

Questions and Answers

Executive

Thursday 22nd September, 2022

West Berkshire Council is committed to equality of opportunity. We will treat everyone with respect, regardless of race, disability, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation.

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

Item (A)	Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022
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(A) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by John Gotelee:

“In respect of the plans for the LRIE to remain an industrial estate one can assume that vehicle movements will remain roughly the same so is the new A339 junction just another tax payer funded white elephant demonstrating that the council cannot be trusted with the public purse?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

I'm afraid that the premise of your question is inaccurate. The regeneration will result in an intensification of employment with hundreds more jobs on the site than at present, so one cannot assume, as you state, that the vehicle movements will remain roughly the same. This does render your question as somewhat moot.

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:

“You answered my question back in June to say that that junction was not actually needed, despite the extra vehicle movements caused by the original plans for houses. You said that the fact that you could manage without it meant that it wasn't essential. So my question is, what is it, is it essential or not? It was produced at a time when you cut the budget in West Berkshire by several million. Did you get good value for money?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

The objectives of the A339 widening and the access scheme that were completed in 2017 were to enhance the economic vitality of West Berkshire by facilitating growth, establish a direct access to the estate from the A339 to make new investment possible, to make the best use of transport networks and to improve the air quality around congested junctions. That is why Thames Valley LEP invested £1.9m to make it happen. That investment supports the recent 'refresh' LRIE delivery strategy approved at Executive on 9 June this year.

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Item (B)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

(B) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture by Richard Bobrucki:

“Please may I have an update on the progress on the development of the Lido at the Northcroft Leisure Centre, including milestones reached so far and the next significant steps?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture answered:

The Development Management Agreement has been signed with Alliance Leisure Services.

Work has commenced and this is currently progressing with ground stabilisation and the filling of voids beneath and around the pool. These voids have developed over many years with soil being washed away by the high water table. Stabilisation works will be completed by the end of September 2022.

Following this Enabling Works – Phase 1 (Structural Repairs) commence to reduce the existing pool length to 50m (Olympic pool length) where a new end wall will be constructed allowing the existing deep end to house a balance tank before being backfilled and paved over.

Design work is progressing on the overall layout, pool plant and interactive water features and slides. The planned opening date is still July 2023

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?”*

Richard Bobrucki asked the following supplementary question:

“Can we expect further planning applications for things like sustainable drainage?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture answered:

Yes you can.

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Item (C)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

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

“Can the Council please provide full details on how much officers time, over the past 10 years, has been recorded against the overall “LRIE re-development project”?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

No. The Council does not record officers' time in that way.

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:

“Are you aware of the OSMC Task Group report issued on 28 July 2020 in respect to the LRIE that clearly states as a recommendation that all officers time needs to be recorded for major projects. Please explain why you are not doing that?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

Council officers are paid a salary that is not dependent on the specific task they perform or projects they work on. If they weren't working on the project they would be working on something else and they'd be paid the same amount. There is no direct incremental cost to the council of their involvement in LRIE. It is of course proper budgeting at the start of a project to make an assessment of officer time to make sure that the resources that are required are in place, and where the council engages the service of external consultants then those services are a direct incremental cost for a specific piece of work. But your question referred to council officers.

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Item (D)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

(D) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside by Simon Pike:

“Why does the last bus for Thatcham on Monday to Saturday leave Newbury at 8.25pm, whereas the last bus for Theale leaves Reading at 22.30, and for Burghfield and Mortimer leaves Reading at 23.00?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

The bus services out of Reading are operated by Reading Buses. The number of passengers travelling justifies the later operation as these services receive no financial support from West Berkshire Council.

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?”*

Simon Pike asked the following supplementary question:

“Today is ‘World Car Free Day’ and obviously you can’t be car free unless there is an alternative. My question therefore is would it appear that Reading Borough Council values its public transport more highly than West Berkshire Council does?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

No is the very short answer. We have had some very good conversations with Reading transport and other local authorities because we all place a very high regard to transportation by bus which is evidenced quite clearly by the offers that we have run several times now, even when it’s not ‘World Car Free Day’.

