

Questions and Answers

Executive
Thursday, 10th June, 2021

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

Item (a)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Gary Lugg/Janet Weekes

(a) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation by John Gotelee:

“With regard to the new council house building company proposed by The portfolio holder for planning will this company be underwritten by the local council tax payer?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation answered:

The Council is currently exploring various financial funding models and options for the proposed Housing Company. The rent from the properties will enable future housing delivery. If we were to establish a housing company, the likelihood is that it would be owned by the Council and this will provide the means for us to meet the priorities set out in our Housing Strategy, which is to enable every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs.

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:

[Not audible]

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation answered:

As you are probably aware, West Berkshire's housing stock was passed to Sovereign in 1988. This housing company is not going to be set up to rival Sovereign. It is going to deal with much more of a niche market. We are not anticipating replacing the valuable work and the partnership that we have with Sovereign. It is in addition to that.

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

Item (c)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Sarah Clarke

(c) Question submitted to the Leader of the Council by David Poynter:

“Are you giving yourselves a pay rise if so by how much?”

The Leader of the Council answered:

Thank you for your question.

The Members' Allowance Scheme is approved by the Council having regard to the recommendations made by an independent remuneration panel. This is in accordance with the statutory scheme.

In accordance with the recommendation of the last Independent Remuneration Panel in 2017, an Independent Remuneration Panel was appointed in 2020 to enable them to review the impact on councillors of the changes implemented as a result of the Boundary review. The Boundary review came into effect in 2019, and saw a reduction in the total number of Members elected to West Berkshire Council.

The recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel were presented to Council in December 2020, and that report essentially proposed a 3% increase in allowances.

The Council approved the recommendations of the Panel, but also resolved to delay the implementation of any increases until April 2022, to reflect the impacts of Covid 19 and the challenging financial circumstances that resulted from that. The current Scheme will therefore remain in place until next year. This provides for indexation of Members Allowances to be linked to that used for officers.

The Council mirrors the national pay agreements for staff. At the current time the national pay negotiations are on-going.

The Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, which sets out full details of Members Allowances and why they are necessary. For example, West Berkshire Council would like to see greater diversity amongst its elected Members, and to encourage this, there needs to be a recognition of the amount of work elected members are required to undertake.

Full details of the Report can be found on the Council's Website and you can even access a recording of the Council meeting and watch the debate which is available for viewing on You Tube.

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

Item (d)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Gary Lugg/Bryan Lyttle

(d) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport by Simon Pike:

“Does the Council still expect to publish the draft local plan for Regulation 19 consultation on 30th June, as stated in its Forward Plan for 3rd June to 30th September 2021, given that fifteen weeks after the close of the last Regulation 18 consultation many of the responses to that consultation have still not been uploaded to its Consultation Portal? If not, then when does it expect to publish it?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Thank you Mr Pike for your question.

As a result of the Regulation 18 Consultation the Council will not be publishing the Regulation 19 Consultation as previously stated on the 30th June 2021.

Work continues on the responses received, issues raised and proposed revisions. When the plan is ready for publication under Regulation 19 it will come to Council for full approval.

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?”*

Simon Pike asked the following supplementary question:

“The Regulation states that a Local Planning Authority must make any up to date information which they have collected for monitoring purposes, that is in relation to the monitoring report, available as soon as possible after the information becomes available. Where can I find that information on the Council’s website and when will the full set of responses to the last Regulation 18 Consultation finally be uploaded?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

At this stage, I don’t have an exact date as to when the work will be completed. There are a number of appropriately detailed responses which have been received. They are all being given due time to work through, and once that stage is complete, I believe the information will all be available as you would expect it to be.

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

Item (f)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Bill Bagnell/Paul Anstey

(f) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development/Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture by Paul Morgan:

“Can the Council please confirm that all costs (capital & revenue) associated with a possible replacement for the Faraday Road Football ground (e.g. SSL consultancy, Monks Lane Sports Ground etc) will be shown / apportioned as a cost for the LRIE project?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development/Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture answered:

Good evening Mr Morgan, I hope you are well.

The costs will be apportioned to each project in line with generally accepted project and cost accounting principles, which would tend not to support the accounting treatment you suggest.

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 asked the following supplementary question:

“On the last Executive Meeting in February, Councillor Woollaston did say that the Council would not go ahead with the Monks Lane project if sporting governance [?], the FA did not support it as a replacement ground. By its very nature, it won't get ahead unless it is a replacement ground. Therefore, why won't the Council not allocate the costs with that to the LRIE?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development/Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture answered:

As a chartered accountant myself, I can tell you that to do so would be in breach of every single projecting cost accounting principle currently in practice in England and Wales. So, that is the reason why that wouldn't happen.

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

Item (g)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Anstey/Matt Pearce

(g) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture by Jack Harkness:

"I understand that there is a proposal to create a football pitch in Goldwell Park. Could the Council explain where this pitch will be located?"

The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture answered:

Thank you Mr Harkness.

The Council are currently looking at sites to identify potential grass pitches in line with our playing pitch strategy. A range of criteria will be considered when identifying suitable sites. We continue to explore all options to ensure any solution meets the aims of the playing pitch strategy.

