, from Newbury Community Football Group to redevelop the existing football ground, which has full funding commitment from Sports England. And why that would be your preference to utilise that existing funding that’s been consistent?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing answered:**

I am aware of the planning application but not the details.

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

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**(b) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside by Councillor Phil Barnett:**

"Now the new bus station in Newbury is fully operational what incentives are being offered by West Berkshire Council to the charter coach companies to break their journey and stop off in the town?"

**The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside answered:**

Thank you for your question. Importantly we are offering the use of a brand new transport facility in a fantastic location close to key amenities in Newbury Town Centre.

My colleagues in the Transport Team have also been in close contact with the Confederation of Passenger Transport to update them on the progress and opening of the new interchange and will continue to promote Newbury as a destination through the trade press.

**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 Phil Barnett asked:**

*"Does the Executive Member for Transport and Countryside agree that the proposal to increase the parking charges would encourage coach drivers and owners to stop off at Chieveley services or even outside the district?"*

**The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside answered:**

In short no I don't, if people are interested in visiting the sites of Newbury, they will come into Newbury and they will make use of the facility that is there. Parking charges are not beyond the realms of reasonability and I don't agree.

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**(a) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside by Councillor Phil Barnett:**

*“Whilst welcoming the pot hole repair programme taking place at present, is the Executive Member for Highways expecting all recognised pot holes on classified roads to be filled in before the winter sets in?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside answered:**

Thank you for the Question. To ensure the roads in West Berkshire are maintained in a safe and serviceable condition, the Council carries out routine inspections. Under this system all roads are routinely inspected by qualified inspectors. From these inspections, all defects needing attention are recorded and repaired in accordance with West Berkshire Council’s Highway Asset Management Plan. It is of course possible for “potholes” to appear between inspections and reports from the public (via the ELM system) are very helpful in this respect enabling us to deal with the defects as quickly as possible.

**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 Phil Barnett asked:**

*“Many residents complain that the perceived potholes might not be recognised as the appropriate pothole size. Can the Executive Member identify if depth is just as important as width bearing in mind that a very small pothole in terms of the size category can possibly have a very large depth which could have a right bearing on the steering for an individual going over that pothole ?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside answered:**

I would come back to you, in writing after having a conversation with my Head of Service on that and get some technical information to support it.

Written response set out below:

“There is no nationally agreed definition of a pothole. However a pothole could be described as an isolated failure in a road, footway or cycleway that has cause for a sizable repair. The Council have adopted a criteria where a defect will be considered for repair when its diameter is greater than 300mm and is 50mm in depth. In this respect depth is as important as width/diameter. It should also be remembered that following the adoption of the new code of practice, “Well-managed Highways Infrastructure” each defect is assessed/repared on a risk-based approach”. It should be noted that officers will take the same risk based approach where there is an on-carriageway cycle lane and treat the defect accordingly.”