

Questions and Answers

Executive

Thursday, 16th December, 2021

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

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Guidance to Officers

- **Answers should be brief and to the point**
- **If the subject matter is not the Council's responsibility, then the questioner should be directed to the appropriate organisation.**
- **Additional supporting information can be provided for the Portfolio Holder for Supplementary questions.**
- **Your Executive Director should see your response prior to it being finalised with the Portfolio Holder.**
- **Above all, answers must be accurate.**

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

Item (A)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley

(A) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport by Steve Webb:

“When will the footway along the A340 between Tidmarsh and Pangbourne be cleared to enable the safe passage of pedestrians along the footway?

Please note this has been reported to the Council on previous occasions, the first report of 2021 was made on 16 February 2021 with reference 192874. An WBC Officer inspected the area on 23 February and advised that the footway would be cleared, no further action has been taken.

The Parish Council has received reports of pedestrians being clipped by wing mirrors whilst on the pavement and vehicles crossing the central line of the carriageway to give pedestrians more space.”

On behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport, the Leader of the Council answered:

Thank you for your question about when the footway along the A340 between Tidmarsh and Pangbourne will be cleared to enable safe passage of pedestrians along the footway.

Apologies for the delay in resolving this matter. It is due to the fact that the work involved to clear this path has turned out to be more significant than was originally thought and the work will need to be built into our works programme. This has been further complicated by recent capacity issues with the Council's contractor. All being well, we expect this footpath to be cleared early in the new-year. Apologies that officers did not keep you informed but I have asked them to update you when the work is programmed.

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

Item (B)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Janet Weekes

(B) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships & Transformation by Alison May:

“Windmill Court, Mortimer provisions for the increasing demands of an ageing population. Burghfield & Mortimer residents continue to be concerned that this valuable service is under threat of closure as a result of increased costs being borne by Windmill Court residents combined with the current under utilisation of this important facility. Can West Berkshire Council reassure the good people of Burghfield & Mortimer that this service will continue to be available to those in need at a reasonable price for many years to come?”

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

The provision of older persons accommodation at Windmill Court that is managed and owned by Sovereign Housing Association is currently being considered as part of their Asset Management Review. Prior to the final outcome of the review being determined there will be an opportunity for local residents to provide their feedback to Sovereign as part of a consultation exercise. West Berkshire Council will work with Sovereign to ensure that housing needs for older persons accommodation in this area continue to be met.

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

Item (C)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Jenny Graham / Jon Winstanley

(C) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste by Gareth Beard:

“We heard at the Executive meeting that Enterprise were planning up to 50EVs to be deployed in the West Berkshire area. To what extent do the council think these should be deployed in the rural areas rather than the towns?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste answered:

We do recognise that there are issues with rural mobility and the Car Club is potentially a great part of the solution to these issues.

We are fortunate to be working with a pioneering partner in Enterprise; we do recognise it would be easy for them to just concentrate Car Clubs in areas of higher population where there is a guaranteed market and easier economics. However, they (Enterprise), are keen to place vehicles anywhere that demand can be demonstrated and/or created. Nonetheless, any growth must work commercially for them. As a Council we will work with local communities to help expand this important service where demand exists.

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

Item (D)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley

(D) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste by Gareth Beard:

“How much of West Berkshire’ residential waste is exported to the Hampshire incinerators and what representation has west berks council made in relation to the recent planning application for a new incinerator at Alton?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste answered:

Thank you for your question about West Berkshire Council’s use of incinerators in Hampshire and whether a representation has been made in respect of a new incinerator at Alton.

In 2020/21, our waste contractor sent about 6,684 tonnes of household waste generated within the District to two energy recovery facilities (ERFs) located at Marchwood and Chineham in Hampshire. This represents about 22% of the total household waste from the Council area going to ERFs and about 9% of the total household waste collected in 2020/21.

The Council has not made a representation in relation to the planning application for the proposed Alton incinerator.

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

Item (E)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley

(E) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture by Nigel Foot:

“Can the Executive outline the rôle of West Berkshire Council as Lead Local Flood Authority for Newbury?”

