

# Questions and Answers

## Council

Thursday, 6th October, 2022

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

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### Public Questions to the Council

6 October 2022

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<b>Question (A)</b>	Meeting on 06 October 2022
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**(A) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside by Joseph Tolman-Lopez:**

*"I want to change the parking situation on argyle road. Some context as to why: Argyle road has recently had an influx of new residents as the charity that owns the properties has opened up to private tenants. The parking on Argyle Road is no longer fit for purpose and needs changing imminently. Firstly, the whole road needs to have marked bays and be SW2 residential permits ONLY. There are local residents as well that are disabled and need dedicated disabled bays. Additionally, on 2 separate occasions my vehicle has been damaged by people and then left without a note. This is terrible behaviour, highly illegal and I believe preventable. If we make the whole of argyle road residential then it will remove some likelihood of damage just as there will be less chance of damage. However, also to this. Please can WBC look to add CCTV to the lamposts on the street. Not only is the parking a concern. However as well as this, anti social behaviour is often an issue too due to the location of the road and the 'thru route' to city playground. I want to know what is needed to get this accomplished?"*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

"Requests for parking restriction alterations and traffic calming should be sent to the Council's Traffic and Road Safety team for initial review and assessment. I have forwarded your requests to the team and will ask them to provide you with a response directly.

With regards to the criminal damage that you refer to, this would be a matter for the Police to action and investigate. Therefore I would recommend directing your request for CCTV to Thames Valley Police".

**Joseph Tolman-Lopez asked the following supplementary question:**

*"I have since invested in a CCTV system for my own vehicle. The criminal damages are in excess of £300 to myself now. The response that I have received from Thames Valley Police has been non-existent to this. I am under the impression, and would look for your clarity, that it is the Council that would need to look at installing public CCTV as it is a public place".*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

"I can certainly take that forward for absolute clarity. That's not my understanding. I know that there are some authorities that have installed, but for us specifically this is something that we look to the Police to look at. I think what I can say is that I'm happy

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that we use our existing channels to pick this up and I'll see if we can move that on for you, but don't stop contacting them to get it looked into with them properly".

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<b>Question (B)</b>	Meeting on 06 October 2022
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**(B) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside by Paula Saunderson:**

*“On 20th January 2022, as the Newbury Clayhill Ward Flood Warden, I submitted a request to the Service Director for the Environment and his Principle Engineer to instigate a Surface Water Management Plan for Clayhill Ward, given that Thames Water had a Call For Projects underway which was expiring on the 25th April, so please may I have an update on how that Request was progressed and what was the Outcome?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

“I can confirm that officers are discussing an application for funding a flood risk management study for the Clay Hill area with the Environment Agency. The decision was taken to submit to the Environment Agency’s Grant in Aid funding rather than Thames Water as it was felt the proposal was better suited to the EA’s grant terms. We hope to find out if the submission will be successful later this financial year”.

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<b>Question (C)</b>	Meeting on 06 October 2022
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**(C) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by Paul Morgan:**

*“Following the OSMC Task Group Report: London Road Industrial Estate dated 28 July 2020, chaired by Councillor James Cole, can you please advise who from the Council (Officers & Councillors) were given the authority /responsibility to ensure that the full list of recommendations specified in the report was adopted, adhered to, and implemented and what performance measurement and tracking mechanisms, if any, are now in place because of the OSMC report?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

“The full response to these questions were considered by the Executive at its report in October 2020, Forward Plan reference EX3956”.

**Paul Morgan asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Who is responsible for monitoring whether the recommendation have been followed through or not? There were 15 recommendations – who is responsible for that? Is it fair to say that the only body within West Berkshire Council responsible for monitoring and reporting on the LRIE is the LRIE Programme Board, which is run by Councillor Mackinnon and officers but no other Councillors? Is that the only body that's responsible for reporting on the money spent with the LRIE?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

“It is quite proper to refer questioners to Council publications, such as a previously published report by the Executive, which is what I've done and I believe I already answered Mr Morgan's supplementary question”.

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<b>Question (D)</b>	Meeting on 06 October 2022
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**(D) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by John Gotelee:**

*“At a time of a million job vacancies and offices being converted into flats does the council have any faith in the proposals to create hundreds of new well paid jobs on the LRIE?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

“The answer to your question is yes”.

**John Gotelee asked the following supplementary question:**

*“I walk down the London Road industrial estate almost every day. There are vacancies that have been posted for months now. At more than one place I might add. If they can't get the people to work because there's a shortage of skills, how are you going to do it?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

“We intend to work with existing and potential leaseholders to bring forward business investment to safeguard and create hundreds of new jobs on the estate by 2030”.