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

Jack Harkness asked the following supplementary question:

"Goldwell Park has been mentioned for some time now, and I have difficulty seeing where it could be located in Goldwell Park, which is why I asked the question. Goldwell Park only has two places which are possibly flat enough, but one of them is covered in trees that have been planted recently, and the other one has the fairground."

The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture answered:

If I could explain further, Mr Harkness, Goldwell Park is one of a vast number of sites that we are looking at. There is no certainty whatsoever that it is Goldwell Park that will be selected.

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

Item (h)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley/Jenny Graham/Bill Bagnell

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

“Regarding the 29 April Executive meeting, Councillor Ross Mackinnon's answer to John Gotelee public question (b), (LRIE Infrastructure related question). “The environmental impact study the council is about to commission should be largely complete by the end of the year.” As this is described as a study and not an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and should be largely complete by the end of the year, please can he give details of the scope, precise area it will cover, and cost (if only approximate cost)?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

The work being carried is wholly relevant to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which itself is an iterative process, as you will appreciate. This process eventually results in a detailed Environmental Statement which accompanies any future planning application.

The work will be estate wide, covering areas such as flooding, drainage and contamination. The current phase of work will cost just under £70,000 and further investigations may be underwritten by a development partner subsequently if they are on board.

The current work is viewed as a confirmatory exercise which it is hoped will allow potential development partners to be sought, who can then be confident there are not unmanageable mitigation works required as part of regeneration and thereby make proposals unviable.

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:

“For clarification, what is the exact context then that money is being spent, £70,000 is a pre-planning assessment?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

We are at the pre-planning stage because a planning application has not gone in yet, apart from that, I'm not sure I can add more.

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

Item (j)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Bill Bagnell

(j) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by Vaughan Miller:

“Aside from their holding objection on the council's planning application, 20/02402/REG3, for the effective demolition of Faraday Road Football Ground, have you been given any further indication from Sport England as to their current view of the proposal, in light of the proposed new sports ground at Monks Lane?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

Discussions continue with Sport England, and an update will be provided following the conclusions of those discussions.

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:

“Do you believe that you will be able to commence demolition of Faraday Road according to that planning permission before the new ground at Monks Lane comes online?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

Yes, that is certainly the intention.

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

Item (I)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Anstey/Matt Pearce

(I) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture by Gary Norman:

“Have you been given any indication from Sport England as to their view of the proposals for the development of the new Newbury Sports Ground at Monks Lane?”

The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture answered:

The answer is Yes.

Sport England have provided guidance detailing their statutory role, including the five Sport England Policy Exceptions, which detail the circumstances in which they would permit development on a playing field. Their correspondence relayed a number of observations relating to technical design and planning matters. Sport England also summarised the respective views of the RFU and the FA. Their communication indicated that subject to addressing the technical and planning matters the proposals could meet planning policy exceptions E4 and E5.

West Berkshire Council will be holding a further meeting with Sport England shortly to review these requirements.

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:

“Can you list the current conditions that Sport England have stated that are conditional on their approval?”

The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture answered:

They're very much technical issues relating to design.

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

Item (m)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley/Kofi Adu-Gyamfi

(m) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste by Nigel Foot:

“In 2020 the UK exported 537,000 tonnes of plastic waste to countries like Turkey, Poland and Malaysia. Could the council indicate the percentage of recyclable waste collected from both its kerbside service and at its recycling facilities that is actually recycled in the UK and what happens to the remainder, if any?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste answered:

Thank you for your question Mr Foot.

The Council's waste collection approach is informed by our commitment to achieving better efficiency and the ability to effectively recycle materials collected. That is why for a long time we have only collect recyclable materials for which we can find suitable offtake markets, preferably within the UK. This approach has helped us to avoid a situation where collected materials are subsequently exported to other countries where environmental regulations may of lower standards, as you point out in your question.

In 2019/20, the Council sent 96% of our collected recyclable household materials to processing plants within the UK. The small remainder consists of some waste paper that was sent to Belgium for recycling. The plant used in Belgium complies with stringent regulatory standards and is regularly audited by our contractor.

In summary, we are reasonably reassured that the Council is achieving its objectives for effective and environmentally-beneficial recycling.

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

Item (n)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley/Jenny Graham

(n) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport by Sarah Slack:

"The Government Service Level Agreement Template has no reference to, "press announcements or publicising the Agreement" that is in Para 21.2 of the SLA for WBDC Community Transport Grant Agreement. Could WBDC explain why they feel the need to insert this clause?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Ms Slack, thank you for your question. The Government's Service Level Agreement Template is exactly that, a template that organisations can adapt to their own needs. The clause you are referring to has been standard in public transport contracts for a number of years, and is included and accepted in other agreements issued by the Council.

It is to ensure confidentiality between the Council and its service providers and it is entirely appropriate to be included. It also allows the Council to take opportunities to provide statements in partnership where possible and where appropriate, and it is also worth noting that the text also states at the end of the paragraph "which will not unreasonably be withheld", and I think that is an important point to make.

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?"*

Sarah Slack asked the following supplementary question:

"Irrespective of whatever charities have signed up, Clause 21.1 in your Service Level Agreement includes "the charities shall not make press announcements or publicise the Agreement or any part of the Agreement in any way, except with prior written consent of the Council." This sounds to me like a gagging clause. Will you be amending it?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

We won't be amending the clauses. There are a number of contracts and agreements that have already been signed, and the standard wording that we've used is across all of those. We won't be making an amendment.