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

Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and Flood Risk Regulations, West Berkshire Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority responsible for managing local flood risk from groundwater, surface water run-off and ordinary watercourses (non-main rivers). Individual duties and responsibilities are provided in some detail on the Council's [website](#) and I will happily arrange for a link to the relevant page to be sent to you for clarity.

The Portfolio Holder 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?”*

Nigel Foot asked the following supplementary question:

“Could I ask when the revised Local Flood Risk Strategy document will be published bearing in mind the importance of this plan to Newbury in a world that is changing due to Climate Change?”

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

I am not able to do that. I will get a written response to you.

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Item (6)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Martindill

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

“Does the revised doubling of the upfront capital cost to £3.351 million include the following items? :-

- 1) 'Lease premium' payable to Newbury Rugby Club?*
- 2) ALS fees already committed to submit the planning application and any future ALS fees associated with this planning application/project?*
- 3) Capital Costs for any grass pitch replacement, due to the loss of the grass pitch at Newbury Rugby Club (e.g. Manor Park and Calcot Linear Park), and*
- 4) The annual sinking fund allocation of £35,000 per annum (£1.4 million over 40 years)?”*

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

1. No this is a one off payment to Newbury rugby club to improve facilities that pertain to the rugby pitches such as improved lighting. This budget is not related to the creation of the new Pavilion, 3G pitch or the creation of the new Step 4 grounds
2. Yes
3. No – these costs will be ascertained following feasibility studies being undertaken at two locations these pitches all support a 10 year playing strategy.
4. No – the sinking fund has a separate budget allocation and is projected to be spent in 10-year cycles, when the 3G-pitch replacement is required.

The Portfolio Holder 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:

“The point that I am making is that you are looking at £4 million rather than £3.3 million which is a hell of a lot of money and I just wonder whether people are aware within the council chamber and within the public how much money you are spending on something which is not a replacement football ground?”

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

I don't know where you get the £4 million from.

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Item (6)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Martindill

(6) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure & Culture by John Gotelee:

“With reference to the Project risk assessment (Newbury Football Foundation), why is there no control strategy in place to counter the very likely possibility of a Judicial Review?”

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

We have robust governance arrangements in place and officers have confirmed that they are completely satisfied that such procedures would limit a successful Judicial Review action.

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

John Gotelee asked the following supplementary question:

“I’m wondering why it wasn’t on the documents. Every other thing on that documents was mitigated or proposals for mitigation, but the last one (the Judicial Review), which I actually think is quite likely since it’s not a replacement of the Faraday Road football pitch, there didn’t seem to be any mitigation of it.

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

As I’ve said, the officers don’t regard it as a risk.

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Item (6)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Martindill

(6) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure & Culture by Vaughan Miller:

“In Sport England's response to the Business Case for the Monks Lane Sports Hub, their estimate of your annual losses would amount to around £150,000. Add to this the cost of over 60,000 per year to service the £3,000,000 + loan for the build, takes the overall subsidy required to over £210,000 per year for 40 years. Is this executive happy to be the one which commits this future administration to underwrite this facility for over £200,000 pa for the next 40 years?”

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

Sport England has advised that it has no objection to the indicative business plan. The figures referenced in the question are highly improbable. To ensure best value is achieved for the operation of the Newbury Sports Hub, the management of the facilities will be subject to open market competition in the leisure market. The costs for the management of the Sports Hub will not be finalised and agreed until the completion of this tender process in the middle of 2022.

To answer the second part of the question directly the answer is yes. We are providing a state-of-the-art Sports Hub for the benefit of West Berkshire residents. This has massive benefits in terms of not just sporting engagement but also educational and motivational and of course general health and wellbeing both physical and mental.

The Portfolio Holder 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:

“Given that future administrations are going to have to bear increasing costs to mitigate the impact of climate change, plus ever increasing costs for social care, and maybe future pandemics and other demands, is it not completely irresponsible to commit to this spend, when you could have a better facility with an extra training pitch, a full clubhouse with accesses way better for active travel and public transport and which will not require any subsidies to be retained and will be retained by the council as an asset. Why won't you just cut your losses and back the superior Newbury Community Football Group proposal to re-develop Faraday Road football ground?”

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

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

In relation to whether the scheme is irresponsible the simple answer is no. We have a playing pitch strategy which runs for 10 years, which noted that there was a shortage of 8 3G pitches and also grass pitches and this council is working towards addressing that strategy.