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Item (E)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

(E) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture by Graham Storey:

“Why was the Weavers Yard development on land owned by the council allowed to be developed with 1) no social housing included, and 2) just 13 affordable apartments out of 232, well outside the council's policy of 30% affordable housing policy for brown field sites”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture answered:

A viability assessment accompanied application 16/00547/FULEXT, which demonstrated that the viability of the scheme was only sufficient for a maximum of 5.6% affordable housing units to be provided, which equated to 13 units. This was verified by an independent viability consultant, and subsequently agreed by planning officers and the Western Area Planning Committee on 23rd November 2016. This approach complies with local and national planning policy.

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?”*

Graham Storey asked the following supplementary question:

“Grainger, the developer, has just posted 30% increase in profits, do you think viability assessment may not have been what actually transpired afterwards?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture answered:

With respect, that was 6 years ago rather than today.



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

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

Item (F)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

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

“Please can the Council say if the London Road Industrial Estate Steering Group changed its name to the London Road Industrial Estate Project Board? and can you provide an updated list of the current members (Councillors and Officers) of this Steering Group /Project Board with their respective roles and responsibilities?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

The LRIE Steering Group ceased to exist when the developer partner arrangement with St Modwen ended in 2018. The LRIE Programme Board was set up to oversee the development of the site in line with the Avison Young Development Brief – see report EX3978 to Executive on 17th December 2020 for details. Following the approval of the refreshed approach to LRIE by Executive on 9th June 2022, the LRIE Programme Board now has overall responsibility for the direction and management of the LRIE Programme.

I am the only Member on the board as Executive Member for Finance & Economic Development. Officers on the board are Executive Director, Place (Chair), Executive Director, Resources, Service Director, Development & Regulation, Service Lead, Legal & Democratic, Service Lead, Customer Engagement & Transformation, Finance Manager: Resources & Environment, Economy Manager and the overall LRIE Programme Manager

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:

“As you are the only councillor on the board can I ask to have a face to face meeting with you? I'd like to discuss the fact that I don't think the London Road can be developed with an SPD and will need an outline planning permission.”

The Leader responded:

That isn't a supplementary question with regards to our constitution. If you wish to make an appointment with a councillor you can email Councillor Mackinnon directly.

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Item (H)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

(H) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture by Lee McDougall:

“When will the Council end its ban on allowing organised children's football on the football pitch in Faraday Road?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture answered:

The Council has no plans to change its current policy, which allows informal play on the grass area.

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?”*

Lee McDougall asked the following supplementary question:

“Given that you need a portaloos and a couple of goals you could allow hundreds of children to play on that pitch every month. Do you not think that is a ridiculous state of affairs for the Council to put their children in?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture answered:

Personally I don't.

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Item (I)	Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022
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(I) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by John Gotelee:

“What problems in relation to planning does the council see in turning a greenfield (faraday rd pitch) into a brownfield site?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

At this time, the Council as landowner knows of no impediments that would prevent the redevelopment of the Faraday Road playing field site but it will be for the Local Planning Authority to determine a planning application for the site when submitted.

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 slightly surprised that you are answering and not the planning councillor. There doesn’t seem to be a distinction in the council between the pitch and industrial estate. The pitch has never been developed, it’s not a brownfield site and different rules apply. What makes you certain that you can effectively turn it into a brownfield site?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

I didn’t say that it was certain at all Mr Gotelee. I wouldn’t want to prejudge any planning application and I’ll leave my answer there.

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Item (J)	Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022
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(J) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture by Paul Morgan:

“Can the Council please confirm the details (scope) and £ value of the contract(s) awarded (to date) to Alliance Leisure Services with respect to the Monks Lane Sports Hub?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture answered:

The scope of the work to date has been to design the Newbury Sports Hub to achieve a Step 4 ground grading standard, 3G pitch (compliant with FIFA and World Rugby regulation standards), pavilion and car parking.

The total value of the works is £126,000.

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:

“About a year ago Councillor Richard Somner said it was around £126,000, so can you tell me when the contract was placed with Alliance Leisure because the numbers on your website makes it look like £175,000 was spent on it so can you please clarify 1) when the contract was awarded and 2) can you check the £126,000 as I think that is light?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture answered:

I don't have that information to hand but I am very happy to arrange for it to be sent to you.

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Item (K)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

(K) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside by Simon Pike:

“Why did the Council identify the need for a ‘refined landscape review’ so late in its development of the new Local Plan?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

The additional landscape work commissioned for the Newbury and Thatcham area for the Local Plan Review is in response to the extra work done in relation to changes in the NPPF and the recent designation of the nutrient neutrality area.

