

Questions and Answers

Executive
Thursday 6th July, 2023

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(A) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity by Gareth Beard:

“What top three environmental improvements is the Liberal Democrat Administration going to deliver on top of the existing environment strategy. When will the improvement materialise and what benefit will it have on the West Berkshire Environment?”

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity answered:

As a member of West Berkshire Green Exchange I apologise if I am now going to repeat things mentioned at our previous meeting. The current Delivery Plan for the Environment Strategy is comprehensive and covers a range of areas of action. The new Administration wants to focus on ensuring that what we deliver first will have the greatest effect in reaching the Council’s target of net zero by 2030. It is a mixture of looking at what we can do, what we can’t and then ensuring that we accelerate those things that have the largest effect that are within our control. You have asked for a top three and the Lib Dems came forward with eventually eight different strategies, so picking just three is a little difficult. Officers and I have agreed that we will make a start quickly on:

- Increasing the renewable energy generation across the District through a thorough investigation of the potential of hydro-schemes, consideration of further opportunities for solar farms and the encouragement of community energy initiatives. In fact EAG will consider that and as it will be broadcast after the meeting is held, you will be able to see all of that in action.
- Increasing our recycling rates.
- Exploring a West Berkshire Scheme to assist residents with improving the energy efficiency of their homes, something that is a passion of mine and that I tried to introduce as a motion before the administration changed.

It’s a bit soon to give dates as to when each part will happen but the instruction is ASAP from the administration, so let’s see what we can get done. ‘What are the benefits?’, which is the final part of your question, well it is all the normal benefits of cleaner air, lower emissions and more comfortable environments at home, so better health benefits at home just to name a few

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

Item (B)

Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023

(B) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development by John Gotelee:

“The Bond Riverside website May 23 states Ardent are putting final touches to their SUDs plans. How can you design SUDs without a surface water management plan?”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

Ardent are undertaking two related but distinct pieces of work. The first is development of a SUDS Strategy for the Bond Riverside regeneration programme which is part of the Place-Making Strategy. The second is design of environmental improvements to the street Faraday Road itself, in the form of small-scale SUDS which will be fitted onto existing drainage on the edges of Faraday Road. This work is being implemented under permitted development rights and no surface water management plan is needed in order to undertake this work. It will complement any future highways drainage on site.

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:

“The main point of SUDs is surface water management. The main problem that we have is that everybody tries to wash surface water straight into the sea meaning the aquifers remain dry and rivers are short. Will you go back and get them to do the job properly, whether it is Council officers or Ardent who don't know their job. ”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Strategy Development answered:

I cannot give you an answer to that right now. We will take that away and come back to you with a written answer.

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

Item (C)

Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023

(C) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement by Brandon Mosconi:

"It's no secret that we are in need of more housing. However, new housing must be sustainable, dense, and close to amenities to reduce already dire traffic, increase active travel, and affordability of homes. Therefore, will the council commit to looking at brownfield areas close to town centers, such as the LRIE, for dense housing rather than extending suburbs out into our green spaces and forcing those living there to use cars?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement answered:

Thank you for your question.

The Council has had a policy of using "brownfield sites" for development within settlement boundaries first unless factors outweigh development such as flooding.

Between 2006 and 2022 81% of all new dwellings were built on "brownfield" sites but this means that most of the suitable "brownfield" sites have already been developed and this is shown by the rate over the last 5 years which is 72.8%.

Unsuitable sites include those that are identified as being liable to flooding.

In 2019 the Council produced a bespoke Density Pattern book which encourages densities of between 90 and 115 dwellings per hectare (dph) in town centres, compared with suburban areas which have a suggested density of 35 dph.

However, people need to have employment as well as housing and West Berkshire does not have enough employment land so must protect our existing employment areas.

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

Item (D)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(D) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel by John Bibbings:

“What additional infrastructure has been planned for the new houses at the end of Speen Allotments.”

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel answered:

Thank you for your question.

In 2017 Outline approval was granted for 93 dwellings (17/02092/OUTMAJ) and the details regarding infrastructure are available from the Council website.

If your question is related to the four outstanding applications which are currently pending consideration, it would not be appropriate to comment outside of the formal decision-making process

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

Item (E)

Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023

(E) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development by Paul Morgan:

"The West Berkshire Council Website, with respect to "Bond Riverside" updates, stated in May 2023 that: "Following a review of the programme Hemingway Designs have been given an extended 3 months to produce the final placemaking report. This will allow for a better integration with other ongoing council strategies such as Parking". Please can you confirm:

- a) That the Hemingway Designs brief has been amended to reflect that the Football Ground at Faraday Road will remain as a football ground with the associated stadia?*
- b) The cost (if any) associated to the Council of this 3-month extension.*
- c) That the final placemaking report will be delivered in August 2023?"*

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

A: Hemingway Design have been informed about the proposed change regarding the football ground remaining a football ground and this is being worked into the Place-Making Strategy.

B: At present the extension has not constituted any further cost. We will be reviewing this closely with the consultants and should this change and additional work be required outside of the original brief, then any further costs will be in line with their pricing schedule submitted to the tender.