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

Item (b)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley

(b) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport by John Gotelee:

“Is the executive aware of the environmental impact of LGVs using the A339 junction and Faraday Road as a rat run?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Good evening Mr Gotelee, and thank you for your question.

The Executive and Council Officers in conversation are not aware of any inappropriate use of the A339 junction and Faraday Road. As this is the access to an industrial area it is inevitable that it will be heavily used by LGV's. The junction allows access to the London Road area for motorists travelling from the south of Newbury, without having to drive the significant distance around the Robinhood Roundabout. This helps provide capacity on this busy junction. Some motorists may choose to use the junction and Faraday Road as an alternative to the Robinhood Roundabout. Again, this is a shorter route, which we understand, meaning motorists use less fuel and it takes further traffic from the busy Robinhood roundabout.

Overall, I am of the view that this new junction has had a significantly positive environmental and network management impact.

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:

“As a resident near there, there has been a marked increase of companies using it as a rat run. You are proposing to turn this into a residential area, surely you want a weight limit on there for deliveries, 7 and a half tonne weight would stop the lorry drivers parking there, they don't have toilets overnight, they're parking on the Faraday Road, and I think it's causing quite an environmental problem that wasn't thought about. Irrespective of when it becomes a residential area, do you really want Artics thundering through housing?”

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

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

I think the answer to that can only be defined once we have moved in a planning stage for that area and I don't think there are any guarantees or definites up until we've moved into that stage. What I can say is that the Robinhood Roundabout is due to undergo some extensive work as well, and in combination that may provide the answer to the residents of Newbury.

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

Item (e)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Gary Lugg/Bryan Lyttle

(e) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport by Simon Pike:

“Does the Council intend to hold a public consultation on proposed changes to settlement boundaries prior to the publication of the draft local plan for Regulation 19 consultation?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Thank you for your question Mr Pike.

No, it is part of the Regulation 19 Consultation process and will be subject to the Independent Examination before any boundaries are finalised. It is important to note that all Parish and Town Councils have been involved in the settlement boundary review.

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?”*

Simon Pike asked the following supplementary question:

“It is unclear what status the consultation was because the maps were sent out without any context about where the final information would exist within the local plan and the DPDs, as you’ve said it was only sent to individual Parish Councils in relation to their own boundaries, and there has been no public consultation. Do you consider that to be consistent with your statement of Community Involvement?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

I think the involvement so far, bearing in mind this process is ongoing, has been adequate. We are not finished, and I would expect there to be further opportunities for comment as the process carries on.

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

Item (i)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Bill Bagnell/Jon Winstanley

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

“Please can the Council say, when redeveloping the Football Clubhouse at Faraday Road to a carpark, is the Council planning to install a sustainable drainage system to bring the site back to an urban runoff green field rate?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

Current proposals are not increasing any areas of hard standing so will not increase the volume or discharge rate of surface water entering the existing underground sewers. The existing facilities, including the clubhouse, satisfactorily drain into existing services and where run off from the building, which has a pitched roof, presents a larger rain water surface catchment area than if the building was levelled to a hard surface. Existing services are well able to cope with proposals.

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:

[Not audible]

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

In regards to the wider land area to which you refer, I am more than happy to rely on the Council's highly qualified environmental officers who provide us with advice on an *ad hoc* basis.

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

Item (k)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley/Kofi Adu-Gyamfi

(k) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste by Vaughan Miller:

“The council has recently provided a facility at its recycling centres for the collection of plastic trays, tubs and pots as a trial. Could you provide a progress update on this trial?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste answered:

Thank you for your question. As you are aware, we started the trial of collection of plastic pots, tubs and trays this March 2021, and the early results have been very encouraging.

Residents appear to be engaging with the trial in a positive manner and our contractor indicates that the target materials continue to find a market within the UK. We are currently working with our contractor to collate more data on tonnages and contamination levels.

One of the improvements we are looking to introduce shortly is to affix more illustrative stickers to the front of the bins to further guide residents about what can and cannot go into the PTT containers. This is based on initial feedback obtained from some trial participants.

We are planning to undertake a detailed review of the trial later this summer and that will help us determine whether the right conditions exist for the service to be expanded to other parts 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?”*

Vaughan Miller asked the following supplementary question:

“When are you planning to expand it to other locations more convenient to the public? I would agree that adding further signage would help, as someone who uses it is easily confused. It sounds like you are going to expand it to supermarkets, correct?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste answered:

We will find the right places. It is premature to speculate now on where or how many of those there will be. I am very conscious that we need at least one more site in the east of the district, which has rather poor provision.

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

Item (a)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Gary Lugg/Jon Winstanley

(a) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport/ Environment and Waste by Councillor Adrian Abbs:

“Given the Appellant's QC's argument during the Sandford enquiry that if West Berkshire Council planning was serious about Net Zero carbon it should have been applying CS15 since 2016, could the executive explain how many missed opportunities there have been to implement net zero homes since then?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport/ Environment and Waste answered:

Thank you for your question Cllr Abbs.

