

# Questions and Answers

**Executive**  
**Thursday 14 January 2021**

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

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<b>Item (a)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Bill Bagnell

**(a) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by John Gotelee:**

*“In respect of the LRIE please could the Executive give a brief explanation of what measures have been taken in order to comply with regulation 64 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

A full Environmental Impact Assessment would normally be undertaken as part of any planning application and until any submission is made in respect of the London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE), this work is not a requirement. Now the Council has a new Development Brief setting out what might be commercially viable on the LRIE, the Council is in a position to consider in more detail redevelopment proposals. Those considerations will be informed in part by further investigative work including environmental issues. Any future planning application on the LRIE will be, as a matter of course, accompanied by full and appropriate site assessments generally.

**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?”*

**John Gotelee asked the following supplementary question:**

*“I just note that last time round when the development came up, the idea of a challenge to the development partner was labelled as medium risk to be mitigated by correct procedures and transparent process being followed to select the development partner. Can you give assurances that’s going to happen properly this time because last time it basically cost the tax payer a million pounds plus?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

Mr Gotelee, I stand to be corrected by the Chairman, but I don’t believe that is relevant in any way to the original question that you’ve asked.

**The Chairman added:** I would suggest that is introducing new information as well Councillor Mackinnon.

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

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<b>Item (b)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Bill Bagnell/Jon Winstanley

**(b) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by Alan Pearce:**

*“Please would the Council confirm why it chose not to undertake and publish an environmental impact assessment, before constructing the new access road from the A339 onto London Road Industrial Estate?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

In accordance with Regulation 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011, the Local Planning Authority was required to adopt a screening opinion as to whether the planning application for the creation of a new access from the A339 to the London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE) required an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The screening opinion concluded that an EIA was not required as firstly, the proposed development (the new junction) was not considered to fall within Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations, and secondly, the proposed development is not considered to fall within Section 10 [f] of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations as it comprises new roadworks which fall below the 1 hectare threshold noted in that schedule. I confess I did have to look those up.

A copy of the local authority's screening opinion was placed on the planning register at the time of the application.

**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?”*

**Alan Pearce asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Yes please if you would. I'm a bit concerned that an Environmental Impact Assessment hasn't been done because the London Road wasn't included in the outline of the planning application for the road junction, if it had it would have triggered an Environmental Impact Assessment and the junction was going to have an impact on that land. So that land should have been included in in the outline.*

*So can you just give me some guidance on that, why wasn't the London Road Industrial Estate included in the outline of the planning permission for the junction?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

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I would just say that all appropriate steps were taken at the time of that work and I can't give any more advice than that.

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<b>Item (e)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Andy Sharp/Pete Campbell

**(e) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education by Vaughan Miller:**

*“What is the total of the cuts in funding by WBC of Youth Services, Youth Activities and childrens' Safeguarding services over the last 10 years?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education answered:**

Thank you for your question Councillor Miller. I'm very pleased to tell you that the budget for youth services and children's safeguarding services is 66% greater than it was in 2010. Then the budget was just short of £10,369,000 while in this financial year the budget has been £17,179,000, which as I said is an increase of 66% or 65.7% percent to be more exact.

Over this period of time our Youth Work provision has been moved to a targeted approach, with specific examples being the support of Young Carers, engaging with those who go 'missing' and promoting the participation and contributions of young people in the services they receive.

Safeguarding services are extremely complex and the national landscape has changed significantly over ten years, driven by such factors as increased legislation and regulation and higher societal expectations. Newer risks such as those posed by social media and greater understanding in certain subject areas, such as exploitation, require a great deal of attention and professionalism. More familiar forms of abuse such as neglect and physical harm continue to require a highly skilled and professional response.

As expectations and accountability rise year on year, we as a Council continue to demonstrate our commitment, both financially and professionally, to achieving the best outcomes for children and young people. Our Children and Family Service has delivered consistently high performance in safeguarding. There is a commitment to partnership working and to having an influence across the region. The service has embraced opportunities for innovation and best practice, most recently evidenced by the Government 'what works centre' report and the outcomes achieved in West Berkshire by the Family Safeguarding Model approach. This way of working has enabled children and families in West Berkshire to receive timely, multi-agency responses to need, which reduces the likelihood of more intense, disruptive and costly intervention at a later stage. As a result we are not experiencing some of the service demands and challenges presenting in other areas. This conclusion was confirmed by a Local Government Association peer review of Children and Family Services in December last year. The reviewers found strong evidence of effective practice, and

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highlighted opportunities for West Berkshire to drive collaborative working further with statutory partners. Earlier in 2020 the Youth Justice Board inspected our Youth Offending Team and rated it an 'Outstanding' service. The service was able to show innovative programmes for young people, such as the drug diversion scheme, as well as strong examples of multi-agency partnership working to prevent offending and reoffending.

**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?”*

**Vaughan Miller did not ask a supplementary question.**

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<b>Item (h)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Bill Bagnell

**(h) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by Paul Morgan:**

*“Please can the Council provide an updated list of the current members (Councillors and Officers) of the LRIE Steering Group, with their respective roles and responsibilities, and advise of any planned changes expected to this Steering Group’s membership or objectives over the next few months?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

Thank you for your question Mr Morgan. The Steering Group is now convened as a Project Board which aims to meet monthly. The members of that Board are as follows:

Myself (Councillor Ross Mackinnon – Portfolio Holder for Finance & Economic Development);  
Councillor Howard Woollaston – Portfolio Holder for Public Health & Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture;  
Councillor Richard Somner – Portfolio Holder for Transport & Countryside.

Those are the three Members on the Board. Officers comprise of:

Nick Carter – the Council’s Chief Executive;  
Joseph Holmes – Executive Director of Resources (Project Board Chair);  
Shiraz Sheikh – the Legal Services Manager;  
Gabrielle Mancini – the Economic Development Manager;  
Martin Dunscombe – the Communications Manager;  
Bill Bagnell – the Manager of Special Projects; and  
Rachel Brown – the PA to the Chief Executive & Clerk to the Board.

In December, a report was published to the Executive setting out an indicative programme with accompanying actions and milestones in order to bring forward regeneration on the estate (LRIE). The Project Board membership may be added to for periods depending on the actions next chosen to progress matters, thereby ensuring appropriate representation at key points in the process. However, at all times, the objectives of the Board, however represented at the time, will be to deliver the ambitions set out in the December report to the Executive.