C: The consultants are currently on track to deliver the final Place-Making Strategy in August 2023, which will then need to be reviewed and signed-off.

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:

"I would like to compliment the Chair for extending the time for questions tonight. Can you provide me with a copy of the revised brief sent to Hemingway Design?"

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

I am sure that we can do that. I will ask the officers after the meeting.

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

Item (F)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(F) Question submitted to the Deputy Leader, Governance and Transformation by Paula Saunderson:

“On the day of submission of this question, the WBC Forward Plan did not include the Executive Item relating to a New Sports Pitch at Manor Park Newbury which had a Public Consultation, the results of which have never been FULLY Published yet the Consultation has been archived, therefore when can we expect the results of the further work due in Spring 2023 to come onto the Forward Plan for an Executive Decision please?”

The Deputy Leader, Governance and Transformation answered:

We have published results of this consultation on the Consultation and Engagement Hub so it wouldn't be fair to say that we have archived them. This will be scheduled to come onto the forward plan for Executive decision in September 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?”*

Paula Saunderson asked the following supplementary question:

“The last time I looked on the Hub it had been archived and the good thing about this was that it was a pre-planning application consultation. I think it would be good to put the whole result of the questionnaire on the Hub because it isn't at the moment, and please un-archive it until it comes to Executive.”

The Portfolio Holder for Deputy Leader, Governance and Transformation answered:

I think that is very reasonable and we will do so.

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

Item (G)

Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023

(G) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development by Alan Pearce:

“When using a drainage strategy to develop the LRIE that incorporates third-party land downstream being used to store urban runoff, and that land is subject to man-made property flooding in a one-hundred-year storm event. Please can the Council give a cost estimate of implementing its current policy EX4219 London Road Industrial Estate Project Refresh “3 Implications and Impact Assessment, Financial: The site currently has a book value £9.2 m (as at 32.3.2021) with an annual income from the site of £0.4m pa” together with its current policy EX3978 London Road Development options “Recommendations 2.1 a. a phased approach option to development of the site with an overall vision for the development as a whole”?”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

The budgets for delivery of the Regeneration Programme are set out in the Project Refresh Executive report EX4219 and that supercedes EX3978 which was the the previous report from December 2020 which set out development options for the regeneration programme – this was revised by the June 2022 report EX4219. Both reports can be viewed here: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/lrie>.

The new administration is currently reviewing the programme with football back at Faraday Road and a revised version will be taken to Executive for approval in due course.

Any changes to the previously approved Regeneration Programme and any significant revisions to the estimated costs arising from those changes will be reported to the Executive for consideration.

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:

“From your previous answer it looks as though you think you can develop London Road Industrial Estate purely on the freehold land that the Council owns and meet drainage law. Have you done any risk assessment of the risks of any legal challenges on any planning permission on the London Road Industrial Estate that could hold things up? You can't meet drainage law without third party land downstream.”

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

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

I don't know the answer to that but we will come back to you with where we are on that and no doubt that will form part of the project going forward.

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

Item (H)

Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023

(H) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity by Gareth Beard:

“What improvements to rural electric vehicle charging (ie rapid charge points) does the council envisage over the next four years?”

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity answered:

Thank you for your question.

I don't know if you have looked at this evening's paper but you will see an Agenda Item 9 which kind of talks to what you are looking for which is a district wide EV charging and you will see that this is about going out to tender for a 4 year contract to start installing EV charging points across the district. More detail will come later. The initial programme will focus on the council car parks where there are currently no EV charge points, council car parks that need more capacity because charging points are already heavily used. We are doing some work at the Rugby Club because that is where the Council's fleet of vehicles will be and Hungerford are a high priority. The Council has tried a couple of time to do something there. The current approach will be at Church Road car park. In total about £1.71m is going into this initial push with potential for another £382,000 coming via a bid.

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?”*

Gareth Beard asked the following supplementary question:

“My focus was on rural electric vehicle charging. Is there a mechanism for the rural parish councils or parishioners to encourage West Berkshire Council to install suitable charge points in the rural areas?”

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity answered:

I think the answer is yes. The officers should be writing either today or tomorrow to the parish and town councils talking to them specifically about collaboration. The future is bright here and we want to collaborate with the towns and parishes to move this agenda forwards.

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

Item (I)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(I) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development by John Gotelee:

“In what way (if any) are the plans for the regeneration of the LRIE different from the previous administration?”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

A key difference about LRIE development is that under this administration our longer terms proposals, the Faraday Road Football Pitch will remain available for organised football. We intend to build a stadium and an artificial pitch there in due course. We are committed to regeneration and we are working with officers to create a revised programme for Bond Riverside, which will be taken to Executive for consideration and approval.

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:

“You will have to forgive cynicism but I believe the regeneration was actually a Liberal Democrat idea back in 2000 and something. It was their nemesis, it has been the Conservatives nemesis. In four years’ time do you think we will have any change?”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

I hope we will. We are working on the Place-Making Strategy as I have already alluded to and we will come forward with some plans in the not too distant future.

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

Item (J)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(J) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel by John Bibbings:

“What new car parking arrangements are being made for the loss of parking in Station Road.”