Given the profile and reputation of the Appellant's QC, he would know that the answer to the question is zero.

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?”*

Adrian Abbs asked the following supplementary question:

“The question was very clear to ask what opportunities this Council has missed, I cannot see how your answer answers that question. What are the opportunities that this Executive has had to implement CS15 given that very respected QCs are arguing that we should have been doing this since 2016 on major planning applications?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport/Environment and Waste answered:

Thank you Councillor Abbs,

The reason for the response of zero is that Policy CS15, which is written with reference to the Code for Sustainable Homes and that was abolished by ministerial statement on 25 March 2015.

Adrian Abbs responded with a point of information:

“We were at a Western Area Planning meeting last night, where this very same question came up, and the planning officers and legal agreed that we could be applying this. So, can I ask you to talk internally and get advice on this important point.”

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

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport/Environment and Waste answered:

Thank you very much.



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

Item (c)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Gary Lugg/Bryan Lyttle

(c) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport by Councillor Jeff Brooks:

“Will the Executive Portfolio Member tell me how many hours of work have been taken up by officers and attendant staff working on the two CIL cases that are in dispute, namely the Maltshovel Public House and the property at 3 Blandy’s Hill, Kintbury?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Thank you Cllr Brooks for your question,

The Council does not currently operate a time management system for all services, so it is not possible to tell you the total officer time spent on the two cases you mention.

However, I can say that Legal Services does have time recording, and there is in the region of 160 hours recoded against one of the matters referred to. The time recorded reflects the lengthy history of the matter which has been referred to.

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?”*

Jeff Brooks asked the following supplementary question:

“Given that we can monetise 160 hours of solicitors and support staff in trying to manage these situations, and that’s just the one example, is it not time for the Council to cut its losses which are now innumerable if we value the time of our officers and quash these two cases where I don’t believe CIL was ever intended to be used? The alternative is you continue to use time, which is money, to defend these cases. It is time to quash them, or you will end up ultimately very much out of pocket, purely by taking a too stringent approach to these two cases. Will you quash these cases?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

To my knowledge, one of the cases has already been paid, so we regard that as being closed anyway. The other continues. I understand what you are saying, I do not have an answer to it at the moment. I do not believe we are in a position to do that. I am happy to be guided by those that have been more involved with it for a longer period of time than I have. But no, I don’t believe it is appropriate.

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

Item (e)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Gary Lugg/Jon Winstanley

(e) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport by Councillor Lee Dillon:

“Further to draft emerging Local Plan and the response to public questions, it stated that mitigation measures will alleviate traffic congestion from the 2,500 proposed Thatcham NE development on the A4, Floral Way, Heath Lane, and Bowling Green Road. Will the Council make public those mitigation measures in advance of the Reg19 consultation?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Thank you for your question Cllr Dillon,

The Phase 2 Transport Assessment Report for the Local Plan will form part of the evidence base at the time of the Regulation 19 consultation. This will follow on from the Phase 1 report, and it will set out the progress made in designing and assessing mitigation schemes and packages of measures associated with proposed Local Plan development.

The information provided will be an indication of possible mitigation packages and will not form the full details of all mitigation or planned schemes. This detail is more appropriate to be included in the Local Transport Plan refresh and any planning applications submitted in the future for the Local Plan sites.

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 Dillon asked the following supplementary question:

“Given the possibility for increased travel flow with housing numbers of that size, how can residents give a considered opinion without having those mitigation methods to be able to comment upon?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

My honest answer to that is that I will need to come back to you with any clarification.

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

Item (h)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Anna Smy/Sean Murphy

(h) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation by Councillor Alan Macro:

“Which areas of West Berkshire are regularly monitored for air pollution?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation answered:

Thank you for your question Cllr Macro,

You can find all the information you require Annual Status report which is published on the Public Protection Partnership website. This provides details of the location and monitoring results at each site, of which currently there are 36. Of these, 35 are measured on a monthly basis, and one is continuously monitored. All locations are reviewed on an annual basis, which takes into consideration infrastructure changes.

For your convenience, I will email to you the link to the Public Protection Partnership website, so you can see these results for yourself.

<https://publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk/environmental-health/air-quality/air-quality-monitoring/>

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 Macro asked the following supplementary question:

“Thank you for sending me the link. It makes life a bit difficult when things are split between the Council website and the Public Protection Partnership website.

Could I ask you to review that list in view of the fact that there has now been a lot of scientific research that has shown how damaging air pollution can be to people, and particularly to children? If you remember, there has been an inquest re-opened where a cause of death was put down, at least partially, to air pollution. This is a really serious issue and I'd like us to take it a lot more seriously please.”

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

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation answered:

As I have said, we review all the locations on an annual basis, and in response to your second question (Question (i)), which I may get around to answer if time is sufficient, I'll give you some information about the work that we are doing on monitoring around schools.

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

Item (k)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Anstey/Matt Pearce

(k) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture by Councillor Erik Pattenden:

“Can the portfolio holder determine whether the astroturf proposal at the Newbury Rugby Club site is intended as a replacement for the Faraday Road football ground or is to address the shortfall of artificial pitches as outlined in your Playing Pitch Strategy adopted in February 2020?”