**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?”*

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**Paul Morgan asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Yes, I’m keen to get on to the questions about the football ground so I’ll keep it very brief, but in terms of the proper representation, I notice there are no Councillors representing the Newbury Town Wards and no Councillors representing the Opposition. So in terms of proper representational democracy, can I ask you to reconsider the current makeup of this Board and actually put someone who actually represents Newbury Town and also an Opposition Member on that Board please?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

Thanks Mr Morgan that's an interesting question.

The three Members who sit on the Board, we may not represent Wards in Newbury, but we are all Members of West Berkshire Council and have the best interest of Newbury at heart. We've been chosen and selected really because of the Portfolios we have and the particular experience and skills that we bring and I'm confident that we can deliver for the residents of Newbury and indeed West Berkshire widely, who will also be using the facility.

In terms of Opposition representation, that has been widely publicised, but until very recently there was an Opposition Member on the Board. However, for reasons that I won't go into right now, I consider that to be inappropriate going forward.

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<b>Item (k)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Anstey/Jim Sweeting

**(k) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by John Stewart:**

*"In the Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement published on 20 Dec 2020, in Table 14 "Projects to which s106 funds have been allocated" it states that £375,000.00 is allocated for "Henwick Worthy Sports Facility - New sports pitch x 1, possibly 2 pitches if match funding becomes available". Please can you provide the details, timescales and business case for of this project?"*

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

Mr Stewart, thank you for your question.

This funding has been identified for the replacement of the existing artificial hockey pitch at Henwick Worthy and for the potential provision of an additional training/multi-use pitch in partnership with the Hockey Club. This project, led by the Hockey Club, has not progressed beyond initial consultation with users and the Henwick Joint Management Committee. Therefore, there is no firm timescale and a business case is yet to be finalised.

**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?"*

**John Stewart did not ask a supplementary question.**

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<b>Item (m)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Anstey/Jim Sweeting

**(m) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by Lee McDougall:**

*“Can Cllr Woollaston please confirm that Sport England and the Football Association have been provided with the necessary and expected details regarding the Council’s proposed announcement that is due to be made later this month regarding a possible replacement football ground?”*

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

Thank you for your question Mr McDougall.

The report on this evening’s Executive agenda is focussed on the negotiations between the Council and the Rugby Club. All those relevant parties involved in the preparation and sign off of the Playing Pitch Strategy will be involved in the process to ensure the Council delivers against its stated position of delivering more playing pitches. I can confirm however that Sport England, the Football Association and the Rugby Football Union are all aware of the plans and in principle supportive, subject to seeing the detail.

**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?”*

**Lee McDougall asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Thank you Councillor Woollaston. Just to confirm then you're saying that Sport England, the RFU and the Football Association have seen these plans?”*

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

They've seen the principles of what we're proposing yes.

They have not seen the plan but they have seen what we are proposing and in terms of the facility.

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<b>Item (n)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Bill Bagnell/Paul Anstey/Jim Sweeting

**(n) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by Jason Braidwood:**

*“Is Cllr McKinnon aware that using the Sport England’s formal guidance on grass pitch usage that 8 -10 children’s organised football matches could be played at Faraday Road each week?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development Culture answered:**

I am aware that Sport England suggests that four match equivalence is the maximum weekly capacity for most grass pitches. As an estimate junior players inflict about half as much damage to the pitch as adults, so that implies that eight children's matches per week would be the capacity of the ground if it was used solely as a dedicated football pitch and solely for children.

However, it's been said previously on many occasions, the Council doesn't want any single dedicated user group to have exclusive control of the old pitch, be that via a short lease license or any other vehicle. Instead, the Council wants the site to be available for general public recreational use ensuring the widest user access until such a time as the land is required for redevelopment, and of course we have a proposal before us later this evening which will consider the future provision of a high quality sports pitch in Newbury.

**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?”*

**Jason Braidwood asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Unfortunately, I didn't hear Councillor Mackinnon’s response, but I do have a supplementary, I think I can probably guess what he said.*

*Before the pitch was closed to the past incumbents there were at least four games per week and training on that pitch. I was just going to ask with the current climate as it is and with senior leagues, and in particular youth leagues, looking to extend their season due to Covid, would you not consider reopening the pitch for teams to fulfil their backlog of fixtures in order to help release stress and improve fitness, health and well-being?”*

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### **The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

Thanks Mr Braidwood, I fully appreciate you had connection issues which is unfortunate. I addressed the four match equivalence point in my answer as well as I suspect answering your supplementary. The Council doesn't want any dedicated user group to have control of the pitch via any vehicle, instead we want the widest possible access, not just football, but for other recreational use as well, but I do look forward to hearing a little bit later the proposal for the future provision of the high quality sports pitch in Newbury which will hopefully in the future deal with those issues.

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<b>Item (t)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Anstey

**(t) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by Gary Norman:**

*“Given the high level of risk associated with the proposal, does the council really think that developing the football ground at the Diamond at Pidgeon’s Farm would be a satisfactory option for Plan B, considering this would mean the loss of a historic, well used and loved public recreation space to Greenham Parish?”*

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

Thank you Mr Norman.

Yes. The Council recognises that a range of people use this site. As a Plan B careful consideration will be given to how best to balance the needs of the local community. Our priority is to improve opportunities for physical activity to take place across the district. As part of this we have already started preliminary studies to improve the playing field offer at the Diamond on the assumption that Plan A is successful.

**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?”*

**Gary Norman asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Yes I do. Your report mentions that you find that Plan B of using the Diamond is satisfactory. Are you aware of your own, and it mentions your SSL report, are you aware that your report from SSL mentioned, among other things, that potential harm to the wider landscape and potential impacts on Greenham and Crookham Common’s SSSI are a huge downside to the proposal? The planners, that’s you by the way, do not consider the site to be sustainable in transport terms and the site would no longer be available as a more general amenity green space for use by the local community, having a detrimental impact on wider access to green infrastructure.*

*Now the dictionary definition of satisfactory, Cambridge dictionary by the way, is good or good enough. So are you saying that all those issues are good enough for you? Thank you.”*

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

I think the answer to your question is that we appreciate it is not the ideal site, hence the reason we're progressing with the rugby football club site.