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel answered:

Dear Mr Bibbings, thank you for your question.

The approved plan for the development adjacent to Station Road recommends the introduction of Bus Stop Clearway road markings to support the bus service which already uses Station Road. Inconsiderate parking has on occasion prevented buses being able to access the kerb so that passengers can board or alight and this has resulted in a road safety hazard if passengers have to step out onto the carriageway instead. The clearway markings will address this road safety concern. No parking will be ‘lost’ as such because motorists should not have been parking in an area of a bus stop in any case.

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

Item (K)

Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023

(K) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Paul Morgan:

“My question relates to Agenda item 10. “Call-In of Executive Decision EX4332: Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement”. Why does the report not acknowledge the fact that the retention of the Faraday Road site as a football Ground / Stadium (which is the new administration’s declared policy) replaces the need for the Newbury Sports Hub and the need for additional grass pitch (at Manor Park/ Linear Park)?”

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside answered:

The purpose of the call in procedures within the constitution are for the Scrutiny Commission to consider the Executive Decision made on 23 March and either:

1. Let the decision stand
2. State its views on the matter and refer the matter back to the Executive
3. Refer the decision to Council if it is considered the decision is contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework.

The purpose of the call in is not to introduce new matters for Decision that would need to follow the decision making process as set out in the Constitution.

On this occasion, Scrutiny Commission has referred to the matter back to the Executive to consider further. This has resulted in the report as appears in the issued papers.

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:

“I’m not sure if you have answered my question there. When I read the report it is almost as if it was written by Councillor Mackinnon as there was no sort of balance in there as to what the options were. Also you do not mention the fact that there is a perfectly viable alternative.”

The Leader of the Council answered:

The document is a procedural document and refers to that, not to further plans of this administration.

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

Item (L)

Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023

(L) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity by Paula Saunderson:

“The proposal to use the Manor Park ANGS – Accessible Nature-based Green Space (with no buildings) – was to provide a football pitch lost elsewhere, which no longer applies as Saturday & Sunday League Football is returning to Faraday Road (Paul Hendry announcement of 21st June 2023), therefore please can we keep this space to enhance BIODIVERSITY, as part of the Local Nature Recovery Network for this part of North Newbury, thus helping to mitigate the loss of a next door Greenfield at the Coley Farm Housing Development?”

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity answered:

Ms Saunderson, thank you for your question.

There are no current plans to proceed with a sports pitch construction at Manor Park. This space can certainly be considered for biodiversity enhancements and therefore we will include this area in our assessment of land suitable for biodiversity offsetting, and/or community conservation initiatives

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?”*

Paula Saunderson asked the following supplementary question:

“Please could we do it in phases and could we have an urgent phase as the land behind it at Coley Farm has now been cleared of the buildings and there will be species needing to be re-homed. The tawny owls have not come back this spring so if we can look at doing some immediate kind of boxes to help the displaced animals from the Coley Farm site I would be really grateful.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity answered:

I will talk to officers tomorrow about it. Thank you.

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

Item (M)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(M) Question submitted to the Leader of the Council by Alan Pearce:

“Question for Executive meeting 6th of July 2023. Agenda Item 10. Please can the Council confirm which members of the OSMC and / or the Executive read and approved the EX4332 report before it was published? (Call-In of Executive Decision EX4332: Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement).”

The Leader of the Council answered:

The paper that appears before the Executive under Agenda item 10 has been prepared by Officers for consideration by the Executive. This follows the call in process as set out in the Constitution (Part 6.9) following Scrutiny Committee having considered the call in request on 20 June. It will be for the Executive to decide how it wishes to proceed having regard to the recommendations of the Commission today.

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:

“That wasn't the question, I asked if anyone read the report”.

The Leader of the Council answered:

The paper is prepared with both the minutes of the Scrutiny committee, the call-in request, and the constitution in mind. Ordinarily it is good practice to have the Portfolio Holder and the Chair of Scrutiny consider the paper prior to publication, however this would have delayed the paper being considered at Executive today. This was not the agreed course of action in line with part 17.1

Alan Pearce asked the following supplementary question:

So just to clarify, no members of OSMC or the Executive read the report or approved it, it was purely officers that generated the report.

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

The Deputy Monitoring Officer answered:

The purpose of a 'call-in' paper is a governance process and the whole point is for the Executive today to consider what Scrutiny Commission has said and that information is available before them, as is the Call-In paper which is exhibited as the annexe. It is a process set down in the Constitution and Executive today will be considering that.

The Leader of the Council asked if Mr Pearce had a further supplementary question.

Alan Pearce asked the following question:

"Could I request a meeting with the author of the report?"

The Leader of the Council answered:

I will certainly have a meeting with you Mr Pearce.

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

Item (N)

Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023

(N) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by John Gotelee:

“The council has said it will be using a herbicide on the Faraday rd pitch can the council name this herbicide and confirm it contains none of the following chemicals which if used incorrectly are dangerous to the aquatic environment Glyphosphate, Imazapr and Triclopyr?”

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside answered:

Mr Gotelee, thank you for your question.

