

Questions and Answers

Executive

Thursday, 18th November, 2021

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Executive Questions: Public

Please find below questions submitted by members of the public for the Executive meeting on 18th November 2021.

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Item (a)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Katherine Makant

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

“In the interests of averting a planning fiasco far greater than St Modwyn would it be better to abandon any plans for regeneration of the LRIE and just reinstate the football pitch and clubhouse. Until such times as you have personnel with the expertise and ability to put forward a competent, comprehensive, masterplan following a logical and structured approach that can pass both policy and planning rules?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

No, it would not. The Council remains committed to both the regeneration of the LRIE and football provision in West Berkshire, which is why it commissioned a Development Brief and high level EIA from consultants including global commercial real estate experts Avison Young and submitted a planning application for a new Sports Hub at Newbury Rugby Club. The Council's position on the former football ground at Faraday Rd and how it relates to our aspirations for the wider LRIE site is set out in our responses to Frequently Asked Questions, which are freely available on the Council's website at <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/playingpitches> and <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/lrie>

John Gotelee asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development responded.

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Item (b)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Janet Weekes

(b) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation by Graham Storey:

“Given the changes announced in the budget, will the council reverse its long standing refusal to directly fund and build homes for social rent, to address the acute shortage of social housing in West Berks”

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

The local authority housing stock was passed to Sovereign in 1988 who provide the majority of homes for social rent in the district. Our model is to work in partnership with registered providers to ensure that new homes for affordable and social rent are delivered in the district. This is enabled by the requirement in our planning policy CS6 which seeks provision of affordable homes of 40% on green field sites, 30 % on previously developed land and from developer contributions delivered via a S106 agreement on smaller sites.

Graham Storey asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation responded.

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Item (c)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Bryan Lyttle

(c) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for planning and transport by Simon Pike:

“Does the Council have any plans to update its 'Supplementary Planning Document: Part 5 - External Lighting', which dates from 2005, does not contain any guidance that can be used as a planning condition, and describes obsolete lighting technologies?”

The Portfolio Holder for planning and transport answered:

Thank you for your question.

The Council does not currently plan to update “Supplementary Planning Document: Part 5 – External Lighting”.

Lighting is being considered as part of the Local Plan Review (Policy SP7 Design Principle's). Nevertheless, the Council is able to put up to date conditions on any planning application such as the replacement of sodium lights with light emitting diodes (LED) if required.

Simon Pike asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport undertook to provide a response to subsequent to the meeting.

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Item (d)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Jade Wilder / Susan Powell

(d) Question submitted to the Leader of the Council by Alison May:

“Violence against women participating in politics encompasses all forms of intimidation and aggression resulting in significant societal and democratic consequences. How will West Berkshire Council lead by example in addressing such challenges?”

The Leader of the Council answered:

Violence and intimidation against anyone engaged in politics, clearly has a detrimental impact on the democratic processes. The impact of intimidation on those who may enter politics has been a concern for some time, and is therefore something that has been under review by the Local Government Association.

The tragic and extreme example of violence against those engaged in public life, was the recent murder of Sir David Amess MP, during his constituency surgery. This followed the senseless murder in 2016 of Jo Cox, who had also been about to hold her constituency surgery.

In response to your specific question about women and what West Berkshire Council will do to lead the way in addressing such challenges, I confirm that the Council can and will take action against any individual who engages in any form of harassment or intimidation of its councillors. This includes the option of taking formal legal action.

If appropriate, such matters will also be referred to the police, who I know through our close working relationship with them will work with us to both prevent and if necessary act on this issue.

Any councillors subject to such behaviour will be supported through the process by West Berkshire Council.

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It is acknowledged that women in politics can face all forms of intimidation and aggression that can put women at risk of various forms of violence and harassment.

This Council is therefore pleased to be supporting White Ribbon Day on Thursday 25th of November, a campaign we have supported for many year which looks to end violence against women.

The Council is prepared to support this day and raise awareness. Already this week our new Chief Executive Nigel Lynn and I have videoed our message of support and committed to stand against any form of violence towards women and asked men in particular to make a difference with the #AllMenCan leading message.