In terms of whether it could actually take what is required, the answer is yes it can, but I'm not saying by any means that it's the most suitable solution.

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<b>Item (g)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Jon Winstanley/Paul Hendry

**(g) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside by Alan Pearce:**

*“Regarding the Swale situated on land west of Tesco, London Road, Newbury, RG14 2BP.*

*Please would the Council say for what reasons a Tree preservation order was put on all this land then subsequently removed?”*

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

Thank you Mr Pearce for your question.

A Woodland TPO was placed on this land by the Council some time ago. A Woodland TPO by definition is temporary in nature and used to protect an area whilst a detailed investigation is undertaken to see if the trees justify further protection. This could be due to a pending planning application for example.

In this instance, further study has identified that none of the trees were considered worthy of protection as an individual TPO. The TPO was therefore not removed, it was simply that the Woodland TPO lapsed.

**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?”*

**Alan Pearce asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Thank you for the answer. Could I have a copy of that report or the paperwork please?”*

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

I can ask officers if that is something that can be shared – yes certainly. If that's possible then I am sure we can do that for you.

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

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<b>Item (f)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Anstey/Jim Sweeting

**(f) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by Vaughan Miller:**

*“How many of the football pitches currently managed directly or indirectly by WBC are being ruined through over playing?”*

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

Councillor Miller, thank you for your question.

I am pleased to say that none of our grass pitches are being ruined by overplaying. It is true that our grass pitches are heavily used and suffer as a consequence of climatic conditions and general use, but by following Sport England guidance on use and with regular maintenance these generally sustain the use to which they are put throughout the season. We will periodically take pitches out of use for additional maintenance during the season without impacting on capacity, however this is not a regular occurrence.

Our Playing Pitch Strategy adopted in February of last year recognises the need for more 3G artificial pitches and we are working hard to identify additional community locations for a structured rollout over the coming years. This will further improve the position. Three are currently at the early stage of being considered.

**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?”*

**Vaughan Miller asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Yes thank you. More 3G pitches are very welcome.*

*So as the Council is obviously capable of managing football grounds appropriately, why has there been repeated statements in recent meetings that the reason for rejecting requests to open the Faraday Road Football Ground for organised football for youth, men's and ladies teams in Newbury is that it would ruin the pitch? Is that deliberate misleading of members of the public? What is the reason why that has been stated?”*

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

Thank you for that Councillor Miller. The reason I think is the amount of use on the pitch. Most of these pitches around the district are used by youth teams and so forth and can be used far more than by senior teams.

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

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<b>Item (i)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Bill Bagnell

**(i) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by Paul Morgan:**

*“Please explain why the detail requested in relation to the payments made to Strutt and Parker Property Consultants has to be obtained via an FoI request and not provided as part of the response to the public question I previously submitted?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

Thanks Mr Morgan. I understand you have now been provided with the table.

Any additional information requested arising out of a response to a public question such as this does need to be considered in light of our obligation around confidential and/or commercially sensitive information and of course our duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and associated legislation. That is why you were advised that your request should go to the Freedom of Information team. It was expeditiously referred to that team and dealt with.

**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?”*

**Paul Morgan did not ask a supplementary question.**

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<b>Item (I)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Anstey/Jim Sweeting

**(I) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by John Stewart:**

*"In the "Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement" published on 20 Dec 2020, in Table 12 "Infrastructure funded by s106 in 2019/20" it states that £33,421.03 was spent on a "Henwick Worthy sports facilities project". Please can you provide details of this project?"*

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

Mr Stewart, thank you for your question.

This is funding which is provided for the general upkeep and minor improvements to the Henwick Worthy facility as a whole (both Grounds and Pavilion) and invariably covers the cost of replacement of ancillary sports equipment, for example last year we had to buy 'dug outs' to accommodate NTFC use of the facility. This funding is not designated to a specific project as such.

**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?"*

**John Stewart did not ask a supplementary question:**

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

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<b>Item (q)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Anstey

**(q) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by Lee McDougall:**

*“How will local football teams be able to generate income from this facility to ensure their sustainability at higher step levels?”*

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

Thank you Mr McDougall.

This report is focussed on formalising discussions between the Council and the Rugby Club. There will be future discussions about who might be in a position to run the operation. The Council will look at a range of options based on credible business plans that ensure a sustainable future.

**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?”*

**Lee McDougall asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Do you have any idea of the costs that would be required to run a local football team? So, for your business case, do you have that level of information at the moment?”*

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

We have some indicative figures but they are very basic.

**Lee McDougall asked** *“Are you able to share them at all, even if it's after the meeting?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture answered:** It will need to be outside of the meeting.

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

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<b>Item (p)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Anstey

**(p) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by Jason Braidwood:**

*“Is it realistic to expect that the objectives of the rugby club, the council and the football community of Newbury will ever be fully aligned, if there is divergence whose objective will take precedence?”*

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

Mr Braidwood, thank you for your question.

Yes. The purpose of a lease and any joint use agreement between the Rugby Club and the Council will be to ensure everyone involved with the operation understands their responsibilities and objectives. The Rugby club is already committed to becoming a community sports facility.

**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?”*

**Jason Braidwood did not ask a supplementary question.**

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<b>Item (r)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Anstey

**(r) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by Alan Pearce:**

*“What is the timetable of events and milestones that will lead to an opening of the new facility in March 22?”*

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

Thank you Mr Pearce.

Once Newbury Rugby Club has formally agreed the terms of the lease, which we anticipate in the next few weeks, the final Heads of Terms will return to Executive for sign off in April.

During that period, the Council will secure the services of a project manager. We do not anticipate any planning policy issues with the proposal given its existing use. The detail planning application will be submitted in the Spring with a view to the contract/procurement process for the construction of the ground being completed in early Autumn and for the ground to be ready to open by the end of March 2022. I do acknowledge that this is a tight timetable with little room for mishaps but the Officer team will do its level best to meet it.

**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?”*

**Alan Pearce did not ask a supplementary question.**

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<b>Item (j)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Andy Sharp/Pete Campbell

**(j) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education by Vaughan Miller:**

*“Has the council applied for and received any new funding for youth services from the £500 Million youth investment fund promised in the Conservative manifesto of 2019 and due to start in April 2020?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education answered:**

Thank you for your question Councillor Miller. The Council did indeed make a bid for funding through our Youth Offending Team, but unfortunately we were not successful.