The Chairman noted: *“Cllr Pattenden has left the meeting, so in accordance with the rules and regulations, we will provide Cllr Pattenden with a written response to his questions.”*

The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture answered:

The development of the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) at Newbury Rugby Club addresses both. Within the Playing Pitch Strategy the Faraday Road Stadium is referenced as Priority 1. In providing the new AGP the local authority will maintain and enhance provision for football for the Newbury and Thatcham areas for both training and match play and be available for significant use by local community clubs.

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

Item (m)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Gary Lugg/Gary Rayner

(m) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport by Councillor Tony Vickers:

“What is the view of the Portfolio holder as regards landowners remaining in control of the public domain forming part of major new housing developments, for example Newbury Racecourse and now, as proposed by the Sandleford Partnership, for a whole new country park, Local Centre and all playgrounds on their strategic site?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Thank you Cllr Vickers for your question.

Landowners remaining in control of the public realm on development sites is not our preferred option. Our preferred option is to find a means to manage the public open space and other assets, either through a management company, which of course involves the residents, or in partnership with a third party organisation. In the case of Sandleford this option might be for the council to take ownership of the land but to then lease it to BBOWT the local wildlife trust as we successfully do with many of our other open spaces.

I would add that contrary to some public opinion that I see about BBOWT, they are not just about managing wildlife, as I'm sure you are fully aware, that they do cover woodland and nature reserves so this, to me, fits the bill quite nicely.

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?”*

Tony Vickers asked the following supplementary question:

“I would agree with your remark about BBOWT, in the former role that I had I found them to be one of the best volunteer management organisations in the country and they cover public access issues as well.

Would this Council consider adding its voice to the strong lobby that is building up to stop this practice whereby landowners having made an eye-watering profit on getting their land developed then try to get an income from it for perpetuity from the wretched occupants, and as the inspector at Sandleford pointed out, that even those who live in affordable houses have to pay these awful charges and have no comeback through the democratic process?”

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The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

I share your concerns. I have one local to myself where the same thing has happened, we were asked to take on ownership of a piece of land, and on review, refused to do so because it was not of a suitable standard.

I stand by that decision made by officers absolutely. I think it is something that we are aware of and we continue to be aware of, and we continue to do whatever we can to make these situations as right as they can be for the residents, especially those in those development areas.

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

Item (b)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Sarah Clarke

(b) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture by Councillor Adrian Abbs:

“Given the mistake made by central government in cancelling Zoom meetings before councils could resume face to face in safety, will the Council help Parish and possibly Town councils by making the Market Street Chamber available for critical meetings?”

The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture answered:

I don't accept the first part of this question. The Government have been taking sensible steps to ease lockdown restrictions, and I welcome the Roadmap which has been guiding us cautiously towards reclaiming our freedoms and way of life. Returning to as close to normality for public meetings as this evening is part of that process.

Before the expiry of the temporary legislation that enabled local authorities to hold remote meetings via Zoom and other digital platforms, the Council hosted a meeting for parish and town clerks from across the district, which was well attended. The purpose of that meeting was to provide advice and assistance to parish and town councils regarding the legal position at that time, and to consider therefore how to hold council meetings both lawfully and safely. Officers from Legal and Public Protection gave presentations and answered questions.

During that meeting, officers stated that parish councils could potentially make use of West Berkshire Council's facilities, which would include the use of the Council Chamber. Therefore, if any Parish or Town Council would like to enquire as to the availability of the Council chamber, we would be happy to hear from them.

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?”*

Adrian Abbs asked the following supplementary question:

“I am little surprised that you took umbrage with the mistake the Government made, as the Government were arguing against it themselves.

Therefore, has any parish or town council approached us to borrow the facilities as this is a rather nice facility that very few can afford?

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

The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture answered:

I am afraid that I cannot answer the question but will inquire and respond.

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Item (d)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Sarah Clarke/Shiraz Sheikh

(d) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture by Councillor Jeff Brooks:

“What discussions has the Council had with Readibus to resolve the contractual impasse over the “gagging clause” in the Service Level Agreement since Readibus announced drastic reductions in their services in the district as a result of the Council withholding grant?”

The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture answered:

Thank you Cllr Brooks for your question. I need to confirm first of all that we do not view this as a “gagging clause” in the Service Level Agreement.

Before Readibus announced the reductions in their services, the Council had had a number of exchanges with Readibus and offered three variations of the disputed clause, although Readibus rejected the three options. It is regrettable that the disputed clause would have let the Council have sight of letters that Readibus sent to its users before they were issued, and it is something I would have liked to have seen. This would have reduced the unnecessary stress and anxiety many service users may have felt upon receiving the letters from Readibus.

That said, I’m not aware of a high volume of concern contacts directly to officers here, and I’m happy to say that we’ve fully engaged with the local volunteer centre to very good effect.

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?”*

Jeff Brooks asked the following supplementary question:

“I think you said earlier, to a previous question on that, that it was a rather standard clause. If it was a standard clause, why was it not in there before? Suddenly you have introduced it and Readibus are uncomfortable with it, and one of the reasons they are uncomfortable with it is that it is not reciprocal.