Many male Council Officers and Members are supporting this which is encouraging.

Within the political environment - we have a female MP locally, a female Leader of the Council, female portfolio holders and a female Safer Streets Champion which I see to be really positive opportunity for us all to stand together and call out inappropriate behaviour towards women.

However I am concerned that recent events, along with online bullying and harassment will put women off standing for public life and cause a democratic deficit in balanced representation. We acknowledge that here in West Berkshire we already have an issue with this and as a Council have worked hard to remove the barriers within our control to enable more women to come forward, I have very recently written a blog on this.

We cannot do this alone and it will take every elected Member to act collectively to call out the types of behaviour that deter women. Too often I see social media posts that attempt to vilify all as a collective in party politics, with no thought or consideration as to how this may impact on an individual. It is to address some of these concerns that I am pleased to say that Claire Rowles our Safer Streets Champion will be bringing forward a motion to Full Council in December that calls for Civility in Public Life and asks all Members to support.

Finally, I want to highlight that there is an open Local Government Association survey, requesting details relating to the abuse and intimidation that has been experienced by councillors, both male and female. I have made my own submission and I would encourage all councillors who have such experiences to

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take part. The results of this survey will help us review if there are any further measures that we can take.

Alison May asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Leader of the Council responded.

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Item (e)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Matt Pearce

(e) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture by Darius Zarazel on behalf of Newbury Town Council:

“At the last Planning & Highways Committee meeting on the 25th of October, Newbury Town Council resolved to ask whether the WBC Executive could conduct a final public consultation on the Monks Lane Sports Hub application, reference 21/02173/COMIND.

The reason given is that, as the new amended application has been validated, and the full costs associated with building and operating the Sports Hub is now known, the public should have a final opportunity to have a say as to whether they agree with the proposals.”

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

There are no plans to undertake a further public consultation on the Sports Hub. The reason for this is that public support has already been determined for the development. Additionally the need to increase the provision of Artificial Grass Pitches is paramount. The Playing Pitch Strategy has identified a shortfall of 8 full sized Artificial Grass Pitches across West Berkshire and it is evident that a new AGP can meet the playing requirements of 38 teams and is needed to support the increasing population of Newbury.

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Item (f)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Katherine Makant

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

“Since you have chosen to remove the high protective net which was installed to prevent balls from being kicked into the Kennet are you planning to prevent ball games being played on the new open recreational pitch?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

The Council's decision in 2019 to open the Faraday Rd former football ground as “an informal area of grassland for general sports and recreational use pending its redevelopment” as part of our regeneration aspirations for the LRIE is a matter of public record. General sports and recreational use includes ball games. The southern boundary fence was in a derelict state and had to be removed for safety reasons. This work has now been completed and the site has been made secure.

Vaughan Miller asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development undertook to provide a response to subsequent to the meeting.

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Item (g)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Martindill / Matt Pearce

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

“Councillor Woollaston is quoted as stating that the Council is intending to borrow funds from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) for the Monks Lane Sports Hub proposal (assuming that it gets the go ahead).

Can the Council please provide full details of the arrangements including:

- The amount the Council plans to borrow from the PWLB for this proposal and be clear regarding what capital items it will cover, upfront and ongoing.*
- The period of time it will be repaid over*
- The interest rates (variable or fixed)*
- When the principal sum will be repaid*
- The process / governance which needs to be followed by West Berkshire Council before any PWLB borrowing contract is entered into”*

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

Technically the lease does not commence until completion of works, with the development phase being undertaken and the legal contract called and agreed to lease to which is appended the agreed lease for subsequent signature upon completion of works. The only capital expenditure foreseen during the period of the lease therefore, apart from routine maintenance and decoration, will be the replacement of the pitch every 10 years. The recommendation from Sport England is to make allowance of £35k per year sinking fund to allow replacement in years 10, 20 and 30 with a total cost of £1.05m. Clearly we would not propose to replace the pitch at year 40. This amount may reduce as there are early signs that the life of an AGP may be significantly longer than 10 years.