I know that locally, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner made bids, as did Berkshire Youth, for monies to support our local youth and they were both successful.

**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?”*

**Vaughan Miller did not ask a supplementary question.**

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<b>Item (o)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Anstey

**(o) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by Paul Morgan:**

*“How can the public expect to make a meaningful and informed contribution to the public consultation when they have not been provided with the details/facts of the proposal?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture provided the following written answer:**

The purpose of the report presented to yesterday's meeting of the Executive is to seek authority for officers to enter into contractual negotiations. The purpose of the public consultation is to gauge the level of support the proposal has and support for the construction of an artificial pitch, what facilities people would like to see at the ground, and views about whether a new sports ground will give people more opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity. An indicative plan showing the layout of the facility will be part of the consultation.

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<b>Item (u)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Anstey

**(u) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by John Stewart:**

*“What is the constitution of the new Culture and Leisure Programme Board and will the Council commit to appoint users and community groups to it to ensure the best outcome?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture provided the following written answer:**

It is an internal governance arrangement to ensure projects are monitored. If community engagement is identified as a project requirement by the Board this will be set up and the right people will be contacted.

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<b>Item (s)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Anstey

**(s) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by Vaughan Miller:**

*“Given that Newbury Football ground at Faraday Road was closed in June 2018, does this proposal provide a replacement facility “of equivalent or better quality, and of equivalent or greater quantity, and subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements” (from Sport England Exception 4 and also quoted in WBC Playing Pitch Strategy)?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture provided the following written answer:**

I am delighted to say Councillor Miller that the answer, in a word, is yes.

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

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<b>Item (c)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	June Graves/Gary Lugg/Janet Weekes

**(c) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Graham Storey:**

*“Could Councillor Cole provide details of the Joint Venture with Sovereign Housing, including the location and current ownership of the sites, housing delivered and planned, and the mix: (social rent, affordable, market)?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing provided the following written answer:**

In order to make best use of land assets, resources, skills and expertise for house building in the District a Joint Venture (JV) with Sovereign Housing Association was established in 2020.

Plans are being developed for two development projects on land that is currently in West Berkshire Council ownership.

The first is at Chestnut Walk in Hungerford for eight houses as shared ownership.

The second at Phoenix Court in Newbury for 18 apartments in two blocks - one for social rent and the other shared ownership.

Feedback is being sought from local residents on both developments until 24th January 2021 - more information can be found on the Sovereign Housing Association website.

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

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<b>Item (d)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Gary Lugg/Janet Weekes

**(d) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Graham Storey:**

*“Could Councillor Cole provide details of the process being undertaken to examine the possibility of setting up a housing company (mentioned in Executive meeting of 17th Dec) to deliver social housing including a time frame for decisions and the scope, financial criteria and ambition of this project?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing provided the following written answer:**

The work on the housing company will follow the Council's procurement, governance and project planning process. This will include a feasibility study to ensure due diligence relating to financial and property modelling and working to a 12 month timeline.

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

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<b>Item (a)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Susan Powell

**(a) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture by Councillor Martha Vickers:**

*“Given that we know from the last OSMC agenda papers that there was a 38.6% increase in criminal incidents of Domestic Abuse during the period of Lockdown, how is this Council planning to prevent a similar rise in serious incidents if another Lockdown is announced?”*

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

Thank you Councillor Vickers. I have to say, I was very concerned by your question as it was contrary to what I had been informed. As it makes reference to police data, I have consulted with the Deputy Local Police Area Commander in preparing this response and the Deputy Commander did provide a full explanation when this same data was highlighted previously. Reassurance has been provided that the increase you raise concern about was due to a comparison between data from Q1 2019/20 and Q1 2020/21 and this has given it an inaccurate picture of the level of domestic abuse related instances during the pandemic and lockdown periods. Effectively, it was a statistical irregularity in Q1 2019.

Overall during lockdown 1 (i.e. 23rd of March to the 31st of May) there was a 7% reduction in calls to Thames Valley Police in relation to domestic abuse incidents and crimes. In comparison with the same period in 2019, there's a slight increase in the number of crimes (17); however, it should be noted in February 2020 before lockdown there have been the highest number of domestic incidents and crimes for quite some time. Therefore March and April were months where domestic related incidents and crimes decreased.

It was recognised during the first lockdown that victims of domestic abuse may believe that they could not leave their homes because of Covid restrictions and throughout the pandemic this Council has echoed national messages and also indicated its own local messaging campaigns to ensure that victims know that 'if it is not safe to stay', they can leave. With the announcement of the current lockdown, a new campaign has been launched to reiterate the message. This Council, in partnership with other local agencies, will continue with awareness raising activities to ensure the victims of domestic abuse know how to access the support they need. The Council and all partner agencies will continue to closely monitor data so any change in the number of incidents can be responded to properly.

I reiterate that during lockdown 1, there was a reduction in domestic related calls to Thames Valley Police and during lockdown 2 this trend continued. It is reported to

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

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me that compared to last year, there's been an increase in arrests made and also an increase in positive outcomes for domestic crimes. Finally, it is important to know that West Berkshire Local Police Area figures do not reflect the national reported trends in response to domestic abuse.

**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 Martha Vickers asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Thank you for that clarification Councillor Woollaston and I think the different figures have been a bit confusing. So thank you for that clarification. Thank you also for emphasising that victims of domestic abuse can leave home because that is a concern I was going to raise, so thank you very much for that.*

*I suppose my supplementary would be - would you agree that there is a concern that a potential incidence of domestic abuse possibly might not be picked up by the usual professionals that are meeting with families, because of the lack of social contact? So can you see how this might be addressed?*

*It also puts an added burden on the community to some extent, and so are there any plans to alert the community to their possible obligation now that there is less contact with families who might be at risk? I hope that's considered a reasonable supplementary”.*

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

Thank you Councillor, clearly we are in very difficult times and no one can ignore that, but there are a number of local initiatives and if I could highlight one - it is that pharmacists and chemists are being encouraged to be helpful in this instance and those messages will be going out very shortly to assist this but it is not an easy solution, I'm afraid, when we're in lockdown.