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Item (6)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Martindill

(6) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure & Culture by Lee McDougall:

“What are the forecasted total running costs for the proposed 40 year lease for the planned sports hub at Newbury Rugby Club?”

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

It is a fairly complex response and so you may wish to look at it in writing subsequently. The capital cost of the project over the life of the lease (subject to planning conditions) is projected to be in the region of £3.351m plus a relatively small premium payment to Newbury Rugby Club for improving other facilities on their site (such as floodlights etc.) which is still being agreed. This capital sum will be borrowed in the normal way through the Public Works Loan Board.

The annual Capital Financing charge to Revenue budget, including repayment of the capital sum, is estimated to be circa £122,000 pa over 40 years using current PWLB annuity fixed rates as an assumption along with the annual £35,000 sinking fund contribution to replace the artificial pitch every 10 years, as advised by the Football Association and the rent for the lease at £41,000 per annum. All three items provide a total annual revenue cost of £198,000.

Final revenue costs will be determined following the tender for the new leisure management contract which will be conducted in 2022.

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Item (6)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Martindill

(6) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure & Culture by John Gotelee:

“Does the Council really believe that this Sports Hub can be up and running by the first week of July 2022?”

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

Yes provided we meet planning conditions and there are no legal challenges.

The Portfolio Holder 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:

“That’s a strong proviso. I have been living in this area for nigh on 64 years and am yet to see the council do a capital project on time and in budget, unless you can tell me of any others that you have done. I am worried that you won’t get anywhere near July. Can you show any sign that you have met the budget?”

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

I can’t do that but what you will see is later on the agenda a report to start the work on this scheme in January, and we have a 26 week construction period, which will hit July.

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Item (6)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Martindill

(6) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure & Culture by Alan Pearce:

“At the site visit to Monks Lane, the planning officers categorically stated that the facility was designed to support a step 6 club, yet the report issued for item 6 of this agenda clearly states step 4- please clarify?”

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

I can confirm that the Sports Hub is designed to fully accommodate a Step 4 Club

The Portfolio Holder 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:

“I would just like some clarification as there is a lot of confusion. Am I right in saying that Monks Lane is not a replacement, but may be used in the future for replacement or part of a replacement strategy. Is that right? At this point in time it is not being built as a replacement. Is that a fair assessment? At the moment it is not a replacement but in the future it may be used as part of a replacement or part of a replacement strategy?”

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

It is certainly part of a replacement strategy.

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Item (6)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Martindill

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

“From the Value for Money and governance perspective, why has the Council, or its agents, not made a direct comparison of this Monks Lane proposal with similar scheme such as the NCFG 3G pitch and new clubhouse proposal for Faraday Road (which had already been approved by the WAP committee)?”

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

The Newbury Sports Hub represents high quality development and value for money. This is in conformation with our playing pitch strategy. We are all aware of the Council's proposals for the wider regeneration of the London Road Industrial Estate which includes Faraday Road.

The Portfolio Holder 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:

“It is confirmed that it is £200,000 per annum that you will be subsidising this facility for, and I don't think that's good value for money at all so why are you not considering other more practical or suitable alternatives rather than just this one that you are looking at? It's not good value for money.”

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

This Council does not own any suitable land within a 20-minute drive time specified as a replacement in part for Faraday Road, so even if an alternative site could be found either to rent or buy from a third party there would still be either a revenue or capital spend. Further, delays in going through this process would inevitably lead to further building cost inflation not to mention legal and design fees.

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Item (6)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Martindill

(6) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure & Culture by Vaughan Miller:

“Is the sports hub no longer 'good value for money' at £3.35m, since the definition from the Varsity Consulting report (referenced in the meeting appendices), cited £2.5m-£3m as the range for good value for this type of scheme?”

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

May I suggest you read the Varsity Consulting report again and in particular paragraph 3.3. This states that the scheme is good value for money coming out at £2,879 per square metre against typical costs of between £2,500 and £3,000 per square metre. It does not cite £2.5m - £3m as the total development cost of the Sports Hub. I think that your confusion is that this report relates to the club house only. The 3G pitch, stand, turnstiles and floodlights are all under a separate contract.