We have to wait until we are at certain stages of the pitch preparation until we decide which herbicide that is going to be used. The correct herbicide will be applied when the pitch has been inspected and is applied so that it doesn't interfere with the aquatic environment. The edge of the pitch area that is currently being prepared is some 20 meters away from the nearest watercourse.

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 you are not going right to the edge of the pitch then as that is less than twenty metres from the water? The Councillor seems very reluctant to say what these herbicides are going to be and as most of them kill not only aquatic organisms but also insects, can we find out what these herbicides are going to be?”

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside answered:

We can and I will send that through to you at each point that the pitch is inspected for the next phase of that work and we also have a document that I can circulate which comes from Central Government detailing best practice for which herbicides to use.

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

Item (O)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(O) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel by John Bibbings:

“Could a loading only parking spot be created, in Station Road as burning is not allowed and heavy loads can be involved with waste and gardening equipment? Many of the gardeners are 80 years old +”

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel answered:

Mr Bibbings, thank you for your question.

Thank you for your question. Advertising and creating a traffic regulation order for a loading bay on the public highway would be an expensive and lengthy process and not something the Council could prioritise at this time. I would be happy to ask Officers to contact the Speen Allotment Association to see if a loading area for allotment users could be made available within the allotment site.

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

Item (P)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(P) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Paul Morgan:

“My question relates to Agenda item 10. “Call-In of Executive Decision EX4332: Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement”. At the OSMC meeting on 20th June 2023 the justification for the upfront spend for the “Newbury Sports Hub” of £4.128 Million (£3.878M + £250K for additional costs) was to fulfil the No 1 Priority of the PPS (which as minuted). Why is there no reference to the No 1 Priority of the PPS in this report?”

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside answered:

The Executive report was attached as an appendix for the overview and scrutiny meeting report and the recommendations within paragraph 2.1 made reference to the sports hub being priority 1 in the PPS, and therefore there was no need to repeat this in the Overview and Scrutiny report.

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:

“Unfortunately that response concerns me as you have said that the number one priority of the playing pitch strategy is the Sports Hub. That’s not the case.”

The Leader of the Council answered:

I don't think Councillor Lewis did say that. The existing playing pitch strategy is the number one priority in it because it hasn't come back through this new administration to be refreshed. I think you are well aware of what our priorities are as an administration, but the Sports Hub will not be our number one priority. We shall wait for Executive to vote and then determine what that top priority is.

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

Item (Q)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(Q) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development by Paula Saunderson:

“A recent Update Announcement on the Bond Riverside Regeneration Project, which was not replicated on the WBC Main LRIE web page, states: 'Arden have begun putting together the final drawings and locations for the SUDS environmental improvements, ready for work to begin later this summer'. As the Clayhill Flood & Drainage Warden and currently the lead on these aspects until a handover can be achieved, I have not been kept informed on these developments, therefore how do they fit into the WBC SFRA (2022) Requirements for the whole of the lands within the red lines of the Regeneration Site to have a full Flood Risk Assessment and a whole site (old LRIE) Surface Water Drainage Strategy? Nb. SFRA Level 2 – Appendix B Pages 105-109 refer”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

The environmental improvements work that has been mentioned is the fitting of small-scale SUDS onto existing drainage on the edges of Faraday Road itself and will complement any future highways drainage on site. Arden have consulted the Lead Local Flooding Authority (LLFA) for advice and are aware of the SFRA and full suite of flood risk documentation at West Berkshire Council – both being considered in the development of the SUDS Strategy and in the design of the environmental improvements.

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?”*

Paula Saunderson asked the following supplementary question:

“That’s very good to hear because a lot of this comes within the catchment of the Lambourn and we don’t have a surface water management plan for our whole area so the importance of having the full documentation for these proposals is really quite significant. Please can we arrange a handover meeting with the Portfolio Holder responsible for flood risk management, and the lead local flood authority and anyone else that may be interested because I have lots of knowledge, documents and evidence that I would like to share”.

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

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

Thank you for that offer, yes we will organise a meeting.

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

Item (R)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(R) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel by John Gotelee:

“Does the executive realise that pedestrianisation and car parking charges has been bad for the small businesses in the town centre. Are you serious about causing further damage to the local economy by extending pedestrianisation?”

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel answered:

Mr Gotelee, thank you for your question.

Removing traffic from the town centre in the evenings will increase the attractiveness of outdoor eating and drinking and provide a welcome boost for the evening economy. It will also encourage active travel through the town centre which is a key part of the emerging Council Strategy. It should be remembered that this is a trial for a minimum of 6 months, during which the opportunity will be taken to fully engage with businesses and stakeholders to measure the success.

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

Item (S)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(S) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Paula Saunderson:

“The recent much welcomed Announcements of the Return of Football at Faraday Road and a video on the preparation of the Sports Pitch (Paul Hendry announcement 21st June 2023) fails to mention how the Rest of the Requirements within the ‘Return of Football at Faraday Road Project Implementation Plan’ will be undertaken by very early in September 2023 so please can the Portfolio Holder outline who will manage the Plan and how the Changing Rooms, Showers/Toilets, Fencing, Connections to Sewage & Surface Water Drainage might be achieved in the Timescales, together with how the Land outside the pitch area, which is part of the bigger Public Open Space, will be maintained and enhanced for Nature Recovery given that it includes an SSSI Buffer Zone?”