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Question (E)	Meeting on 06 October 2022
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**(E) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside by Alan Pearce:**

*“Please would the Council commission an independent report or give a description of where the extra acre of urban runoff caused by the construction of the new A339 London Road Industrial Estate junction is presently being stored before being released at a green field rate into Thames Water Surface Sewer or is it just released and causing flooding downstream?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

“No, the Council will not commission an independent report. Just for clarity, underground surface water attenuation was included in the construction of the A339/LRIE junction. Details of this have been provided to you previously by Council Engineers. No further work will be undertaken by Council Officers on this request”.

**Alan Pearce asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Has the Council got itself in a catch 22 situation? So we've now had three big reports on the LRIE: that's the London Road industrial estate development, the environmental appraisal, but most of all the Arden catchment study report. And none of these reports give the flow rate of the Northbrook stream or the flow rate of the culvert. This is crucial information that Council needs when making any decisions on the London Road industrial estate right from day one if you publish that and gave that information to councillors. So the question was, have you got yourself in a catch 22 situation with the London Road industrial estate?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

“No, I don't believe we have”.

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Question (F)	Meeting on 06 October 2022
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***(F) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside by Craig White:***

This question was rejected by the Monitoring Officer under Rule 4.12.3 as it relates to a planning application, relates to an ongoing complaint, and requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

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Question (G)	Meeting on 06 October 2022
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***(G) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside by Adrian Radford:***

This question was rejected by the Monitoring Officer under Rule 4.12.3 as it requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

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<b>Question (H)</b>	Meeting on 06 October 2022
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**(H) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside by Simon Pike:**

*"In the draft 'Transport for the South East' 'Strategic Investment Plan for the South East', does the Council support the proposed 'Intervention' for "Newbury/Thatcham bus enhancements" and, if so, what enhancements would it like to see?"*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

"West Berkshire Council is supportive of the Transport for the South East draft 30-year transport strategy, described as a 'bold vision for a brighter future'. The improvements we would like to make to bus services in the district, including in Newbury and Thatcham, are detailed in the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan which can be seen on the Council's website".

**Simon Pike asked the following supplementary question:**

*"I understood that the time frame for the Transport for the South East strategic plan has a much longer time frame than the bus service improvement plan that's on the website. I would ask specifically what you had in mind for the improvements between Newbury and Thatcham which are described in that strategy. Can I ask for a written reply if you find after the meeting that there's more information that you can provide. Thank you".*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

"I'm not sure I can add anything to that because as I've already said the details are out there. I think anything that's a longer term strategy than our immediate plan we would look to break down into relevant areas and timeframes. What we have in there at the moment is an approved improvement plan and we need to enact those elements first and then move on from there, always looking forward".

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<b>Question (I)</b>	Meeting on 06 October 2022
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**(I) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside by Paula Sanderson:**

*“At The Executive Meeting on 22nd September 2022 in Members Questions, Cllr Vickers was given an Answer to his Question 2 by Cllr Somner after he asked if WBC could apply for Surface Water Programme funding from Thames Water, the Answer being “Yes, from OSMC there are ongoing Conversations, and We Will Look to make sure the right things is being done by the right people with the right amount of money provided”, so is this to be a NEW REQUEST from a Non-Ward Councillor, and does this supersede the Request from myself as the Clayhill Ward Flood Warden and member of the Lambourn Valley Flood Forum?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

“The recent request for funding from Thames Water’s Surface Water programme is in relation to the Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan. This plan has understandably been a significant priority for the Council in recent years and this submission does not supersede any request you have made personally”.

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Question (J)	Meeting on 06 October 2022
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**(J) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by Alan Pearce:**

*“At present all the surface water from the London Road industrial Estate (LRIE) flows into the Thames Surface Water Sewer and is then released unattenuated into the Northbrook stream. This is because the water table is just below the surface due to the river Kennet and only small quantities of urban runoff can be stored on site.*

*During heavy periods of rain, the urban runoff is attenuated downstream at the enclosed Tesco culvert and my garden is flooded to store the urban runoff until it drains away, my property is located after the Greenham Lock where the water table is approximately 8ft 11” lower so the land can store more water than the LRIE at a ratio of 5:1.*

*Please would the Council say how it is intending to redevelop the LRIE without a master plan outline planning permission that incorporates the necessary third-party land and a holistic drainage system, so each individual site on the LRIE can comply with common drainage law and planning policy?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

“First of all, the Council is not intending to develop the estate in its entirety at once as it only has direct control over two parcels of land at present – the former depot site and the former playing field site. Secondly, there is no evidence that third party land is needed to mitigate flood risk on the estate. Any increased flood risk as a result of anticipated new development on the estate will be assessed at the appropriate time. These matters were considered as part of a high level Environmental Appraisal Report of the now superseded Development Brief for 2021, available on our website. They will be considered again during the development of the site-wide Place-making Strategy as part of our refreshed approach to the estate, again at individual planning application stage and again as part of any draft Supplementary Planning Document”.