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?”*

Simon Pike asked the following supplementary question:

“The NPPF is more than a year old and so my question is still valid. Why has it taken a year after the NPPF for you to realise that it was needed?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

I think that question is based on the fact that everything is only happening now. There is a considerable amount of work that has been undertaken and that continues to be undertaken to get anything in place for this Local Plan. We want it to be absolutely correct and therefore we take no shortcuts. The time that is taken is a sensible amount of time to take to achieve the position that we are in as far as I am concerned.

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Item (L)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

(L) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture by John Gotelee:

“The pitches represented by the NPPF are Football, Rugby union, Rugby League, Hockey and cricket. As only 2 of these will be represented at Monks Lane is calling it a sports hub a case of mis leading the public by mis representation?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture answered:

No the term sports hub is not a mis-representation.

Sports hubs bring together sport clubs and key local partners who want to develop and grow the sporting offering in the community.

It is envisaged that the Newbury sports hub will be a home venue for 2-3 football clubs and a training venue for many football clubs and rugby clubs, accessible for 80 hours of community use per week.

The pavilion includes a kitchen and social area can be hired for social events.

We expect the hub to be used for school holiday programmes, multiple competition and events, for coaching children in rugby and football and a location for obtaining achieving coach qualifications. It is in every sense a sports hub.

West Berkshire is supporting the development of more hockey and cricket facilities at other locations and is working closely with these National Governing Bodies and local clubs to achieve this.

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:

“It is misleading because when you’ve done the consultation you have sent out questions like ‘would you like more sports in the area?’. Everyone is going to answer ‘yes’, but the fact is that you are not giving more and you are effectively taking away”.

The Leader of the Council answered:

That was not a question, but a statement.

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Item (M)	Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022
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(M) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside by Simon Pike:

"When will the results of the Council's review of "the number of new homes in North East Thatcham for the draft local plan's next stage" be made public?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

The Councils proposals for new housing throughout West Berkshire will be made public with the publication of the Regulation 19 Consultation into the Replacement Local Plan.

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?"*

Simon Pike asked the following supplementary question:

"When will that happen, in particular? Will it be agreed by the Council at its meeting on 1 December?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

December is our target date.

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Item (N)	Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022
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(N) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by John Gotelee:

“Is there any way that the proposed regeneration of the LRIE is viable without building either commercial or residential units on the old football pitch area?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

It is unlikely. Under the Council's refreshed approach to the LRIE, approved by Executive on 9 June 2022, retaining the playing field site and adjoining car park within the LRIE red line provides flexibility to expand and/or relocate existing businesses, to attract more businesses to the area and to provide place-making elements including SUDS and biodiversity net gain.

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:

“So just to be clear you are saying that there is no way that the industrial estate when it's regenerated can be viable without building on that football pitch?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:

It sounds like you are repeating your question again and I will repeat the first part to my answer which is that it is very unlikely.

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

Item (O)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

(O) Question submitted to the Leader of the Council by Simon Pike:

“Why are West Berkshire Council press releases not published on its website?”

The Leader of the Council answered:

West Berkshire Council communicates with residents, customers, journalists, partners and a wide range of other stakeholder groups. Such groups include town and parish councils, the voluntary sector and local industry.

There is no one size fits all approach and we will use different channels to talk to different groups about the issues which are most important to them. In the case of residents and journalists, while there is a good deal of overlap there will be occasions where the information shared is specifically for the media to provide an operational or technical update on an issue they are following. Similarly, we will hold media briefings for journalists to provide updates and answer questions on key activities and projects within the Council.

That said and in answer to your question the majority of press releases are published in the West Berkshire Council newsroom. Since the beginning of July, more than three-quarters of releases issued to the media were also published online for residents to read directly. In real terms, only five of 21 media releases were not published in the newsroom.

I would also highlight that our website newsroom, while useful, is not primarily how residents choose to access our news. Views of our website news articles are modest compared with the number of residents reading our news in our e-newsletters and on social media – and who will access content by those journalist with whom we work.