The Portfolio Holder 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:

“So we know that delivering the Sports Hub, not just building it, will cost closer to £4m next year, not just the £3.35m build cost. The FA have indicated that this money could provide 3 or 4 AGPs. So rather than ploughing all this money into a single Sports Hub in Newbury, which by the way is not tested yet whether it will meet the like for like requirement to be a replacement for Faraday Road football ground. Have you considered alternatively using this money to build 3 or 4 of the 8 3G pitches needed across the district, thus bringing greater benefits to council tax payers across the whole district?”

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

I think perhaps that what you are misunderstanding Cllr Miller is that a 3G pitch costs something in the region of £1.35m for just the pitch. As you know, you would then need changing rooms and toilet facilities, so I am afraid you are not comparing like with like.

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

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Guidance to Officers

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- **Above all, answers must be accurate.**

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

Item (A)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Jon Winstanley

(A) Question submitted to the Leader of the Council by Councillor Alan Macro:

“Given their vital contribution to our community, will the Council introduce measures to allow those who volunteer at the vaccination centre to use the Kennet Centre car park free of charge, in order to facilitate their vital work?”

The Leader of the Council answered:

Councillor Macro, thank you for your question, and for the opportunity to dispel some of the inaccurate reporting on this issue that has been circulated by the local press.

Having been contacted direct by those running the service on the weekend of the 4th December we responded by offering free parking for volunteers at the Kennet Centre vaccination centre in the new Newbury station car park. This was in response to the new Omicron variant and a rapid escalation of the booster programme. It is a way for us to express our thanks to them during this vital stage of the vaccination programme and to help facilitate this vital work.

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the feedback that I have been sent by the St John's vaccinator administering this scheme. The email that I have received says: “I have received nothing but professional and expeditious support from the council in this matter and my request for free parking for volunteers in the Covid vaccination centre was immediately authorised and set up in partnership with your parking manager. This matter is fully resolved and is monitored by the gentleman that sent the quote to ensure compliance and to avoid any abuse of the offer. Again, I cannot say enough for the reaction to the issue by West Berkshire council and their continued support for the community and the response to Covid associated matters”.

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

Councillor Alan Macro asked the following supplementary question:

“I would like to thank the council for moving on this. However, some of these volunteers have actually been spending money on parking to enable them to volunteer, for some

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time. Will you please consider reimbursing them for the parking fees they incurred before the free parking was introduced?"

The Leader of the Council answered:

There is no requirement for those volunteers to have been spending that money because the government spent billions on the vaccination rollout and I understand that both the Royal Voluntary Service and the St John's Ambulance allow for expenses to be claimed, which include mileage and parking costs. This has been the case from the start of the rollout. Details of how volunteers can claim this is publicly available on their FAQs, so I would urge any volunteer who has not yet claimed to do so quickly in case there is a time limit on when claims can be made. Or, I am sure they can speak to their team leader for assistance in following that process. Since the funding of this programme is received by those two organisations rather than West Berkshire council, the duty to reimburse volunteers expenses will also fall to them.

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

Item (B)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Shiraz Sheikh

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

“Will the portfolio holder consider altering EAG, such that ideas that are debated are made public and only commercially sensitive information is placed into a separate part 2 section of the group's agenda?”

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

The simple answer is No. EAG or Environmental Action Group, for the benefit of the public, is not a decision making body, nor are it's Transport and Planning equivalents. It is a cross party confidential forum allowing for exchange of views and advice to the portfolio holder for matters such as development of policies and strategies. When developed, such policies would be consulted on where appropriate and any significant key decision would be the matter for the Executive.

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

Councillor Adrian Abbs asked the following supplementary question:

“EAG as far as I was aware stands for Environmental Advisory Group rather than Environmental Action Group. The answer doesn't make much sense. The question is framed around letting the public listen to the debate. When it becomes confidential with commercially sensitive information etc. I totally understand why it would move to a Part II, but I don't understand and I would like you to explain why all parts of EAG are held in Part II and not just some of it”.

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

Bear in mind this is just one of three different groups as I mentioned earlier in my answer to the original question. There is also the equivalent Transport and Planning ones. I don't see why the Environmental one should be any different to the other two.