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside answered:

Thank you for your question.

Officers are hard at work arranging the basic facilities which will allow the pyramid of league football to return to the Faraday pitch. As we progress we have been arranging for specially created blogs to go onto the Council website so that everyone can keep up to date with the 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?”*

Paula Saunderson asked the following supplementary question:

“I think the ‘live day’ is 2 September 2023. I hope we can see a visualization of the critical path through to the 2 September, for all of the components that need to be within the implementation plan for live day to go live. Would that be possible?”

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside answered:

Yes we can arrange to update that so that you can see the full picture as we go along.

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

Item (A)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(A) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

“On 24 November, you, Cllr Vickers, stated “The Liberal Democrats are broadly content with the district-wide policies in the Local Plan that we’ll be asked to vote on next Thursday. We certainly won’t be voting against the motion to publish it for the Regulation 19 consultation.” Why then, one week later, did your group vote against publishing the Local Plan for the Regulation 19 consultation?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement answered:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Mackinnon,

A motion was put to Council in December requesting that the results of the Regulation 19 consultation be reported back to Council before the submission of the plan so that Members made the decision to submit the plan rather than officers.

Only when the amendment to that motion was defeated we decide to vote against the Regulation 19 Consultation. We never said actually that we were going to support it.

A fuller response is included in our Regulation 19 submission which is available online at www.localplanservices.co.uk/westberkshirelpr and the Examination Library as CD7 page 2269 of 4657.

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 Ross Mackinnon asked the following supplementary question:

“I am absolutely stunned by that answer. In the question I believe I am quoting you accurately that you certainly wouldn’t be voting against the motion to publish the Regulation 19. How can the statement that you have just made be consistent with the fact that you were also quoted in the Penny Post on 29 November 2023 saying that you were going to vote against, a reversal of your decision, and you had a letter published in the Newbury Weekly News on 1 December 2023 saying that you would be voting against the publication, but you are telling me now that you only decided to do that when we voted down your amendment. How can both things be true? ”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement answered:

A correction on the date, it was 24 November when the Penny Post published that so I had a whole week in which to reflect as a member of the then Shadow Executive

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

group and I never said we were going to vote for your motion. I was persuaded convincingly that we could not even abstain, that we would oppose the motion on the grounds that we felt there were significant reasons why we could not do otherwise.



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

Item (B)

Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023

(B) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement by Councillor Dominic Boeck:

"In the Liberal manifesto you promised to "fix the local plan". Given that the plan has already been approved by expert senior officers and submitted to the Inspector, how do you propose to fix it?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement answered:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Boeck,

A motion was put to Council in December requesting that the results of the Regulation 19 consultation be reported to back to Council before the submission of the plan so that Members made the decision to submit the plan rather than officers.

Only when the amendment was defeated did the Liberal Democrats decide to vote against the Regulation 19 Consultation.

A fuller response is included in our Regulation 19 submission which is available online at www.localplanservices.co.uk/westberkshirelpr and the Examination Library as CD7 page 2269 of 4657

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 Dominic Boeck asked the following supplementary question:

"I don't see how Councillor Vickers' response relates to the question, which is simply 'how do you propose to fix the local plan?'"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement answered:

All we can say, as we are awaiting advice that will come to full Council later this month is that at the time which we were required to vote on this, we felt that there were reasons why it needed to be fixed and if you want to know the reasons why we wanted to fix the plan then they are there online. But in terms of what we do going forward, you will be hearing more later this month and in fact it's only a week before the report comes forward which will give the full background.

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

The Leader of the Council asked if Councillor Boeck had a supplementary question.

Councillor Boeck asked the following supplementary question:

“Thank you Councillor Vickers. I get that you are pointing me to a massive document as to where I will find the answer to my question, but my supplementary relates to my understanding that the Council's expert planning officers considered that the Plan was robust and recommended that submission to the Inspector in December. Councillor, you have revealed to me that you were unaware of the planning implications of AWE's detailed emergency planning zone. The question is “how does Councillor Vickers know better than our expert planning officers when he doesn't even know what the DPZ planning implications are in Aldermaston, Burghfield, Mortimer and Tadley?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement answered:

There is nothing about Aldermaston DPZ within our response to the Local Plan, so it is not part of what we need to fix. The timetable for the response was set by the administration. It's plain to see that from the number of other Councils that did delay, as we requested, that there were good reasons to take the alternative steps that we decided to take.

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

Item (C)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
Submitted to:	Nick Caprara

(C) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel by Councillor Howard Woollaston:

“At the Executive meeting on 8th June, you stated that “empty homes should not be allowed in this day and age”. How many properties in West Berkshire meet your definition of empty homes?”

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel answered:

The latest information available is from 2022 when it was identified that of the 1300 properties registered for Council Tax in the District, 111 properties had been empty for more than 2 years.