The Leader of the Council 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:

“Thank you for telling me about the news website which I certainly have not been able to find despite considerable use of the Council's website. Given that the Council already has a system for residents to subscribe to information about specific consultations couldn't the same means be applied for subscribing to receive all press

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releases, because the press release is presumably intended for the ultimate information of the residents?"

The Leader of the Council answered:

I think that when you work within this arena you recognise that you need to talk differently sometimes to different audiences, and what we do is take the same information and turn that into our E-newsletters. Most of our press releases do end up within our E-newsletters and I would encourage most people to subscribe to that where they can effectively get all the news from West Berkshire Council direct. So I would encourage people to please sign up to our E-newsletter.

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

Item (A)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

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

“Why has West Berkshire Council not adjusted dog-waste bin collections to align with the increased use by residents?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:

Cllr Abbs, thank you for your question. I do hope you mean increased use by dogs, not residents.

Approximately 33% of the population own a dog. Increasing dog waste bin collections would mean asking 67% of the population to subsidise dog ownership by footing this additional expense, which would seem ludicrous when it is perfectly acceptable for dog owners to place dog waste in their own black bins, as has been consistently advised for some time.

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:

“I’m quite surprised at that answer Councillor Sumner because I have talked to officers in between, because I sent this question in a long time ago. I thought we were taking actions to address this but you’ve not answered that question, so my supplementary is what could it be, actually I haven’t got one ”.

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Item (B)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

(B) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside by Councillor Tony Vickers:

“Can the Executive Member for Planning & Highways explain which flood risk authorities (this Council, the Environment Agency or Thames Water) are responsible for maintaining which sections of the North Brook in Newbury, which is naturally an arm of the Kennet River when full and overflowing at its source west of Northcroft Park, then is culverted in what is a surface water sewer under - and draining much of - the town centre, to emerge east of the London Road Industrial Estate behind a row of residential properties, before again being culverted under the A4 and being made to flow into the River Lambourn rather than the River Kennet into which it flowed directly until at least 1893?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

Thames Water.

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:

“If it's Thames Water could we please consider applying to their surface water drainage programme funding so that we can help deal with the problem which is affecting our own site and lots of others in Newbury town centre?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

Yes. You will know from OSMC recently that there are ongoing conversations with Thames Water anyway over several topics that sit under them. We will always look to make sure that the right thing is being done by the right people with the right amount of money provided.

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

Item (C)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

(C) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside by Councillor Alan Macro:

"In the past, members with proposed housing allocations in their ward have been invited to attend Planning Advisory Group meetings when these allocations are to be discussed. What plans do you have to do this for the current Local Plan Review?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

Council has tasked the Planning Advisory Group with the production of the Local Plan Review but it is not a formal decision making body, that is the Council. Consequently, Planning Advisory Group (PAG) and for completeness Transport Advisory Group (TAG) and Environment Advisory Group (EAG) are private meetings. Therefore attendance at those meetings is by invitation of the Chairman only.

However, members of PAG have been invited previously and recently to share relevant information with their group members to enable them to give informed feedback to PAG but on the clear understanding that these private meetings are considered to be Part 2.

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 past Members affected by the housing allocations have been invited along by the Chair to these meetings so that they can hear the reasons why those allocations are still in the Plan and to provide their input. Without this capability they are not able to do that except through hearsay, passing their comments onto one of the members of PAG until the actual Council meeting in which case the deal is done and it is too late. Would the Councillor reconsider please?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

I would make one other comment before I answer that part which is that I think you are doing a bit of a disservice to Members generally to regard it as hearsay. Hearsay to me means that it is likely to be full of inaccuracies and I am sure that isn't the case and I'm sure that is not what you meant. The preferred methodology has been stated and it's been stated in the PAG meetings. There are occasions where other Members can be invited along and we will take that on consideration, as and when. I am concerned with the level of detail that is gone through and the depth of conversation that we have all been exposed to in those circles at the moment, and there won't



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necessarily be a level of understanding which will give good contribution to the meetings, and that to me is a concern.

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Item (D)	Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022
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(D) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture by Councillor Martha Vickers:

“What preparations has this Council made for Community Warm Spaces, to help with fuel bills and the real dangers to health from many households being unable to both eat and heat their homes this winter?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture answered:

A series of cross-council working groups have been set up by the Council – one of which will be looking at what the Council can do with partner agencies and the voluntary sector to support residents. Community Warm Spaces are one such initiative that is under consideration. In addition, the Council was also pleased to announce match funding of the £50,000 committed by Greenham Common Trust to launch a £100,000 Emergency Cost of Living Fund to help charities support those affected by unaffordable hikes in energy prices and double-digit inflation.