Councillor Boeck added - I'd just like to respond if I may to Councillor Vickers concerns, because of course there is an ever present risk of abuse in all families and amongst some of our more disadvantaged families, it's appearing as well. It's true that the number of non-accidental childhood injuries has increased during this time and for a variety of reasons, but our social workers have been coached and briefed on the increased risk to some of our children. They bear this in mind in the risk assessments that they undertake from which they decide what form of statutory contact they might employ. So, our social workers are aware of the increased risk Councillor Vickers and are doing all they can to manage that risk.

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

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<b>Item (b)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Jon Winstanley

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

*“Why is the speed limit in Northbrook Street, Newbury, and other parts of the town centre still 30mph, when in Bartholomew Street it is 20mph?”*

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

Thank you Leader and thank you Councillor Marsh for your question. I have to confess to be a little confused, I'm conscious that I shouldn't drive out there and so I have taken the opportunity to have a look on google maps. Not advertising it just happened to be available. I'm pleased to say that the whole of Northbrook Street is covered by the Newbury Town Centre 20 mile an hour zone and using google maps, I could actually see signs that backed that up on the photographs there from the Clock Tower end. So I'm either misreading your question or there's a slight breakdown in communication but that whole area is 20 miles an hour.

**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 David Marsh asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Only that I was very much under the impression that it was 30 mph and perhaps Councillor we could discuss this at the next Transport Advisory Group to clarify any ambiguities. Apologies if I'm wrong but I'm delighted if I'm wrong because I think it should be 20 obviously.”*

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

Yep happy to do that. I'll add it to the agenda no problem, thank you.

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

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<b>Item (c)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Anstey/Sean Murphy

**(c) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment by Councillor Phil Barnett:**

*“Can the Executive Member for Highways and the Environment identify if dog waste bins are being emptied more frequently than before the start of the lockdown?”*

*Full submission for info:*

*During the last few months we have been encouraged to exercise much more, whether walking or cycling*

*Residents owning dogs have clearly exercised them much more frequently than perhaps they would have previously done*

*It is very noticeable dog waste bins have been quickly filled*

*Therefore can the Executive member for highways and the Environment identify if the dog bins are being emptied more frequently than before the start of the lockdown?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Environment answered:**

Thank you Leader and thank you Councillor Barnett for your question. This situation about higher levels of dog waste is being actively monitored right now and officers are identifying the most frequently used dog and litter bins.

We've tasked our contractor to make additional visits to those parks and open spaces where bins are being filled more frequently. Of course, if you're aware of particular sites where frequency of emptying is not adequate then I would encourage you, and in particular encourage your residents, to use the council's online reporting form to highlight this and appropriate action will be taken.

**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 the following supplementary question:**

*“Yes Leader, actually supplementary has been partially answered but if you beg my indulgence to raise it, there's a couple other points which are relevant for Councillor Ardagh-Walter to answer.*

*Thanks very much for that answer Councillor Ardagh-Walter. Even though you've identified that several collections are programmed in each area on a regular basis, it's clearly visible that several waste bins have been overflowing on recent occasions over the last few months - not only during the major lockdown and especially within my ward in Greenham. Therefore, can officers make sure that both frequent collections*

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

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*take place where bins are clearly overflowing and can we possibly place notices around the bin, because I feel that encouraging dog walkers and dog owners to take their bags home and not disregard extra waste, which cannot be accommodated in bins, is probably just as important as actually regularly emptying the bins."*

**The Portfolio Holder for Environment answered:**

Yes, thank you Councillor, that's a very good point and I'll ask officers to look into that.

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

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<b>Item (d)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Coe/Andy Sharp

**(d) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care by Councillor Alan Macro:**

*“What is the council doing to get the Berkshire West CCG to provide more Continuing Healthcare Funding?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care answered:**

Thank you Councillor Macro and Happy New Year to you.

As you will know from the answer I gave to one of your questions at last month's Executive, although that was in writing, the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) sits at the lower end of the national rankings in terms of payment for Continuing Healthcare – or CHC funding.

Now two comments upon that:

- First, we've got to remember that this isn't just West Berkshire – this is the Berkshire West CCG (as it is presently constituted – and I'll come back to that in a moment). It not only covers West Berkshire, it covers Wokingham and Reading as well, and the numbers relate to all three.
- Second, I would presume that the CCG would argue that it is protecting the funds of the NHS in being robust in how it responds to funding requests.

So this is all public money and we're basically in a discussion as to which pot it comes out of. Now, I do think that there is scope for the CCG to treat more individuals as meeting the criteria for CHC, than is the case currently.

Therefore, what are we doing, about that?

First we should recognise that, as with many things, Covid has got in the way. CHC was suspended as a result of Covid, but assessments have now restarted and we have actually employed an additional assessor, using CCG money, and that's intended to progress the work.

In the medium term, there is a Project underway which is targeted on two areas of CCG funding – both CHC and Section 117 (Mental Health Aftercare). This project sits within the Modernising Adult Social Care Programme and its aim is to ensure fair settlements from the CCG in both domains. There are various models out there to assess who should be funded and we're currently in discussion with the CCG about their use, and looking to draw on good practice from other parts of the BOB Integrated Care System (ICS).

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

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The other point to make is that, in the longer term the stated aim to have a single CCG at the BOB ICS level, which may also play into the process (although the recent paper from the NHS on Integrating Care actually refers to ICS leaders delegating significant budgets to a Place level, nevertheless, this might include continuing healthcare and we can conceive an argument that even if funding is at Place level, the modelling should be at System level for consistency). So those discussions are ongoing and I'm looking forward to continuing those and seeing how officers conduct that process.