The amount the Council borrows is subject to commercial confidentiality based on the procurement and price secured by Alliance Leisure Services. The capital items it will cover are: Pavillion incorporating 4 team changing rooms, officials changing area, medical room, kitchen, social area, committee room, and public toilets. Also 3G Artificial Pitch (meeting World Rugby Regulation 22), fencing, spectator stands, spot lighting (x6) storage areas and 52 car parking spaces.

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The period of repayment will be no longer than the estimated asset life of 40 years.

This will be borrowed at a fixed annuity rate. The current rate over 40 years is 1.93% (certainty rate) the actual rate will depend on the first drawdown on the project.

The principal sum will be repaid during the 40 year term with the likelihood that the capital repayments will start after the first 2 – 3 years once the facility has been properly established.

Once the capital project has been agreed by Council as part of the capital programme the borrowing will be undertaken by the Council's treasury team when the funding requirement is deemed necessary after considering the Council's overall cash flow position and in accordance with the Council's Constitution. This is standard procedure for all capital projects and is, of course, subject to call in by the Oversight and Scrutiny Committee.

Paul Morgan asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture responded.

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Item (h)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Katherine Makant / Bill Bagnell

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

“What do you estimate would be the financial consequences to the taxpayer of failure to be able to build houses / flats on the Faraday Rd football pitch?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

The financial need to include the Faraday Rd former football pitch within the development package to enable the regeneration of LRIE for the long term benefit of taxpayers including local businesses and residents is recognised. It was identified by consultants as early as 2011 and reiterated in the Development Brief approved by Executive in November 2020. The financial contribution of the Faraday Rd site to the overall scheme will depend on the quantum of residential development that can be delivered and that will be defined by the statutory planning process.

The Council's position on the former football ground at Faraday Rd and how it relates to our aspirations for the wider LRIE is set out in our responses to Frequently Asked Questions, which are freely available on the Council's website at <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/playingpitches> and <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/lrie>

John Gotelee asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development responded.

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Item (i)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Janet Weekes

(i) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation by Graham Storey:

“Does the fact that over 1860 applications to the new Housing register have been rejected since January indicate that the social housing policy is not meeting the councils objective of “Enabling every resident to have access to a home that meets their needs””

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

This indicates that the Councils objective as stated, is being achieved because applicants do not qualify if they are not local to the district or, do not have a genuine housing need.

In addition, West Berkshire Council continues to work in partnership with Sovereign through the joint venture, to assist with delivering additional affordable housing of all types, including social rent to meet genuine need. As committed through the Housing Strategy, the development of a Housing Company also continues.

Graham Storey asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation responded.

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Item (j)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Bryan Lyttle

(j) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for planning and transport by Simon Pike:

"Will the Council follow the recommendation of the Institute of Lighting Professionals in its guidance note 01/21 'The Reduction of Obtrusive Light' that "Local Planning Authorities specify the following environmental zones for exterior lighting control within their Development Plans"? (there are five zones: urban, suburban, rural, natural and protected)."

The Portfolio Holder for planning and transport answered:

Thank you for your question.

The Institute of Lighting Professionals have not notified the Council of its latest guidance note so we were currently unaware of it.

Having searched on line for a copy it is only available behind an Institute Membership firewall, so we are unable to view it.

However, the Council considered lighting under Policy SP7 Design Principles of the Local Plan Review and this could be considered further during this process.

Simon Pike asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport undertook to provide a response to subsequent to the meeting.

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Item (k)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Katherine Makant

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

“Could you please confirm the total costs of preparation of Faraday Road Football Ground to be reopened as a recreation pitch, inc. demolition of the burnt down clubhouse, removal of fences, site clearance, resurfacing works, etc.”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

The total expenditure to date of the works to Faraday Rd former football ground to make it safe prior to opening it to the public is £115,622. This is broken down as follows:

- £22,389 to demolish the remainder of the clubhouse and ancillary structures following the fire in August
- £5,790 on the planning application including bat and drainage surveys
- £58,883 on the initial survey, vegetation clearance, removal of floodlights, heras fencing, removal of eastern steps and clearance of hardstanding, fencing modifications and tree removal, and repairs to gully gratings in readiness for resurfacing
- £27,319 on resurfacing the hardstanding to the west where the stadium was located
- £840 on removal of waste including needles between eastern fences
- £630 to cover the cost of delays while dealing with protesters who accessed the site illegally on 4 November.