The Council is establishing a strategy to bring empty properties back into use and as part of this, the evidence will be reviewed and this will help inform actions that the Council can take to tackle this issue.

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

Item (D)

Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023

(D) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement by Councillor Paul Kander:

“How much will it cost the council taxpayers of West Berkshire if you withdraw the Local Plan and start again from scratch?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement answered:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Kander.

At this moment in time, I am unable to answer your question.

If the Plan is withdrawn, an exercise would need to be undertaken to determine how much of the existing evidence can be recycled. It is only certain parts of the evidence that we would be interested in looking at, therefore the time and the cost would not be that excessive.

Furthermore, we also don't know what changes the Government will introduce as part of the changes proposed in the Levelling Up Bill and the additional changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which I read today are now not expected to be known until September 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?”*

Councillor Paul Kander asked the following supplementary question:

“If the Plan is withdrawn and West Berkshire loses its five year land supply, what is your intention and plan for protecting the district from uncontrolled development, and over development in rural areas without any logistics or travel?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement answered:

You are assuming, Councillor Kander, that there will be over development in rural districts and I can't accept that that is the case. But there will be more on this when the full Council agenda papers come out which will provide the options that officers have prepared for us.



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

Item (E)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(E) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity by Councillor Carlyne Culver:

“Is West Berkshire Council ready to fulfil its impending obligation from the Environment Act to create a Local Nature Recovery Strategy?”

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity answered:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Culver.

Yes.

We are working collaboratively across Berkshire to produce the LNRS (Local Nature Recovery Strategy) following the guidance that was produced in March 2023 and the Regulations that came into force on the 13 April 2023. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has been proposed as “Lead Authority” for Berkshire.

The first meeting of the steering group was held on 3 July 2023 and work is under way to develop the baseline local habitat map. Initial consultation is planned to be undertaken in autumn 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?”*

Councillor Carlyne Culver asked the following supplementary question:

“I am aware that we lost our ecologist recently and obviously an ecologist would be central to helping us to deliver on this obligation. What plans are there to urgently recruit a new ecologist?”

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity answered:

If I may, I will come back to you with an answer. There is some sensitive information around that so I will come back to you in writing on that if you don't mind.



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

Item (F)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(F) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel by Councillor David Marsh:

“Further to her comments at the last Executive meeting about the problem of long-term empty properties, will the portfolio holder undertake that the council will: 1 Take rigorous action under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to ensure that owners of buildings left empty, and which pose an environmental hazard to neighbours as well as “adversely affecting the amenity of the area”, are held responsible for restoring them to an acceptable level? 2 Where the owner refuses to do this, and where a property has been left empty for at least two years, take out an EDMO (empty dwelling management order) under the Housing Act 2004 on the property? 3 Where both these approaches are unsuccessful, serve a CPO (compulsory purchase order) so that suitable properties can be brought back into use as much-needed homes?”

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel answered:

Establishing a strategy around bringing empty properties back into use is a target within the Reducing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 – 2025 delivery plan. The development of this strategy also contributes towards achieving aims of the Housing Strategy in improving conditions in the private sector.

The development of this strategy will focus on providing a holistic approach to tackling the problem of long-term empty properties in the district. The approach will need to focus on a suite of voluntary options as well as a commitment to utilise appropriate enforcement action in order to ensure properties are brought back into use. Once this strategy is developed this will be approved through the Executive cycle including the use of EDMO's or CPO's.

In the meantime there exist enforcement powers which are available to the Council to use in the appropriate circumstances where an empty property is creating issues in the local community relating to issues such as rodent infestations or untidy land. These powers will continue to be implemented according to the merits of a case in order to minimise the issues these properties create to the local community.



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

Item (G)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(G) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

“The Liberal manifesto promised to fix all potholes “first time”, and dangerous potholes within 72 hours of notification. What specific changes to the Council’s highway maintenance processes will you make to keep this promise, and how much will they cost?”

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel answered:

Councillor Mackinnon, thank you for your question.

Potholes and how we fix them is a significant issue for our residents which we repeatedly found during our campaigning for the election in May. This administration is committed to working with officers and industry experts to improve our processes to ensure our residents receive the service they deserve. This work is ongoing and I will update you once changes have been identified.

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

Item (H)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(H) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement by Councillor Dominic Boeck:

“If you are successful in removing housing from the North East Thatcham strategic site in the Local Plan, will the housing be placed instead in our rural villages without the infrastructure to support it?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement answered:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Boeck.

It is a function of the planning system that the Local Plan must be accompanied by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which sets out the infrastructure needed to support the plan.

In addition, any new allocations would show what infrastructure needed to be provided with that development to make it acceptable.

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 Dominic Boeck asked the following supplementary question:

“The question is quite simple. Will the housing be placed instead in our rural villages?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement answered:

We are not going to be imposing development in rural areas where there isn't sufficient infrastructure either already there or provided as part of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. We don't believe the increase in infrastructure costs will necessarily be any greater than in the current Plan as it stands.