**Alan Pearce asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Will you work with me Councillor Mackinnon? I don't think the information that you need for developing the London Road is in these three reports. You are not aware of the situation on the ground on the London Road industrial estate. So if you'll work with me, can we have a meeting please to go through these reports”.*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

“I think I've already said that I'm happy to have a meeting with you and appropriate officers to discuss your concerns. I would however state that I do have confidence in

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our highly trained officers assessment, but I would never rule out meeting with you at an appropriate point".

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Question (K)	Meeting on 06 October 2022
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**(K) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by John Gotelee:**

*“Is the LRIE refresh project fully costed (Yes / No). If not why not?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

“The answer is yes”.

**John Gotelee asked the following supplementary question:**

*“When will these figures be published in that case?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development answered:**

“The anticipated costs of the programme have already been published and are set out in Executive report EX4219 available on our website”.

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

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<b>Question (A)</b>	Council Meeting on 06 October 2022
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**(A) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holders for Planning, Transport and Countryside and Environment and Transformation by Councillor Carlyne Culver:**

*"Please can the portfolio holders update the council about their work with local landowners to create offsetting projects for carbon, biodiversity and nutrient neutrality?"*

**The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transformation answered:**

"We have been working through our Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership with several local charities and organisations to explore processes and mechanisms for linking landowners with opportunities for carbon capture and biodiversity gains. Part of this work includes the development of some pilot projects to help our learning and be able to get real feedback from landowners.

One of these projects on Sulham Estate land is the most advanced although still very much work in progress. Outline plans for Sulham Estate are looking at an area of 130 hectares. There is also dialogue with landowners over 3 other projects involving woodland planting, wetland and species rich grassland creation".

**Councillor Carlyne Culver asked the following supplementary question:**

*"I'm very interested to hear this. Could I please request that you keep us informed on an ongoing basis about this and ensure that opposition parties are included in the discussion as well. It's a shame we didn't get to debate the rural conference because I think that's going to be a good forum. I think there should also be forums that invite other members of other parties to get involved in discussions about this as well, especially as I'm in a rural ward and I know a lot of the local land owners and it would be good if we were all talking together about what's happening. Thank you".*

**The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transformation answered:**

"I'll be very happy to make sure we keep you updated as well as the Liberal Democrats".

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

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<b>Question (B)</b>	Council Meeting on 06 October 2022
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**(B) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transformation by Councillor Steve Masters:**

*“Given the recent lifting of the moratorium on the extraction of Shale gas (Fracking) by the government, can the portfolio holder outline the current and proposed draft policies regarding Shale gas extraction here in West Berkshire?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transformation answered:**

“There are no known development proposals for fracking within the District. The emerging Minerals and Waste Local Plan will contain a policy for fracking should proposals be submitted to the Council in the future”.

**Councillor Steve Masters asked the following supplementary question:**

*“With the rising fuel wholesale costs and, as we've already seen, the intention to frack elsewhere around the country, as prices rise it will become more and more viable in more areas. What's the Council's view? If it becomes financially viable, would the Council be supporting fracking in West Berkshire?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transformation answered:**

“This administration has not yet formed a view, and personally I would be dead set against coal and fracking within this District. But we've not got a formal position that I'm aware of at this point”.

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Question (C)	Council Meeting on 06 October 2022
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***(C) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside by Councillor Carolyne Culver:***

*“Does the portfolio holder have any concerns about the impact of recent government planning policy announcements on our evolving draft Local Plan?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

“The draft Local Plan continues in preparation with officers working diligently to continue preparing the draft Regulation 19 version supported by the extensive evidence, and I’m grateful to officers for their continued work on that. So no, I do not have any concerns about the impact as the details have not been officially announced and anything other than this would be mere speculation at this stage. Those that have been announced are being addressed”.

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<b>Question (D)</b>	Council Meeting on 06 October 2022
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***(D) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by Councillor Steve Masters:***

*“Does Council expect additional funding from central government in the coming months to reduce the impact on West Berkshire residents from the cost of living crisis that is impacting many families already?”*

**Councillor Masters withdrew this question at the meeting.**

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