It seems to me that it could be sorted out, I urge you to do so, and I would like your assurance that you continue to talk to Readibus and you will look for some reciprocal arrangements on this clause, whether it’s a “gagging clause” or not, and that they believe they can live with. Because, while you are frankly sitting on your high horse as

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a council, and saying "we need this clause, this is essential", there are users who are having drastic aspects of their life hurt, while you are playing around with clauses that frankly should be able to be sorted out, and I urge you to sort it out very rapidly please.

I'm asking if you can give a reciprocal clause that they can then say "at least the Council has committed itself in the same way you're asking us to commit ourselves" because otherwise, you are looking like "we are the big Council, and you are small, and you will do what we tell you" because that is how it is coming across."

The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture answered:

I respect your view, I do not agree with it. I do not think we are "playing around". I absolutely do not accept that as a statement. We have continued dialogue with Readibus and in the last exchange of emails there was a desire to arrange a date, which we have yet to do, but I will remind you that we have signed same contracts with other providers, and on that basis we would also need to go through the entire process with every other provider. I do not think that is acceptable.

Jeff Brooks responded:

"I do not think reducing service is acceptable either."

The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture answered:

I say again that we have not been inundated with calls from concerned residents, and if you have residents' details that can be passed on to me if they are happy for you to pass them on.

If there are residents out there that have not found alternative solutions to their transport needs, I am happy to receive their communications. I have not done so, as far as I'm aware, the head of the service has not received any. I can only make that offer to everybody, I cannot make it to individuals, because Readibus will not share the details of their customer base. I understand their reasons for doing that are GDPR based, but under these circumstances, in my view, there is an opportunity for them to do that if they choose to do so.

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Item (f)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Gary Lugg/Jon Winstanley

(f) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport by Councillor Lee Dillon:

“In the HELAA site assessment (2020) for Thatcham NE the significant volumes of additional traffic identified the need for significant improvements to roads in the North of Thatcham including Heath Lane and new routes, yet in response to public questions it is stated there are no plans for new routes. These routes are already dangerous as the residential lanes are being used as a rat-run to avoid the A4. What has changed since 2020, or has the Council failed to perform a traffic assessment for this area?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Thank you Cllr Dillon for your question.

No, the Council has not failed to perform the necessary assessments. The Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment is the first stage in the process of sifting development proposals and contains initial responses from consultees.

The Council has produced detailed traffic models for both Thatcham and Newbury. These have been used in conjunction with a strategic transport model for the District to further assess the proposed development and its impacts. The mitigation packages indicated in our transport assessment work will be informed by the transport modelling. New routes will only be planned where there is a clear need and a robust business case to support them. Currently there are no new routes proposed for the north Thatcham area.

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 Dillon asked the following supplementary question:

“Would you accept that new roads or significant improvements will be required if there is to be a Thatcham New Town built?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

I would accept that if the planning indicates that there are, and the assessments match that that it will be part of the process that will be followed, but I cannot say that I have

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identified a certain route that needs to be provided, because clearly I am not qualified in that area.

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Item (i)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Anna Smy/Sean Murphy

(i) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation by Councillor Alan Macro:

“Which air pollutants are regularly monitored?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation answered:

Currently we monitor for nitrogen dioxide. In the autumn, we shall also be doing a short-term monitoring programme of Particulate Matter 2.5 micrograms per cubic metre in locations near schools as part of a project funded by DEFRA.

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 Macro asked the following supplementary question:

“Could I ask you to consider putting that on a wider basis? I have seen something from the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory which is done by modelling rather than actually monitoring, which shows, for example, an area right across the A4 which is red, which is greater than 4 parts per million. There is another site that shows the particulates outside my own house are just below the WHO recommendations, and I am not on a main road. Could I ask that you widen that please and do it on a more regular basis?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation answered:

As I explained, this particular schools monitoring is funded by DEFRA for a specific area, which is schools, which you expressed particular concern about in your first question. I accept that there are other areas in the district and certainly in my own ward, Chieveley, M4, A34 interchange that there is a high incidence of PM which you would expect. But, at the moment, we are doing the specific project and we will see what the results on, and we will be in a stronger position to consider what future action the Partnership will take once this monitoring has been completed.

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Item (I)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Andy Sharp/Pete Campbell

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

“Does the Council find it acceptable that over 8% of local children are living in poverty within its own area?”

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

It is never acceptable that children live in a position which could be described as poverty and for this reason the council has placed a significant focus upon addressing inequalities and reducing the gap in life experience for those in the more deprived areas of the District. It is important to note that West Berkshire is a comparatively affluent area and that levels of deprivation locally are limited. The Council has a clear commitment to the development of opportunities within the District not least through the production of the recovery strategy as we move out of the Covid pandemic and seek to grow the local economy. Creating jobs and enhancing access to housing for families is a key element of our approach to ensuring that disadvantage is addressed locally.

It is important however to recognise that there will likely always be some families who, for a variety of reasons find themselves, at least temporarily in a position of relative poverty compared to other in the District. Where this does happen the council has a range of mechanisms in place for families to access support. For example over 3,000 people have been supported through the community hub since it was first started back in March 2020 and over 400 people have accessed food banks during this time. The hub has also supported over 200 people with gaining access to medication, and have signposted residents to different services in order to receive support. In addition to this the winter grant that stopped in March helped over 3500 people in need.