**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 Alan Macro asked the following supplementary question:**

*"Thank you Councillor Bridgman and Happy New Year to you too. Yes, sounds promising that there's some actual work going on to actually improve the situation because according to the latest figures, we were 134th out of 135 for Standard CHC, and for fast track it wasn't much better.*

*So while we're not considered a deprived area, on the other hand, there is deprivation in the area and we've got poor health and so on. So, we shouldn't be that far down the tracks. So I'm very pleased that that's happening. But are you aware that we went through an exercise, a few years ago, before Berkshire West was formed, when we were in a similar situation, and we actually had a whole series of meetings at the Commission and the situation significantly improved but it's gone backwards again. So, I think it might be wise just to go back and see if you've got some records of what you've managed to do then, following the Overview and Scrutiny Commission. Thank you."*

**The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care answered:**

Well if I can come back on that. Firstly, when you say we of course it's not we, it's not West Berkshire Council, it is Berkshire West CCG that sits in the rankings and I've already commented on where their obligations and determinations lie. So far as what has gone on in the past, I think, we are in a new framework. I mean firstly, we are dealing at the moment with a CCG that sits at a place level, so it covers three local authorities, two acute care trusts, an ambulance service and the CCTS. So you know that the dynamic of the CCG is different to what it was before and we know that the government has pressed for CCG being at a system level even though the current guidance appears to might be move the money to a local place level. So, I just think we're in a different place and I know officers are working quite hard on this one and as I say, there is a project to improve things but we will see how that turns out.

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

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Item (f)	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
Submitted to:	Ian Pearson

**(f) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education by Councillor Erik Pattenden:**

*“What is the council doing to make sure West Berkshire nurseries, schools and colleges are safe for all pupils and staff?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education answered:**

Thank you for your question Councillor Pattenden. Ensuring pupil and staff safety is a top priority for this Council, as it is for Heads and Governors.

Since last March, schools and other settings have been making provision for children based on government guidance that has been regularly updated. Various council teams, including Education, Health and Safety, HR, Public Health and Legal, have supported the interpretation of this guidance. They have provided advice and tools to help schools and settings assess risks. Officers have worked tirelessly with Heads, including in the evenings and at weekends, to make sure safe practical arrangements are in place, as well as reviewing risk assessments and making site visits. The Council has sourced PPE, when schools have found this difficult to obtain.

Both Education and Children and Family Services have been particularly active in monitoring provision for disadvantaged children, who remain a particular focus for us. We have supported the provision of Free School Meals and have helped ensure remote learning is as safe as it can be.

From the start of term, we have supported the roll-out of Lateral Flow Device Testing in Secondary settings, and stand ready to do so for Primary schools.

Throughout, we have maintained a positive dialogue with unions, who have endorsed our approach and are grateful for the support we have provided to their members.

**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 Erik Pattenden asked the following supplementary question:**

*“I do, thank you, So, I mean, given that there's been quite large numbers of cases amongst school staff and amongst pupils and the impact of that; does that all mean you feel that the West Berkshire schools, nurseries, colleges are all as safe as they should be Councillor Boeck?”*

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

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### **The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education answered:**

I think they are extremely safe. I'm not sure what 'should be' means, we review the data every week and Councillor Bridgman is our data expert on this and I'm sure he'll be able to back me up when I say the evidence is not clear that the cases that are identified in schools are contracted in schools. I don't think that's understood. The fact is, that all children who contract Covid at some point go to school. So I think the jury's out on that one. But I'm very confident that our Heads, our schools and our Governors, are doing everything they can to make their children as safe as possible.

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

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<b>Item (i)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Jon Winstanley/Jenny Graham

**(i) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment by Councillor Adrian Abbs:**

*“Given that the old solar panels are now in storage, why did new solar get installed on the councils Market street offices instead of on the new Highwood Copse school which had them removed due to budgets?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Environment answered:**

Thank you Leader and thank you Councillor Abbs for your question.

As I am sure you are aware, Highwood Copse School is an academy and will be managed by Newbury College. While it's unfortunate that solar panels were not installed during the building of Highwood Copse, we, as a Council, as you well know, are prioritising mitigation of climate change measures on our own estate first. So it would have been ideal but we are where we are. The panels that were installed on Market Street roof has been replaced by a far more extensive array.

The new array will generate a lot more power. Over 86,000 kWh p.a. compared with the previous to 8,500 kWh – so big in increase and accordingly they will provide more carbon reduction than the old installation.

The old array will not stay in storage for long; the plan is to re-use it on our Chieveley Roads Depot unit. Thank you Councillor Abbs.

**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 Adrian Abbs asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Thank you Councillor Ardagh-Walter. Yes of course, we have an academy scenario and we have our stated aim to achieve a carbon zero West Berkshire by 2030. I just think the members of the public would expect, rather than nit-picking around that one's this, and that one's that, the Council to consider the greater net gain to West Berkshire by placing the solar where it could have been most effective, most quickly. It's great that you're going to reuse it, but we have a brand new bare building which if it had had its solar fitted, would have been pretty much a shining example of how close you can get to carbon zero with a new school and we've just missed an opportunity. I just really want to encourage, and I hope you could agree with me, that we can start to connect some of the departments just a little bit more to get these better outcomes even if it does means bending our rulebook a little bit to achieve it. Thank you.”*

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

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### **The Portfolio Holder for Environment answered:**

Thank you, Councillor Abbs, we can both agree that the ideal is always the ideal. Of course I would have loved a large amount of solar energy to have been installed on Highwood Copse. By the way, the installation on the Council Offices, as I refer to moving to Chieveley, would be far smaller than we could usually accommodate on Highwood Copse, however that is a side issue. But yes, we will seek every opportunity to continue on this agenda. Thank you.

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

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<b>Item (e)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Paul Coe/Andy Sharp

**(e) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care by Councillor Alan Macro:**

*“What proportion of staff and residents in West Berkshire care homes have received a Covid-19 vaccination to date?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care answered:**

Thank you again, Councillor Macro.

Before I give you the latest in relation to care homes, I should make what might appear to be a blindingly obvious comment - that this is a very fast moving picture as I hope we all appreciate. Data is changing on a daily, if not hourly basis, and further, as again you know, it is not this Council that is rolling out the vaccination programme - that task falls squarely to the NHS.

What we can do is report upon the programme and the usual route for doing that is at the bi-monthly Public Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) meetings and the next LOEB meeting is on Monday and will be put on YouTube and the vaccination programme is an agenda item.

Indeed, I should say there has been a very recent announcement from the Berkshire West CCG about how the three most westerly Primary Care Networks will be operating a combined vaccination hub at Newbury Racecourse. Plus details from the West Reading villages PCN about the use of Rosewood Hall in Pangbourne as a similar hub, and no doubt there will be a lot more about that on Monday.