As the site has been closed since 2018, any proposals to open the ground to the public would have incurred costs to make the site safe. These costs should be taken into context against the future financial benefits that the regeneration will bring to the taxpayer.

Vaughan Miller asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development responded.

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Executive Questions: Members

Please find below the questions submitted by members for the meeting of the Executive on 18th November 2021.

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Item (a)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley, Eric Owens

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

“Why is the planning department of West Berkshire Council not testing the applicability of CS15 given it is one of our major tools in the fight against climate change and as a result, by not demanding net zero homes, we simply add to the problem we will need to tackle with every application that is approved”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

The Planning Department is testing the applicability of CS15 via the appeal at Sandford Park and continues to keep this policy under review.

Policy CS15 was a model policy at the time it was written until the government abolished the Code for Sustainable Homes.

If the Council was to rely on that part of the Policy, which is not in conformity with the NPPF and demand net zero homes then developers could appeal to the Planning Inspectorate and potentially ask for costs against the Council for unreasonable behaviour.

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Item (b)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Eric Owens /Bryan Lyttle

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

“Given that the previous Portfolio Holder, Hilary Cole, confirmed that CIL charges would not have been levied to residents if they had filled in their Planning paperwork correctly, in particular two cases which have been referred to in previous Council meetings, will the current Portfolio Holder now cancel those charges with immediate effect - reimbursing and/or cancelling all charges in such cases?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

No. This issue has been investigated numerous times and no new evidence has been presented at any time to alter the facts of both cases.

As has been previously stated the only similarity in the cases is that the applicants (a private individual and a developer) have fallen foul of the CIL regulations. It is not a matter of not filling in forms.

Councillor Brooks asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport responded.

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Item (c)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley

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

“The signs within a District can very quickly show the level of pride that a Local Council has in its area. Will the Portfolio holder explain what he is doing regarding the dreadful state of Highways signs across the District as we understand that the cleaning and replacement of these has been de-prioritised in recent years and has therefore led to a very poor state of affairs?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

The maintenance of signage across the District is an important aid to the direction and movement of traffic using the network. We currently undertake cyclic condition inspections, as part of a wider highway inspection regime and targeted inspections informed by defect reports received from customers.

We prioritise repairs and maintenance of road signs on a risk based strategy, as we do with all our Highway assets, and in accordance with agreed service levels to ensure the visibility, legibility and correctness of individual signs.

At present no cyclic cleaning or renewal of aging signs is undertaken unless it is considered to be a risk to highway users or safety critical.

If there are any particular signs you are concerned about I suggest reporting them on the Council's report a problem webpage.

Councillor Dillon asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport responded.

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Item (d)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Jenny Graham

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

“Why is it that nearly 12 years after Newbury Racecourse proposed a Car Club for their residents on the new strategic housing development – which is over a mile long - there is not one parking space allocated on the site by them for a Car Club car?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Thank you Councillor Vickers for your question. The Travel Plan for the housing at the racecourse included provision for a car club. This commitment was combined with the Council's desire to see a car club for the central Newbury area and the opportunity to bid for government funding to establish such an initiative.

As part of the car club for Newbury there has been a dedicated space and car immediately adjacent to the racecourse site since the beginning. The decision to site the car just outside the new housing development was to try and encourage use from existing residents in the Eastfields area as well as residents of the new housing thereby maximising potential for impact and success.

As the site was built out further to the east, space was allocated for an additional car club vehicle, which would be an electric car. Now that there is a new operator of the car club on board this additional car will look to be established to serve the wider site. The commitment is there through the Travel Plan to see this happen and provide this facility on the development.