Through our Education teams, low income families are supported in a variety of ways including access to free school meals, underpinned by the use of a voucher system during recent holiday periods and a holiday activity and food programme which offered free places to children accessing free school meals over the Easter, summer and Christmas periods.

Free childcare is made available for families with disadvantaged 2 year olds in order to support them in accessing employment which is critical to addressing issues of inequality.

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During the recent pandemic the DfE provided laptops for FSM children to assist them with learning and the council supplemented this national programme at a local level, which has been particularly helpful during the periods of lockdown and beyond. In addition to this as part of our support to children from deprived households as we come out of restrictions we have ensured the local delivery of a national tutoring programme, as part of 'catch-up', addressing 'learning loss' as well as offering additional support with Home To School Transport and funding for schools via the Pupil Premium.

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Item (n)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Bill Bagnell

(n) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by Councillor Tony Vickers:

“What progress has been made so far this year in respect of the LRIE Master Plan, including the component known as Gateway Plaza?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

The Council has commissioned estate wide environmental impact assessment work which is an iterative process. Where assessments highlight issues, those issues may then require further analysis. Initial assessment work is due to be completed in the autumn of this year and where at that point it may be appropriate to amend existing master plan layouts in the Development Brief. In respect of the Gateway Plaza scheme the Council are in discussion with the leasehold owners and these are ongoing. I cannot really add more about that at this stage.

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?”*

Tony Vickers asked the following supplementary question:

“Would you not agree that the Gateway Plaza, which has full planning permission with all conditions discharged as far as the planners are concerned. If it was allowed to get on and redevelop, act as a boost, as a catalyst, to the economic value and interest in the wider development industry in the rest of the site. Should we not be moving forward faster on that aspect as a landowner?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

My concern with that as Portfolio Holder with responsibility for the regeneration of the site is for the site as a whole, rather than commenting on individual parcels of land, so I would not propose to agree or disagree with that assessment.

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Item (g)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley

(g) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport by Councillor Lee Dillon:

“Given the flooding on the A4 following recent rain, what actions are the Council taking to reduce the flooding occurrences on the A4 London Road, Newbury?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Cllr Dillon, thank you for your question.

Following the recent “flash” flooding on the A4 London Road, Newbury a site investigation was undertaken by officers and remedial work to the system identified. The system currently outfalls to a ditch or swale (on private land) and this will require excavation and re-profiling. The Drainage and Flood Risk team will write to the landowners requesting the work is undertaken under the Land Drainage Act. In addition, a works order has been placed with the Council's Term Contractor to carry out cleansing work of the roadside gullies and carrier drains.

Additional roadside gullies and outfall pipes were installed when the cycleway improvements were undertaken in 2018.

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

Lee Dillon asked the following supplementary question:

“It would appear that particular flash flood would be of interest to engineers' views. The cycle lane should have left the situation in either the same or a better position in terms of flood defences, but actually having that hard kerb stone there seems to keep all the water on the highway itself, and obviously where that is now a narrower channel you've got all the cars having to drive through the flood water rather than having to drive through the centre of the road. Being such a key route through the town, I am keen to see it resolved as soon as possible.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

I understand that. I am happy to look into the reports that have been raised so far and if there is information that we can share with you I am happy to do so.

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Item (j)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Gary Lugg/Jon Winstanley

(j) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport by Councillor Alan Macro:

“The council's proposals to allocate sites for 170 new homes in Theale, in addition to over 450 already given planning permission, plus a site for 20,000 sq m of office space will greatly increase the traffic on roads in the area. The proposal to allocate 2,500 homes in Thatcham will add to this. What plans are there, therefore, to carry out detailed traffic modelling in the Theale area?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Thank you for your question Cllr Macro.

The Council has a strategic transport model covering the whole District. This is considered to provide an appropriate level of assessment for Theale for the purposes of the Local Plan.

The detail of the model varies from area to area according to the number of zones that have been included. The level of detail increases around Theale due to the breaking down of the area into a number of zones. If outputs from the strategic model indicate further work is needed there are a number of options for further assessment. These range from making use of other models used to support planning applications through to specific junction modelling tools. The Local Transport Plan process can be used to consider Theale's networks as well and, in particular, measures and packages to be used to increase the level of more sustainable travel to and from the area.

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 Macro asked the following supplementary question:

“The strategic model which was shown to the Planning Advisory Group and Transport Advisory Group did not show problems on the road network around Theale and the junction on the M4 that other, more detailed models, like the one carried out for IKEA did, and that residents saw on a daily basis before the Covid pandemic reduced the amount of traffic. Could you please look at that again, and maybe look at some detailed traffic modelling before these sites are allocated and put even more strain on our local roads?”

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The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

I am happy to pick up with officers again and where there is information that we can share, we are happy to share.

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Item (o)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Gary Lugg/Bryan Lyttle

(o) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport by Councillor Erik Pattenden:

“How can the replacement of a grass football ground at Faraday Road with an artificial pitch at Monks Lane involving replacement of a grassed area used by Newbury Rugby Club be in accord with Core Strategy policy CS18, which says ‘Developments resulting in the loss of green infrastructure or harm to its use or enjoyment by the public will not be permitted’?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

WBC, in delivering its Playing Pitch Strategy, is seeking to increase both the number and quality of grass and artificial pitches within West Berkshire. The Council is examining multiple sites to enable new grass pitches to be created in the future. The creation of a new grass pitch when the old one at Faraday Road is eventually lost through development, subject to consent, is part of the examination of possible new grass pitch sites. These sites will create new opportunities for football, including junior football.