So turning to our care homes, the latest that I have is that a total of 59 staff have been vaccinated and the local surgeries have advised that all the residents and the remaining staff who can be vaccinated (there will be some staff who are advised not to be vaccinated - underlying health conditions, pregnancy, etc. and some who don't want to be vaccinated) will be vaccinated, we are told, shortly.

Notrees is timetabled for tomorrow, Willows from Monday and with Walnut there's a risk assessment being done because there's a Covid positive resident. But they hope to do that next week. Birchwood was scheduled for Monday but I heard (about two and a half hours ago - which is how up to date this stuff is, that this might slip to the following Monday.

So, what we know about vaccinations in our care homes, tomorrow, next week and so on, lines up with what we're hearing about vaccinations across the sector generally. The programme is underway; indeed I saw that one of the doctors from

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

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Newbury was on BBC breakfast, I think yesterday, confirming what was going on. We've got it from the CCG that they expect the PCNs to conclude vaccinating care home residents and staff by the end of next week or shortly afterwards (I've already made the point about Birchwood, so it will be shortly afterwards but hopefully very shortly in the week after). Now that of course excludes any care home with an outbreak because there has to be a whole risk assessment process around those and they will follow as soon as it can be achieved in such homes.

**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 Alan Macro asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Thank you Councillor Bridgman. So does that mean, that as of today, that no residents have yet been vaccinated?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care answered:**

Well I think there may have been some who were vaccinated at Oxford, but apart from that, in terms of the care home rollout; no, it starts tomorrow.

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

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<b>Item (g)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Pete Campbell/Ian Pearson/Joseph Holmes

**(g) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education by Councillor Erik Pattenden:**

*“Given the extra emotional pressures on young people during the last year, what additional help, financial and other, has the council provided to charities and other groups supporting young people?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education answered:**

Thank you for your question Councillor Pattenden.

In this financial year, the Education Service provided £30k to Mencap from the Short Breaks for Disabled Children Budget to support their after school club provision. Due to Covid, this could not operate in the normal way, so we agreed flexibility in the way disabled children and their families could be supported. Officers have had regular meetings with Mencap to discuss how this funding is being used to offer services in the context of the pandemic.

Education Service funding has been used to support the following charitable organisations during the Covid period, to extend their work and activities:

Mencap (as I said)  
Recovery in Mind  
Newbury Community Resource Centre  
Parenting Special Children  
PACT  
Autism Berkshire  
PALS  
Crossroads  
Swings and Smiles

In partnership with the CCG we commissioned 'KOOOTH' which is a digital platform available to support all young people for mental wellbeing. Working closely with schools, the service was implemented quickly and accessible by young people before the school summer holidays began. There has been a good level of take up by young people in the area, which shows that mental wellbeing support is needed, and that this method of delivery is effective.

Children's Services, in partnership with the Community Hub, ensure that there was additional support to young carers locally, including a partnership with the YMCA to provide support to this very vulnerable group.

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**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 Erik Pattenden asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Yes thank you. I wonder if Councillor Boeck, if you can say how much of that is new funding?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education answered:**

In terms of additional funding spent only this during this period. Well the example that I gave of the £30,000 that we gave to Mencap - that is new funding.

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

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Item (k)	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley/Kofi Adu-Gyamfi

**(k) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment by Councillor Adrian Abbs:**

*“Given that the Garden and Food Waste Service is suspended will the council be offering people that have paid a rebate on the charges made?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Environment answered:**

Thank you Leader and again thank you Councillor Abbs for your question. As you know, we took the difficult decision to postpone the garden waste collection service for a period of two weeks. So starting next Monday and resuming again on the first of February. This of course is due to the entirely unforeseen circumstances of the lockdown and Covid, causing the entirely predictable rise of waste demand at Christmas not to ease away again at this current time. In other words, we would normally expect a large peak of volume post Christmas which would have been cleared by the crews. It seems that, again, people are being at home more and buying more things and generating more, in particular cardboard, that has not allowed the excess of waste collections to have been dealt with.

So again, this is a difficult decision, but we are strong with the view it's the right one and our officers are very confident that by diverting more collection crews onto the cardboard and recycling work, that they will be able to clear the backlog and resume normal service in early February. Because, also this time of year, there is little garden waste being generated; plants are not growing a lot.

We are very happy to be able to offer residents, on resumption of the service, that an additional three bags of garden waste, as well as the green bin will be cleared. So in reality, the service is being suspended and all that garden waste will be cleared on the first collection after the 1st of February. So given all these factors, we will not be refunding the pro rata equivalent of the garden waste subscription to residents. As well as the facts that I've mentioned, the diversion of officer time and money towards working out and calculating and administrating payments would really not be worthwhile and would not be helpful for the residents of the district.

**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 Adrian Abbs asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Yes thank you very much. I'm really pleased to see that you're doing something. I think the only supplementary bit is - you mentioned supplementary bags – is there a*

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*limit that the public should be aware of or how do we measure what extra will be taken?"*

**The Portfolio Holder for Environment answered:**

Thank you Councillor Abbs, again the guidance is that the three additional bags on top of a full bin will be collected, and, as within normal times, at the crew's discretion additional waste can be taken. But again, on this occasion we will allow three extra bags to be collected.

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

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<b>Item (h)</b>	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Ian Pearson

**(h) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education by Councillor Erik Pattenden:**

*“In the event of remote learning being necessary in future, what is the capacity of West Berkshire primary and secondary schools to deliver this?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education answered:**

Thank you Councillor Pattenden. First of all I'm going to tell you about some work that we've done at West Berkshire to improve school capacity to respond speedily to the new reality of remote learning. We've rolled out a remote access gateway for schools that participate in the IT systems that we provide, so that members of staff can access school-based network services from home.

This allows them to access their own digital resources that remain stored on school-based servers. Now, the background to this is that although much of the schools networking has migrated to the cloud, there still remains years and years of teacher resources that is on their servers in schools. So, while they're at home they're able to access that data so that they can then prepare the new remote learning lessons they're having to work on.

The Department for Education set out their expectations of remote learning in a letter to schools on 15 December and from the 25 January all schools will publish their remote learning plans and it will be possible for you Councillor, or for anybody, to have access to view each of the learning plans individually. We're in a fast-moving scenario here, where schools have very rapidly had to improve their remote learning capacity and they are at various levels varying levels of readiness, but what we know so far is that secondary schools are offering lessons that have been recorded by staff and some they're offering face-to-face and this is mixed in with learning from programmes of work and independent study.