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

Item (I)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(I) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Councillor Howard Woollaston:

“On 24 May the Council announced on its social media channels that work had begun to get the former football pitch at Faraday Road ready for organised football, along with photographs of Cllrs Dillon, Lewis and Colston. At that time, the new Executive had not been appointed. Lynne Doherty remained Leader of the Council. On 21 June more announcements were made presenting the decision to cancel commercial development and use the site for football as a fait accompli. The commercial development of the site was agreed by the Executive on 9 June 2022 as part of the London Road Industrial Estate Refresh (EX4219). How can an Executive decision be set aside, with significant economic and financial implications for the District and the Council, before the new Leader and Executive were appointed, and without due consideration and publication on the Forward Plan?”

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside answered:

Thank you for your question.

The revised delivery strategy which was approved in the June 2022 Executive report (paragraph 6.9) says that the football ground is to be used for sports and recreation uses until it is re-developed for commercial use in 2026. Therefore, the Council's current actions to enable the Faraday Road sports pitch to be used for football is in line with the previously approved policy.

We are working with officers to review the Bond Riverside (London Road Industrial Estate) Regeneration Programme, and will be revising the long-term goals of the programme based on our aspirations. A revised set of proposals will be taken to Executive in due course, which will make a formal decision setting out this Administration's vision for the ultimate long term use of the Football ground. In the meantime, we wanted to ensure that the football ground is available for football by the autumn, and we have therefore been working hard to make sure that happens.

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 Howard Woollaston asked the following supplementary question:

“I'm still at a loss to understand as to how you can produce the football that you are proposing there on a single pitch with no parking. It just doesn't tick. Can you explain in more detail?”

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

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside answered:

From what I understand, there is some parking there already, it is just going to be used for the initial pyramid league. The pitch is being provided so that we can return to league football at the weekend.

Councillor Howard Woollaston made the following comment:

For clarification, the number of parking spaces is four.

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside answered:

I will have to come back to you on that.



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

Item (J)

Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023

(J) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

"The Liberal Democrat manifesto promised to remove the Garden Waste charge. How much income did this charge generate in 2022-23?"

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services answered:

The actual income from the Garden Waste charge from the last financial year was £1.71m.

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 Ross Mackinnon asked the following supplementary question:

"That's quite a lot of money. I believe that the Liberal Democrat intention is to phase out the charge over the four year term of the administration. If it is the intention, then how will you fix the hole in the revenue budget that the money will leave?"

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services answered:

At the moment as you are aware we are still awaiting the Q1 outcome and so are looking at various options and how we are going to reduce that fee and will also look to other options to backfill that loss of income.

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

Item (K)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(K) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development by Councillor Dominic Boeck:

“Cllr Colston, commenting on a possible extension of pedestrianisation hours in Newbury town centre, you were quoted in the Newbury Weekly News recently as follows: “We made a commitment in our manifesto to trial extended hours of pedestrianisation in Newbury town centre from 10am through to midnight. The idea is to support the night-time economy and enhance the town centre for pedestrians and those eating/drinking outside in the evening. Deliveries to businesses can take place between midnight and 10am, and those who shop by car, including the disabled, will still be able to do this up to 10am as they do now.” Will you commit to consulting with local residents and businesses before making any changes to pedestrianisation hours, and how extensive will that consultation be?”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

Cllr Boeck, thank you for your question.

The Council is proposing to extend the pedestrianised timing by using an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order which allows an order to be made for a maximum of 18 months during which full consultation and engagement can be undertaken with business and stakeholders. We therefore propose to trial the extension for a minimum of 6 months, following which a decision will be taken on whether to make the order permanent. This will give an excellent opportunity to assess the impact and gauge the success before taking that important decision. As the consultation will take place while the pedestrianisation is in place, responses will be based on the reality of the situation rather than any hypotheticals. The trial has the support of the BID Chair and is based on a recommendation made by the BID to this Council and supported by Newbury Town 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?”*

Councillor Dominic Boeck asked the following supplementary question:

“Once the Order is introduced there will be an immediate impact. What do you say to our disabled residents who under your policy will now be prevented from accessing the town centre by car completely between 10.00am and midnight? Could the Order be considered as discriminatory? Also the immediate impact on taxi firms and businesses taking deliveries, I just wondered how that has been factored in?”



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

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

The whole purpose of this is to do it as a trial so that we find out in reality how it is working and we will make changes if required, as we go through.

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

Item (L)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(L) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Councillor Howard Woollaston:

“The outstanding, state-of-the-art new Sports Hub facility was eagerly anticipated by both Newbury Football Club and Newbury Rugby Club. How will you provide a home for high level football in West Berkshire with the same FA Step Level as the Sports Hub given your election promise to cancel the development?”

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside answered:

The Newbury Sports Hub has been designed to a Step 4 FA ground grading standard. In light of the stated aspirations of the new Liberal Democrat Administration, plans to bring football back to Faraday Road as soon as possible are underway and further plans will be developed to provide a home for high level football at the Faraday Road Ground.