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Item (p)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley/Jenny Graham

(p) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste by Councillor Adrian Abbs:

“As the new settlements proposed in the Local Plan will not be carbon neutral (as disclosed in WBC public responses), what steps are WBC taking to perform a carbon audit in order to dimension the necessary carbon offsetting that ensures net zero carbon by 2030 remains on target?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste answered:

Thank you for your question Cllr Abbs.

Until the Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation Document is produced it is not reasonable to say that new settlements proposed will not be carbon neutral or net zero carbon

The intention in the draft policy was for all developments to be regulated as carbon neutral in line with the Councils' declared Climate Emergency Policy.

To provide further background, what we see as the Future Homes Standard, which the Government is currently consulting on at a high level is intended to be consulted on at a technical level in 2023 with legislation introduced in 2024. While it is rather more deliberate than I would have hoped, we do have a trajectory and I am confident of top-level guidance from the government ensuring further developments will be carbon neutral in this 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?”*

Adrian Abbs asked the following supplementary question:

“If we already have the tools available to us, and it was revealed that we do at the Western Area Planning meeting, why are we not pushing further for net zero. Why are we waiting for Government to move forward when we seem to have the ammunition in our own armoury?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste answered:

I will have to get back to you with a detailed response, but in general, it is absolutely not the case that we are sitting on our hands waiting for Government you produce that

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higher standard. As you are aware, we do now have the tools to be able to mandate higher standards and I am confident that we will do that.

Adrian Abbs responded:

"I think we are on the same page here, we want net zero homes. That's fine."

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Item (q)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley/Paul Hendry

(q) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste by Councillor Adrian Abbs:

“How will the council be ensuring damage to ancient trees, hedges etc in and around the proposed Sandleford proposal is avoided given the growing evidence of lack of enforcement along warren road?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste answered:

Cllr Abbs, thank you for your question.

With regards Sandleford and its ancient woodland, Officers will be opening up early discussions with the developer to make it explicitly clear what protection measures are required and to follow this up with regular monitoring of the site.

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?”*

Adrian Abbs asked the following supplementary question:

“That surprises me, because there is existing growing evidence of damage and potential damage to the existing ancient trees. We are not waiting for Sandleford to come along, we can look at Warren Road.

Would you agree that we have a lack of enforcement to monitor the various things that are going on around the district, and this leads to the danger of our ancient wonderland being destroyed before we even get to actually build anything new?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste answered:

I have to disagree. We have had an officer looking on-site at the trees on Warren Road and are investigating currently to see how this can work out. Currently the assessment is that trenching is close to the trees but no significant damage has been caused. I am confident that we do have enough monitoring, but I will ask officers to make sure that is the case.

For information:

With regards Warren Road trees, Planning were informed of some trenching works alongside Warren Road in April. A Countryside Officer has been on site to look and it

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appears the trenching is close to the trees but no significant damage. Officers are investigating this further to see who carried the work out.

Other than that the Sandleford applicant has carried out some improvements to Warren Road in order to get machinery back and forward to the farm. This is all low key permissible works but we have informed them we need them to inform us beforehand. Minor surface improvement has been carried out periodically over several years. The residents continually raise this but we have informed them that it is not related to the development but simply improvements to the surface for existing purposes.

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Item (r)	Executive Meeting on 10 June 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Anstey/Sean Murphy

(r) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation by Councillor Adrian Abbs:

“Can the administration explain how we are supporting local taxi companies vs how neighbouring councils are doing so during these current pressures?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

The Council has provided a wide range of responses to support local companies across the district. These include business rates relief, Central Government Business Grants and the locally tailored Additional Restrictions Grant scheme using Government funding. Local taxi companies have been supported, and continue to be supported, through the Additional Restriction Grants. The Council has paid out £24,000 for taxi companies and is in the process of reviewing a further 23 applications for the Additional Restrictions Grant from local taxi companies, awaiting evidence from applicants.

Notes:

- For the latest round of business grants using Additional Restrictions Grant, the Council has highlighted part D to taxi companies as part of our support
- The Council has provided a variety of streams as part of the additional restrictions grant to support many different elements of business and local companies across 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?”*

Adrian Abbs asked the following supplementary question:

“How much that £24,000 covered, and whether we are comparing whether we are giving support to taxis in neighbouring councils?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

I cannot speak for neighbouring councils, but what we have done for taxi firms alongside other local businesses is that if they can demonstrate financial vulnerability and a significant drop of activities due to Covid, then we will award an Additional Restriction Grant. That is a good policy, and I would certainly not be suggesting that

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we give a grant to every taxi firm in the district, regardless of size, or turnover, or whether or not they are financially vulnerable. I think we have reached a good balance by supporting businesses that are showing signs of vulnerability with targeted grants without distributing money to businesses that do not need it, which would be too much of a cavalier approach to public money.

I do not have the number of businesses we are supporting on hand, but we waiting on and processing 23 applications, and the money paid to date is £24,000. I will be happy to send that information to you.