We've provided over 300 additional laptops for disadvantaged children and as a result of our own initiative and also the DFE's laptop scheme, we have spent extra money. The DFE allocation of laptops is being extended to all those who need them, and while this will depend on national needs, we expect the rollout of laptops to schools to continue.

Staff in-service training has been supported, including updates of IT user and data protection policies. Since last March, the school improvements team has worked with all schools to develop the remote learning provision that I spoke about earlier on.

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Mutual support between schools and networking between schools is at a very high level.

**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 Erik Pattenden asked the following supplementary question:**  
*“I do thank you. So given all of that Councillor Boeck, are you sure then that all children working from home have got everything they need to continue with their education?”*

*I've seen feedback that children are having to share devices and that's obviously going to significantly compromise their education. So yes, I think we need to know that you're confident that all children working from home have got everything they need.”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education answered:**

I am sure Councillor Pattenden that not all children have everything they need. We started from a situation, before this lockdown, where many of our children didn't have laptops. Indeed, even where children had laptops, that doesn't necessarily mean that it's easy for them to participate in remote learning. There are factors that are beyond our control, such as having access to a quiet space, that you know we could not really address.

The way that the DfE laptop provision works, is that the DfE allocated availability of laptops to schools. All of our schools, have drawn on their allocation. Not necessarily, all of their allocation, but certainly all of them have called down laptops. What we're sure about is that that total allocation, at the moment, will not meet the demand. The demand is so high, that the government has had to prioritise the delivery of the laptops and they've started with Secondary schools. As of last week, all laptops called down by Secondary schools should have been delivered. The government has then moved on to prioritise Primary schools, according to a level of deprivation. So areas which are highly deprived, they're getting the laptops first. So we're going to be quite a way down the list. What we're assured is that by the end of this month, all the laptops will have been delivered. That still won't fix the problem, there will still be some children who need a laptop or they may need networking devices for example. I'm therefore absolutely delighted with the offer that we've had from Greenham Trust - they've set up a fund of £250,000 to buy laptops to get us close, Councillor Pattenden, to every child having the IT systems they need.

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Item (j)	Executive Meeting on 14 January 2021
Submitted to:	Ian Pearson

**(j) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education by Councillor Erik Pattenden:**

*“Given the recent concerns about the provision of food parcels for children that normally receive free school meals, please provide an update on the supply, take-up and contents of parcels distributed during the current lockdown to children at West Berkshire schools.”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education answered:**

Thank you for the question Cllr Pattenden. You know, you and I should meet more often. You've asked me a very important question. Few of us can have missed the current publicity about plainly sub-standard food parcels sent to children at home, who are entitled to free school meals. Images posted online, on Monday, quickly became widely shared by mainstream media yesterday and I asked our education service to brief me on the situation here in West Berkshire. I think we can agree that all our children, at home and at school, need and deserve good, wholesome food, that is both nutritious and enough, and I wanted to be sure that this is what they have been given. I think we all understand that schools and their catering contractors had to mobilise quickly, following the announcement on Monday the 4th of January that schools would move to remote learning for the majority of children the following day. That's just over a week ago.

Today, for children at home who are entitled to free meals, schools are either providing vouchers to their parents or carers or sending meal parcels to their homes. In overseeing their contractors who do this for them, schools have been keen to ensure these meals are fit for purpose. They have reviewed the contents and challenged appropriately when necessary. Where the meals are prepared in school kitchens here too these reviews have been carried out. Heads are also listening to and addressing any parental concerns that arise. To check this myself, I have been speaking to schools and I have been reassured that Heads are content with their arrangements. I trust them to hold contractors to account and to ensure that quality is maintained. It is clear though, that schools are facing considerable challenges in providing meals for children at home. Heads of schools who have arranged their own vouchers, want to move to the Department for Education voucher scheme that is soon to be relaunched. Other heads want to move from meal parcels, to the DfE scheme as soon as they can. West Berkshire has responded to that demand by offering all schools access to our voucher scheme.

Over Christmas, the Council issued 3,600 vouchers and bought a similar number ahead of the half term in February. So we are ready to go and we can give schools a workable solution that they can use, until the DfE's national scheme is up and

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running. Ours is the same scheme that we will use to deliver the planned holiday activity and food programme at Easter. I have every confidence that schools working in partnership with the contractors and the Council, will continue to ensure that no child entitled to a free school meal will be without one, while learning at home. Just as all children, who are in school, will continue to have access to their usual standard lunch.

This term, there are many more children in school than during the first lockdown, in some cases four times as many. Teachers have to provide remote learning, teach children in school, and make sure that health and safety and hygiene protocols are observed; I spoke about that earlier on. While some of their colleagues are absent due to illness or self-isolation, the strain on them, and especially their Heads is huge, and now they're doing their absolute best to make sure their most vulnerable children receive the meals they deserve. I have spoken to a Head who told me that he and his teachers have inspected the quality of food parcels personally, and delivered them to children themselves. On this point, my trust in our heads is unshakable.

I hope that I have answered your question Councillor Pattenden and I hope I have given you some assurance that here in West Berkshire we take good care of all our children, especially during this difficult time. I have seen no evidence that, as your Leader yesterday complained, parcels sent out to families across Newbury and beyond are woefully inadequate. If Councillor Dillon can show me that this is happening, I will happily investigate personally. Otherwise, my advice to him is to beware believing his own propaganda.

**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 Erik Pattenden asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Yes I do thank you, and thank you Councillor Boeck that is a comprehensive answer and I welcome your response. Given the strength of feeling that there's been about the disgraceful food parcels that have been publicised this week, and the impact that that has on children, I thought it would be useful to give you the opportunity to clarify the Council's position.”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education answered:**

Thank you and I'm grateful for the opportunity Councillor. Please remember what I said at the top of my reply - you and I should meet more often, and we should discuss these sorts of challenges.

But I would urge you to be clear about one thing, the national publicity that we've seen, about the appalling standard of parcels that have been sent to our most disadvantaged children, is not what we're seeing here in West Berkshire. There's absolutely no

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evidence of anything but high quality, adequate, nutritious food going to our children. Alternatively, families are getting the vouchers that they need.

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