Councillor Vickers asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport undertook to provide a response to subsequent to the meeting.

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Item (e)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Jenny Graham

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

“While the Request for Tenders issued by this Council to seek interest in taking on the existing Newbury Car Club only asked for bidders to commit to between just 5 and 8 vehicles in a contract of between 3 and 6 years, the successful bidder Enterprise has said their aim is for 50 vehicles – all EVs - within 5 years, located right across the District. Why was there such a gap between this Council's ambitions and those of Enterprise and what will you be doing to close the gap?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Thank you Councillor Vickers for your question.

The Council is ambitious in its response to Climate Change and its desire to be Carbon Neutral by 2030. It has reorganised its structure in recognition of the key areas that will deliver change and has developed a new Environment Delivery Team staffed by enthusiastic and experienced officers ambitious to promote all measures that will deliver our goals.

On the expiry of the contract with the previous supplier of the Newbury Car Club, Co-wheels, it was decided to continue with this key project and seek an operator for the next period of delivery. There was a degree of frustration that the Council's ambitions in regard to expanding the Car Club were not being met by the incumbent operator and officers knew that a more ambitious marketing effort was required, particularly to make the Car Club available across the whole District, not just in Newbury.

Enterprise came out of the competitive process the best company with a well-prepared bid and references that demonstrated their ability to deliver and grow Car Clubs when working with Local Authorities. The bid made it clear that the Council's contribution* to the Car Club would be wholly directed towards a multi-channel marketing effort, with Enterprise picking up all operational costs, including the installation of charging points for car club EVs.

The figure of up to 50 Car Club cars across the District was not specifically mentioned in the tender response, but emerged in conversations and briefings with Enterprise as publicity was given to the new contract. This is a bold ambition, fully supported by the

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Council, but its delivery will depend on the prevailing operational and planning environment.

The Council is pleased that after your initial reservations over the appointment of Enterprise you are now fully behind our current ambitions and the ambition of Enterprise to deliver with them in partnership. However the West Berkshire Car Club evolves over the period of the contract – and any follow-on contract – we hope to be able to work together on the overall ambitious delivery without unnecessarily being fixed on a particular number of vehicles. The overall definition of success is broader than that and includes awareness, changing behaviours, utilisation and a whole new approach to personal mobility. This Council has that ambition.

Councillor Vickers asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport responded.

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Item (f)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley/ Peter Walker

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

“As the new 500-place multi-storey car park behind the West Berkshire Council Market Street offices are soon to be handed over to the Council, what changes in arrangements for its use are envisaged in the light of the post-Covid changes we are experiencing in travel and work habits?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

The car park was designed to meet the pre-pandemic parking needs of rail users and Council staff. 150 spaces are reserved for Council employees Monday to Friday daytimes, but are available to everyone outside of these times. The remaining spaces are leased to Great Western Railway and National Rail. Regular meetings will be held between the three parties, during which any post-pandemic changes in travel and work habits can be discussed. However under the management agreement, decisions on tariffs within the car park are at the discretion of the rail companies.

Councillor Moore asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport responded.

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Item (g)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Avril Allenby / Ian Pearson

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

“Why have you arranged food vouchers for the Christmas holiday but let over 3500 children in West Berkshire go without vouchers for the October half term?”

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

During the pandemic there have been various funding allocations which have been used towards the cost of allocating vouchers to free school meal children and children who are deemed vulnerable. This has included vulnerable two year olds, early year's pupil premium, those with a social worker and the most vulnerable receiving early help services. Please see the table below.