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Item (C)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Shiraz Sheikh/Clare Ockwell

(C) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure & Culture by Councillor Tony Vickers:

“How confident is the Executive Member that the 'rotten ward' of Sandleford and Greenham Parish, where I was 'elected' in 2019 with zero votes, will no longer exist to embarrass him and his colleagues when the next local elections arrive?”

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

Our officers have made enquiries and spoken to the Boundary Commission representative to take soundings on how a governance review would be received by the Commission. This is because we are required to obtain the consent, whilst within the 5 year period from when the review of wards was last undertaken. The informal view we had was that this would largely be dependent on what the outcome of the Sandleford appeal is on housing numbers to provide certainty.

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

Councillor Tony Vickers asked the following supplementary question:

“I’ve read the guidance on Community Governance Reviews in some detail. I looked at this 7 years ago when it was first published, and again when the Sandleford ward was created. It is possible to take a single, simple issue like this separate from a full CGR. If it won’t be done voluntarily by the district council, then it will be done through petition which we will have to set up with the affected residents. Does the Portfolio Holder really want that to happen, or do you just want to let it drag on and face embarrassment because to do a full CGR I don’t believe is possible in the time available before the next election? I have 6 electors who elect 5 parish councillors and you can’t even get the nomination papers signed for them. It is ridiculous. ”

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

We have been assured that this was not something that is remotely unique to West Berkshire Council and we could potentially be spending a lot of time and resources in undertaking a Community Governance Review where it would only be largely dependent on certainty as to housing numbers. That is the advice that we have been given.

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Item (D)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Joseph Holmes

(D) Question submitted to the Leader of the Council by Councillor Jeff Brooks:

“Will the Leader tell us whether succession plans are in place for officers in key roles who have recently retired or may intend to retire - Alex Drysdale as an example - where the disruption has impacted or likely to impact significantly on the delivery of key strategic objectives of this Council?”

The Leader of the Council answered:

Ensuring that we deliver the key strategic objectives of the Council is at the core of my approach as Leader. As an Executive, and with the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, we receive quarterly reports on the delivery of the Council Strategy to ensure that its delivery is rigorously maintained, as we have done this evening. Any loss of a member of staff can be disruptive as they will have built up specific knowledge as to how the Council works. The Council's workforce strategy recognises the challenge of succession planning and proposals are coming forward to further support this. All services look at key areas of resilience.

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

Councillor Jeff Brooks asked the following supplementary question:

“We were looking at the workforce strategy at Personnel Committee, and I'd like to think that we would be able to look at succession plans as well within that for key members of staff. Would you agree that they can come before the Personnel Committee please? Any department should be looking at the contingency for someone to leave, whether they retire or not, by succession planning. It is fair for the Personnel Committee to know that they are in place within departments. Not individuals per se, although if someone does give an indication they are going to retire in 12 months then it is reasonable to look at that in isolation. But the general point of succession planning I think should be coming through Personnel Committee”.

The Leader of the Council answered:

I am more than happy to take this up with our new HR manager. I know that they are currently reviewing all policies and procedures and looking in detail at the workforce

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strategy, as is our new Chief Executive so I'm very happy to come back to you once we have the opportunity to have that conversation and raise that for you.

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Item (E)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Paul Coe

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

“How much will the extra funding identified in the 'People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform' white paper allow West Berkshire Council to better plan and develop the support and care options provided by it?”

The Deputy Leader on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care answered:

I am answering this in the absence of Cllr Stewart and if you have a supplementary it may have to be answered in writing.

The question appears to anticipate that the Council needs to improve its care planning and support options, and that the extra funding will allow this. If that is what is being suggested, then I disagree - I think we are good at planning support and care for those who are entitled to such care and support. The White Paper certainly advocates change, and such change - in particular the cap on personal care costs - looks like it would introduce new clients to ASC support. However, we don't yet know how many that might be.

So far as the finance is concerned, in simple terms it is too early to give more than a general answer. We are still awaiting details of the Local Government Settlement 22/23 which will set out precisely how much this council will receive in general and social care funding. So at the present time we don't know, in the words of the question, “how much ... the extra funding ... (will) ... allow”. Certainly, the plan to invest £5.4bn nationally into adult social care over the next three years should deal with the principal changes that are planned to be introduced, including that cap on personal care costs and the equalisation of care costs across the sector.

