

Executive Meeting

24 November 2016

Questions and Answers



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

No public questions have been submitted in relation to items not included on the agenda.

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

(a) **Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport by Councillor Alan Macro:**

Question:

"For how many hours have the car club vehicles been hired in the last three months, per location?"

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport answered:

We have cars in five locations as I think you know: West Street, in Boundary Road, Eight Bells Car Park, Oddfellows Road and the Kennet Centre. We have information from Co-Wheels for three month period from July to September. I can give them to you to two decimal places if you would like.

So we have: West Street 215 hours, Boundary Road 164 hours, Eight Bells Car Park 510 hours, Oddfellows Road 126 hours and The Kennet Centre 39 hours.

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 Macro asked:

You only talk about 39 hours over three months, that's sound as if that vehicle is not being used very much.

"What are we going to do to promote this service? Which we have always greatly valued, which originally was a suggestion to actually get more use out of it?"

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport answered:

We were very fortunate to get a grant to develop this properly; it is unusual for a town like us but we are being pioneers. It so happens this week I got a letter through my door, promoting this service.

We do have plans; we plan to have displays at town centre locations like the Corn Exchange, some free sign up days, demonstration days, and social media. So we are looking at that, there is certainly capacity to do more.

It is interesting how little varies over time but early days and hopefully more and plans to communicate more. It can be a great opportunity for us.

(b) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Community Resilience and Partnerships by Councillor Alan Macro:

Question:

“Please give the number of complaints about graffiti received by the Council in the three months before, and the three months after, the termination of the neighbourhood warden service?”

The Portfolio Holder for Community Resilience and Partnerships answered:

The number of complaints about graffiti recorded in the three months before the termination of the neighbourhood warden service from April – June this year was 3 and in the three months after July to September 2016 was 3.

The local environmental quality indicators for graffiti remains as good for both periods which is the highest score that can be achieved.

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

There was no supplementary question.

(c) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Environment by Councillor Alan Macro:

Question:

“Please give the number of complaints about fly tipping, made by members of the public, that were received by the Council in the three months before, and the three months after, the termination of the neighbourhood warden service.”

The Portfolio Holder for Culture and Environment answered:

The number of recorded complaints about fly tipping received in the three months before June 2016 was 291 and three months after was 350.

These were complaints and what we will find is we don't necessarily record complaints about fly tipping on land that we are not responsible for. The reported number of complaints may include multiple complaints for the same incident, or complaints may relate to materials that are not waste for example, builders have left a load of materials for collection later on and the neighbours may report that.

The number of fly tipping incidents that are actually handled by us is a lower figure. I would like to give you that, in April – June 2016 there were 221 fly tips and in the three months thereafter and this is around the period when the neighbourhood wardens services were terminated and in the three months after there were 269.

Now I would like to point out there is a seasonal pattern here, these are quarter one and two figures and the last several years quarter two have always been a larger figure than quarter one and that is reflective in the 2016 figures.

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 Macro commented:

I think effectively you are saying is perhaps it's early days, is it? We need perhaps yearly figures?

The Portfolio Holder for Culture and Environment answered:

I am not quite sure Councillor what your point is, because as I would like to point out that the termination of the warden service has had no impact on the incident of fly tipping.

It was never in the wardens brief to be fly tipping preventers rather they had a duty to respond in their local areas.

Despite the numbers that I gave there, typically the wardens would be dealing with roughly 50 fly tippings a quarter which these figures are for the mean time.

(d) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing by Councillor Alan Macro:

Question:

“When was the Council first aware of the “Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Sustainability and Transformation Plan” proposed by NHS England South?”

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing answered:

Firstly thank you, finally I've got a question in my Portfolio.

Firstly the context of your question is wrong as there is no agreed plan, as Councillor Croft has said whether this is an urgent matter or not is debatable but it does give the opportunity to give some context to the STP and to address some of the issues which particularly in the last week or so.

I'll give you a bit of history. In December 2015, the NHS announced that every Health Care system in England would produce a multi year Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) as part of the NHS Five Year Forward View.

Health Care systems came together in January 2016 to form 44 STP footprints, we are part of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire locally known as BOB footprint. The CCG submitted an initial draft plan to the NHS in June 2016. The Executive sub committee, the Health and Wellbeing Board, on which Councillor Mollie Lock sits on behalf of the Liberal Democrats, received a presentation on the STP on the 7th July 2016.

The CCGs submitted a further draft plan to the NHS in October 2016, and the Health and Wellbeing Board received a further update on this latest draft, this morning. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny committee will scrutinise the plan on the 6th December 2016 this year. The STP will be publicly consulted on by the NHS between January and March of next year. The final STP will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in March next year.

Two particular issues have arisen by extrapolation, misunderstanding and indeed political mischief regarding the STP. I think they were addressed by the Chief Executive of the CCG at the Health and Wellbeing Board this morning.

So, in relation to the threat, what has been reported as the threat, to West Berkshire Hospital. If you have look the plan, it is a 112 page document, there are two lines, which is actually the same line which is repeated, which is a review of Berkshire West hospital provision, not West Berkshire, Berkshire West. So that doesn't just include our own hospital, though indeed very much a pain to point out the plans are, they are investing in that particular facility. So that future is secure.

There has been talk of a £479 million cut in funding; that is not at all accurate reflection of reality that is what has been identified in the STP document as the gap should we not act to rectify. That means demand issues and delivery of service issues. That is really what the SPT document is all about. But there is certainly no cut of that nature at all.

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 Macro asked:

“As you say there has been a lot of publicity and a lot of activity by Reading Borough Council on this, this has been going on for the best part of the year. What has this Council done to try and influence the STP because when we are talking £479 million, whether we are calling it a gap in shortfall or cuts then there is obviously going to be serious work done to address that, so I wondered what the Council has done to influence this Strategic Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing answered:

I'm not sure you have actually read the plan yourself but we are a part of the, this is a NHS lead exercise and we are a part of this process and that consultation. Local government is built into that consultation process. We are part of that.

Councillor Macro commented:

By reading the plan, weren't we drawing up a plan initially as well?

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing answered:

We are involved certainly; this an NHS lead exercise and we will be taking full part of it. We have been very proactive; this is being taken to Overview and Scrutiny. There is a lot we can do, but that doesn't change the fundamental problems we all face as a Health and Social Care economy which we have to deal with collectively.