Name of scheme	Date	Total Pupils	£ Vouchers per child	Total £ per scheme
Food Voucher Scheme and Covid Winter Grant Scheme - Christmas 2020	Dec-20	3685	£30	£110,550.00
Winter COVID Grant - Food Vouchers - February Half Term 2021	Feb-21	3798	£15	£56,970.00
Winter COVID Grant - Food Vouchers - Easter Holidays 2021	Mar-21	3870	£30	£116,100.00
Food Vouchers - May Half Term 2021 - COVID Local Support Grant	May-21	3916	£15	£58,740.00
Summer Covid Grant - Food Vouchers - Summer Holidays 2021	Jul-21	3991	£75	£299,325.00
Total cost since Start of Pandemic				£641,685.00

The process to ensure that all the eligible children are supported during the various holiday periods involves a considerable amount of checking by schools and officers. The vouchers are order based on the school lists and then each family is allocated a code by their school against which they can redeem their vouchers for their chosen supermarket. At the end of the summer scheme it was announced that there was to be no further funding. This was communicated widely to families and schools. Following the announcement of the Household Support Fund a discussion took place about how best to use this new funding. Part of this funding is to be used to support families. The decision was then made that there would be a further allocation of vouchers as this is a very direct way to support families and that the Christmas period would be an excellent time to be providing support for food provision. Families are also able to apply for funding to support household bills and other financial needs directly

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through the Household Support Fund. There will also be further vouchers allocated during the February half term and potentially the Easter break subject to there being sufficient funding.

From Easter 2021 the Holiday Food and Activities (HAF) programme ran alongside offering hot food and activities for free school meals children. The total grant for this £404,460 has to date covered the cost of both the 4 days at Easter and 16 days in summer and will provide provision for a further four days in the Christmas break.

Holiday Activities and Food overview:

- Total cost of HAF April 2021 to October 2021 cost so far £225,725
- Total number of HAF activities - this figure is the number of locations for Easter and summer 27
- Easter 11 sites open for 44 sessions
- Summer 16 sites open for 256 sessions
- Total number of people who participated in HAF – Easter and summer 1269 this is the accumulative figure

There has also been a further announcement that HAF will be further expanded across next year and early plans are in place for West Berkshire to build on the good provision that has been developed over this year.

On the 6 October we received notice that we were to receive a new grant to help households facing financial difficulties over the winter months. This grant came with new guidelines that said the funding was to cover households both with and without children. We decided that our priority was to enable all eligible recipients to get access to this as quickly as possible, and prioritised getting this application online prior to the October half term. We were one of the first local authorities across the country to do so. Recognising the financial pressures from the festive season we agreed that free schools meals voucher would be a welcome top up to this funding for eligible families. Arrangements are already in pace to allocate this directly.

Councillor Pattenden asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education responded.

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

Item (h)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Eric Owens, Gary Raynor

(h) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for planning and transport by Councillor Adrian Abbs:

“Would the Council accept that the lack of enforcement officers has led to the regrettable situation in Lambourn where a 7-8 year-old apparent illegal conversion and occupation of a stable has now resulted in Western Area Planning being forced to pass an application for lawful occupation to the dismay of the residents of Lambourn.”

The Portfolio Holder for planning and transport answered:

It is the responsibility of a developer and/or landowner to ensure that they have the correct planning permission(s) in place for the use of land they own and/or occupy. Obviously the number of officers has an effect on the amount of work that can be undertaken, and when demand is high for reactive enforcement work on contraventions that are brought to our attention, this can introduce competing demands that must be prioritised. We are conscious of the demands placed on our two planning enforcement officers and have authorised the creation of an additional Planning Enforcement post. The appointment of a temporary officer is underway to fill the gap until that permanent post is filled.

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

Item (i)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley

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

“Can the Portfolio explain why, ten months after the Speed Review Task Group met and agreed to recommend the reduction of the speed limit on the A4 from Henwick Lane to Lower Way from 40MPH to 30MPH, the Council has still not gone out to Consultation on the matter?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Brooks. As you are aware, the speed limit task group considered your request to lower the speed limit on this section of the A4 in December 2020. Along with three other speed limits, the task group recommended that this speed limit was lowered. These four projects were then included in the Network Management Minor Works Programme for this financial year.

The Traffic and Road Safety team is responsible for implementing changes to speed limits, but please bear in mind that this team was at the forefront of the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of its effects on the Highway. The pandemic resulted in a change in priorities for many staff, particularly in the Traffic team. The various measures implemented on the highway in response to the pandemic were resourced at the expense of pre-existing projects on the 2020-21 Minor Works Programme and as a result many schemes on the programme were delayed and had to be deferred until 2021-22, including speed limit changes agreed at the 2019 Speed Limit Review. When matters began to return to normal, the team was able to pick up projects that had been delayed. It would not have made sense to start work on new projects before the previous year's ones had been finished, so work on this speed limit did not begin until well into the current financial year.