Now I don't want to give the impression that officers are just sitting on their hands waiting for the announcement of funding, or to see the effect of the changes. There is a project across multiple teams to prepare for all eventualities. But, fundamentally, we are waiting for the precise rules and, more to the point, to understand what the funding is going to look in order to assess what changes there will be and how the council should respond to them.

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

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

Councillor Alan Macro asked the following supplementary question:

“In the Executive summary of the White Paper it mentions no more than £70 million to increase the support. Would you not agree with me that £70 million is not going to go very far when spread across all local authorities with adult social care responsibilities?”

The Deputy Leader on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing answered:

I don't recognise that figure. I am happy to look at the details if he points me and Councillor Stewart at those precise words. Certainly, in preparing an answer to this question I looked at the guidance in the White Paper and, as I say the number across social care in three years is £5.4 billion so those number differ somewhat, but please point us at the numbers you are quoting and we will do our best to answer the question.

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

Item (F)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Matthew Pearce

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

“What is the cost to the taxpayer over the life of the lease of the Sports Hub in both capital and revenue terms?”

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

I have already answered this in respect of a public question. Would Councillor Pattenden like me to repeat the answer or accept it as read?

The capital cost of the project over the life of the lease (subject to planning conditions) is projected to be in the region of £3.351m plus a relatively small premium payment to Newbury Rugby Club for improving other facilities on their site (such as floodlights etc.) which is still being agreed. This capital sum will be borrowed in the normal way through the Public Works Loan Board.

The annual Capital Financing charge to Revenue budget, including repayment of the capital sum, is estimated to be circa £122,000 pa over 40 years using current PWLB annuity fixed rates as an assumption along with the annual £35,000 sinking fund contribution to replace the artificial pitch every 10 years, as advised by the Football Association and the rent for the lease at £41,000 per annum. All three items provide a total annual revenue cost of £198,000.

Final revenue costs will be determined following the tender for the new leisure management contract which will be conducted in 2022.

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

Councillor Erik Pattenden asked the following supplementary question:

“You’ll know from previous discussions that from our side we don’t think that’s good value for money and we think that the money would be better spent elsewhere or on current services. Would you agree that there would need to potentially be corresponding rises in council tax or cuts in services in order to support those costs that you have just outlined, particularly the revenue cost”.

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

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

To put this in perspective the annual budget of this council is one of nearly £140 million, so £200,000 per annum is not a massive element that should effect the council tax rate.

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

Item (G)	Executive Meeting on 16 December 2021
Submitted to:	Janet Weekes

(G) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation by Councillor James Cole:

“In light of the recent introduction of our Social Value policy would the Portfolio Holder for Housing please review at the next Housing Board the possibility of installing ground source heating at the Chestnut Walk redevelopment, recognising the Council's commitments on both Climate Change and Social Value, and thereby taking the opportunity of turning this into a showpiece project that sets a real example to developers.”

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

West Berkshire Council remains focused on delivering on its commitments on both the environment and its newly adopted Social Value policy. We will be happy to review the possibility of installing ground source heating at the Chestnut Walk development at our next Housing Board. Pending the findings of this review the Board will then make a recommendation to Homes for West Berkshire, the Joint Venture between Sovereign Housing and this Council that is progressing this development.

I am confident that we will be able to achieve the highest possible environmental standards on this site through this Joint Venture. Sovereign Housing Association's sustainability statement relating to the planning application for Chestnut Walk, demonstrates their commitment to work with us to achieve our collective environmental ambitions relating to carbon neutrality and Social Value.

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

Councillor James Cole asked the following supplementary question:

“Another aspect of the implications of our new Social Value policy was raised as part of Hungerford Town Council's presentation on the planning aspects of the Chestnut Walk development last night. Cllr Downe asked if we could also look at minimising the cost of living for residents of new social or affordable housing by covering such issues as powering charge points for electric cars from house power rather than from

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

expensive commercially provided public power where possible. Would you be happy to include that element?"

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

Yes, we are striving to progress our environmental ambitions relating to the newly adopted Social Value policy and will consider making a recommendation to Homes for West Berkshire about the possibility of electrical vehicle charging to enable the use of electric cars or vehicles at Chestnut Walk. I agree with you that it is extremely important that we ensure that the residents of Chestnut Walk have reasonably priced access to electric vehicle charging points.



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