A Community Forum will be established to help inform the plans for the Faraday Road site to ensure that it will deliver the standard required for high level football. Representatives from both the Football Foundation and the Berks and Bucks FA have confirmed their willingness to be part of this Community Forum which will be open to all football clubs in Newbury and the Newbury Community Football Group

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 Howard Woollaston asked the following supplementary question:

“Given that the current Newbury Football Club is playing at a Step 7, it is a considerable hike to even get to Step 4, and when will you be at a stage that you can actually release some costings for your aspirations which I think will go further out of kilter than even what was proposed at Monks Lane?”

The Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside answered:

I shall take that forward and await that moment.

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

Item (M)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(M) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

“At the Budget Council meeting on 2 March, where the Liberals failed to suggest any amendments to the Conservative administration’s budget, Cllr Abbs promised that if the Liberals won control of the Council at the election, they would present an emergency budget detailing what their amendments would have been. Will there in fact be an emergency budget, or is this the first broken promise of the new Liberal administration?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services answered:

As stated at the last Executive back in June, any decision on an emergency budget is really going to be dependent upon the Q1 2023/24 outcome which is due later this month, I think around about 17 July. For the moment it is pure speculation what is needed going forward until we know what those numbers are.

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

Item (N)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(N) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel by Councillor Dominic Boeck:

“Since GWR introduced charges in both their car parks at Aldermaston Station, rail travellers have been parking in every available space in Station Road, Aldermaston Wharf, causing considerable inconvenience to nearby residents. For example, one young family with small children are consistently unable to park within a reasonable distance from their home, which severely affects their wellbeing and the quality of their lives. Residents, Beenham and Aldermaston Parish Councils and I have persistently asked Highways to address this problem, without success. What commitment will the Portfolio Holder make to consider the problem of parking at Aldermaston Wharf?”

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel answered:

Cllr Boeck, thank you for your question.

We understand that competition for parking space from rail commuters may be causing difficulty for a local resident in particular and the Council's Transport Policy team have liaised for several years with Network Rail, GWR and the Parish Councils to find a solution that would encourage better use of the station car park and relieve pressure off the highway. Unfortunately no solution has yet been agreed.

However, Officers have committed to investigating later this year, when priorities allow to see if a practical solution can be found.

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

Item (O)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(O) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development by Councillor Howard Woollaston:

“How many hours of football will the pitch at Faraday Road be capable of hosting, compared to what would have been available at the proposed 3G pitch at the Sports Hub?”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

A 3G artificial pitch could accommodate 60-80 hours of community use per week. This Council is developing plans for a high grade football facility at Faraday Road that will be able to deliver a pitch with a similar capacity. Whilst these plans are being developed, the grass pitch at Faraday Road is being reinstated to enable football to be played for the next season. The initial capacity will be dependent on climate conditions but the recommended usage for an undrained pitch is around 2 hours per week. This can be increased by 50% for players aged 15 years or younger who produce reduced wear on the pitch. The final football pitch that we are planning will have the same capacity as that planned for the Sports Hub.

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 Howard Woollaston asked the following supplementary question:

“We know how long the Monks Lane debate went on for and so we may be looking at another three years until that, with in the meantime only 2 hours of football playable. What are you going to say to the residents who are concerned that your proposals will result in a lose/lose situation with less football being played than would have been the case at the Sports Hub as well as the loss of jobs and business rate revenue from the loss of commercial development?”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

We are putting forward plans that we are developing at the moment on what we are going to do and will bring those forward to a future Executive.

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

Item (P)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(P) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

“The Council has announced that it will not commercially develop the former pitch at Faraday Road and instead use it for football matches, despite a superb alternative facility being shortly available at the Sports Hub. Leaving aside the constitutional propriety of that decision, approximately how many jobs would have been created on the Faraday Road site if it were commercially developed by 2026 as planned by the previous administration?”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

The existing regeneration programme for Bond Riverside aims to safeguard 300 existing jobs on Bond Riverside and create 200 new jobs across the whole of the site. The objectives of the programme, particularly the figures regarding commercial space and job creation, will be determined as part of the review of the programme which will take into account future plans for the football pitch. Long term plans for the site will be the subject of a future Executive decision.

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 Ross Mackinnon asked the following supplementary question:

“Residents may well consider that this new administration has prioritised those who wanted football back at Faraday Road over the economic wellbeing of the district, and that West Berkshire appears to be closed for business under this new Liberal Democrat administration. What would you say to those residents?”

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answered:

Clearly I would disagree with that strongly. We are wanting to bring football back to Faraday Road because there was lots of public support for that position and we will be making new plans for the whole of Bond Riverside with football at the heart of it, and we believe we can make that a good project.

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

Item (Q)	Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023
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(Q) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

“Following Readibus’ decision to discontinue operations in West Berkshire, how many residents were unable to access alternative community transport services?”

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel answered:

ReadiBus continue to deliver community transport services in West Berkshire, in the greater Reading area. In the two years following the grant reduction in 2019/20, the Council has been contacted by around 30 Readibus customers concerned about transport provision – some who were directly affected by service changes and some with more general enquiries. For those residents seeking help that contacted the Council's Transport Team, details of alternative provision with other community transport operators were provided. Although the model and offer of assistance may vary from one operator to another, we have not been made aware of any individuals who were still unable to secure transport assistance after being signposted to other providers.

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