Changes to speed limits involve statutory consultation processes in order to create new Traffic Regulation Orders using powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The latest position with the speed limits agreed in 2020 is that the Traffic team has completed the process of detailed site surveys and defining the extents of the new limits and the information has been given to colleagues in Legal Services to draft the new Orders. When this has been done, there will be a three week statutory consultation period. If no statutory objections are received, the new speed limits can be brought into force relatively quickly but any objections will need to be the subject of a separate report to determine how to proceed.

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

Councillor Brooks asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport responded.



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

Item (j)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley

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

“Whose job in this ‘crossroads of southern England’ - which is our District - is it to ensure that drivers of long-distance HGVs, of which the country is so short, have decent facilities to use on the job?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport answered:

Thank you Councillor Vickers for your question. The provision of facilities for lorry drivers is a nationwide issue, particularly in proximity to National Gateways, the Strategic Road Network and other major freight generators. Regulations on drivers' working hours and long haulage distances mean that drivers are often required to take mandatory overnight breaks. Locally, this results in a demand for lorry parking on both the M4 and A34 corridors, as well as freight traffic generated by the District's own economy.

In terms of lorry parking on the Strategic Road Network, West Berkshire is well-catered for; with almost 300 spaces at the motorway service stations (Reading, Chieveley and Membury), plus a further 27 spaces just south of the District on the A34 at Tothill. The motorway service stations typically offer drivers with the opportunity to use bathroom facilities, cafes and shops, although there is a cost for stays in excess of two hours.

There are a number of ways that coordination of work to improve HGV driver facilities can be tackled. Through the planning process we ensure that lorry parking issues are considered in line with requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. Regionally, we are engaging through the Transport for the South East's emerging freight strategy and the National Highways Route Investment Strategies to seek that facilities are provided for both the M4 and A34 corridors. Locally, the Local Transport Plan Freight Strategy contains policies that seek to improve lorry parking and the forthcoming review of the Local Transport Plan will include reviewing freight policies, including those relating to provision of lorry parking and driver facilities.

Councillor Vickers asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport responded.

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

Item (k)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Matt Pearce

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

“When deciding on the proposed Sports Hub (based at Newbury Rugby Club) which other locations were considered and rejected?”

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

The other sites which have been explored for the location of a 3G pitch as a replacement for the Faraday Road Stadium were:

- Northcroft Park – reason for rejection: Flood risk, area would have impacted on cricket provision on the site
- The Diamond – reason for rejection: -Site too small. No current support facilities available with limited options to expand to Step 5 if required.
- Henwick Worthy – reason for rejection: Not in Newbury, a Step 6 or Step 5 facility would have impacted on other grass pitches available on the site.

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

Item (I)	Executive Meeting on 18 November 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley

(I) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture by Councillor Jeff Brooks:

“Given that it will be the Platinum Jubilee celebrations during the weekend of 3rd June 2022, and the public will be encouraged to plan and enjoy Street Parties on 5th June - to be known as the Jubilee lunch - will the Council enter into the spirit of this magnificent occasion by waiving fees for street closures to interested residents?”

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture answered:

Road closures for events on the highway require a legal order to be made. In some cases, mainly for larger events or events on main roads, it is necessary to advertise the order in the local newspaper and this will incur costs. However, for small street parties on minor residential streets it is not usually necessary to advertise the closure in advance, and therefore no charge is made. I would envisage that the majority of street parties for the Jubilee will fall under the latter and there will therefore be no charge. I would advise anyone planning such a party to contact the Council's Traffic Management and Road Safety team at the earliest opportunity to make the arrangements. Further information on the process and an application form are available on our website.

Councillor Brooks asked a supplementary question at the meeting to which the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture responded.

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