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 Martha Vickers asked the following supplementary question:

“It was good to see one of the Council's officers at the meeting that was organised last night to try and get the voluntary agencies together. I like your answer and it is good to hear that some thought is going into this. Obviously you recognise that the Council has a key role here in putting everything together and can we make sure that when Warm Spaces are set up, that the Council has a role in communicating this to the community because there is a lot of goodwill out there. A lot of charities want to do their best and the Council, do you agree, is crucial in pulling things together and making sure that information gets out to the people that need to know?”

The Leader of the Council answered:

The Council has already set up a hub on its website with all of the pertinent information for the cost of living crisis and as and when we have more information we will be keeping that up to date. We are making sure that we are able to communicate out and have once central resource and looking at what model works best. You may not have heard my conversation at the very start of this meeting, but I would agree that yes our communications are going to be absolutely key with our residents.

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Item (E)

Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022

(E) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside by Councillor Adrian Abbs:

“What is the Executive Member for Highways doing to ensure that there are safe ways for owners of electric vehicles living in homes without off-road private parking to charge their vehicles from their own power source without obstructing the public highway?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

It's an interesting point and one that has made me re-visit the information that we have out there. Apart from the car parks, we have provided on street charge points in East Fields and West Fields in the Newbury area, and in Hungerford. We are looking to roll out further charge points throughout the district. We are also looking at trialling conduits beneath our footpaths to allow homeowners to charge safely at the roadside without causing a trip hazard to the general public. I did note the recent press article and was horrified at the picture on there. What I have also noted looking back at the information on our website are the frequently asked questions which refer to a lot of things that you should do, but not those that you should not. I think that fundamentally the picture that was in the paper reflects one additional FAQ that will be added to the list very shortly.

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:

“You are not aware of the email address ‘ev.westberks.gov.uk’ that people can request information? An FAQ doesn't cut it by the way. The question is when are we going to come up with some guidance about the possibilities? I understand that the trialling is actually one location in Speen somewhere, but anyway a proper document that helps people get to grips with this is what we have got planned and how we are going to do it and come to us with ideas maybe. Just some proper interaction and advice for people with a certain challenge. It's not many as most with EVs have a driveway”.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

I am aware of the email address thank you. What I would say is that the website is where the FAQs are. If you are looking at the Council website for information, advice and guidance you will see the FAQs and I do not understand why anyone would go that far and not read previous provided information. However, as I said, that information needs to be up to date and kept up to date and that is what we will do. I can't remember off hand where the trial is, you may be right on that one but this is

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something that will constantly be evolving as you will be aware. We will continue to discuss it I am sure in TAG, and we are open to the changes that are coming forward in this industry to see if we can actually implement them successfully in our district.



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Item (F)	Executive Meeting on 22 September 2022
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(F) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside by Councillor Tony Vickers:

“Can the Executive Member for Highways tell me what if any ‘further work’, as advised by consulting engineers Ardent over 2 years ago in the London Road Catchment Study, has been done to investigate the four options for mitigating the high risk of both fluvial and surface water flooding of properties that they identified, in particular options 2 & 4?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

Progressing the recommendations of this report was always subject to securing funding from Defra. This has proved difficult to secure as the actual flood risk to the London Road properties has been deemed relatively limited. Some funding has been secured this year, however work to progress this has taken a back seat to the Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan schemes in order to hit key deadlines associated with that work.

I will ask officers to update you directly on progress.

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 did ask for specific information about which of the options is being progressed and I haven't had an answer. I am particularly interested in Option 4 because my research in looking at old maps shows that never until LRIE was developed in the 60's was all the water run-off from the town centre required to go into that drain along the London Road properties. If we could look at ways (which is suggested in Option 4), of attenuating upstream of that location then I hope that is the Option that we are going for. Can you elaborate on what the proposal is?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport & Countryside answered:

I can't elaborate but I am happy to make sure that it is brought up and discussed with officers in the right forum so that we can have the conversation, push ideas backwards and forwards, comments and views with the people that have the technical know-how included in the conversation.
