

Questions and Answers

Executive
Thursday 23rd May 2024

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Agenda Item 16.

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

Item (A)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(A) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by John Gotelee:

“Referring to the Flood and water management act 2010 the west Berks 2021 Local Flood risk Management Strategy 2.1.2 states The Act reinforces the need to manage flooding holistically and in a sustainable manner. Is there going to be a holistic drainage plan for the london road estates prior to any plans being submitted?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing answered:

Mr Gotelee, thank you for your question.

The long-term re-development of the site will be shaped by development proposals on a plot-by-plot basis, however the sustainable drainage framework strategy produced by our consultants has set out the design principles to be followed for sustainable drainage for the whole site. Each individual application will have to demonstrate how it fulfils the aim of that framework.

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:

“Are you saying that it is going to be a holistic plan for the whole site at once?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing answered:

The consultants have put together a strategy on a whole site basis, but plots will be looked at individually.

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Item (B)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(B) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Richard Garvie:

“Given the issues with flooding in the District this year and the fact that we had sewage in our streets for almost four months, will this Council make a cast iron promise to ensure that all drainage assets that are under the responsibility of the council are fully inspected and cleared over the Summer?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Mr Garvie, thank you for your question. The widespread flooding has caused a number of challenges for our residents. The main source of the flooding, as you mention in your question, has been from sewer flooding, but also from main river flooding. West Berkshire Council is working with the responsible authorities, Thames Water and the Environment Agency to see how we can help protect our residents going forward.

Where the Council has drainage assets in flood risk areas, these will be inspected and cleansed if needed to ensure they are working correctly.



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Item (C)

Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024

(C) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Alison May:

“West Berkshire District Council's commitment to tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency is commendable. The delivery of decarbonisation related projects will contribute to a reduction in harmful pollutant emissions throughout West Berkshire and other areas. Can the Council provide details of decarbonisation related initiatives that would seek to reduce West Berkshire Council's emissions and seek to reduce emissions associated with other sectors?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Dear Ms May. Thanks for your encouragement for the Council's ongoing decarbonisation efforts. These measures have already delivered a 15% reduction in our carbon emissions compared to the 2019 reference point.

Some examples of decarbonisation projects already implemented are:

- Rooftop solar on completed on selected Council-owned buildings across the district;
- Expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure – both on-street (near residential areas) and off-street e.g. car parks, village halls etc; and
- Initial heat decarbonisation studies completed for Northcroft Leisure Centre and four local schools. The results could be used to bid for further government grants to implement required improvements.

Some examples of decarbonisation projects underway and in the pipeline are:

- Grazeley solar farm: with a minimum 16MW peak output, expected to go live in 2025;
- Padworth solar scheme: with up to 1.2MW peak output, expected to go live in 2025;
- Exploring the use of Hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO) as fuel for selected waste collection vehicles. (HVO is better for the environment than diesel); and
- Micro-hydro electricity generation: currently at feasibility stage.

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Item (D)

Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024

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

“A recent proposal to introduce a reduce speed limit in Theale was not accompanied by an environmental impact assessment. Reducing the speed of fossil vehicles reduces the miles per gallon considerably. In order to achieve the Council's Environment Strategy should all decisions by West Berkshire Council consider and, where practicable, mitigate carbon and other emissions?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Dear Mr Beard, thank you for your question.

Decisions made by West Berkshire Council should consider the strategic objectives of the Council's Environment Strategy. In relation to the proposal to introduce a reduced speed limit in Theale, officers considered it to be disproportionate to undertake a detailed analysis of the associated CO2 emissions for a minor local road scheme where vehicle flow is currently very low. The existing layout on many of the roads included already has the effect of slowing down vehicle speeds below the current limit of 30mph, therefore formalising the speed limit to 20mph would result in a negligible increase in CO2 emissions. Where this is not the case, the view is taken that on balance the improvement to road safety compensates for the effects of CO2 emissions from vehicles.

Whilst the environmental is a very important factor that the Council must consider when planning our projects, there are many other equally important factors we must consider that in some instances may take priority, including health, economy, safety, wellbeing, safeguarding and many more.

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Item (E)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(E) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Paul Morgan:

“Can the Council please confirm from which budget(s) (capital and revenue) the current expenditure (of at least £230,000) and future expenditure for the Faraday Road Football ground has / will be coming from?”

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

Thank you for your enquiry. A specific budget was set up for the enhancement of the open space on Faraday Road to return this to football use. This will be supplemented from capital to deliver the playing pitch strategy to undertake detailed design into the delivery of 3G pitch this year.

Future expenditure will be dependent on successful capital bids through the Council's capital allocation process.

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 don't believe you have answered the question, which budget has it come from?”

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

A written response will be provided.

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Item (F)

Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024

(F) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Alan Pearce:

"It's just over one year since the Liberal Democrats have been in control of the Council. Can the newly appointed Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport, and Countryside please give his absolute assurance that within the next 2 years a new Community Sports Stadium, with a new pitch, and with enhanced stadium facilities will be built and fully operational as promised in the Liberal Democrats Election Manifesto and subsequently adopted in the 2023 -2027 WBC Council Strategy?"

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

We are really delighted to have reintroduced football to Faraday Road will continue to work to improve the quality of the grass pitch for football use. A feasibility study will now be undertaken to inform options for further development of the ground. The outcome of this study will inform the refresh of the Playing Pitch Strategy.

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:

"Can you give assurance that within the next two years a new community sports stadium with a new pitch and enhanced stadium facilities will be built and fully operational as promised by the Liberal Democrats?"

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

What I can confirm is that feasibility studies are being done and they will inform how the delivery of the budget and things for the Faraday Road ground will be implemented.

Alan Pearce asked the following supplementary question:

In the Bond Riverside update at section 6.6 it states that 'however the scope of what that project may become and its timeline has not yet been identified'. So there seems to be no plan at the moment for the stadium at Faraday Road to come back.

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The Leader of the Council answered:

You Mr Pearce sat in a meeting about three weeks ago where we talked about the needs of this project, so you know the answer to this. You know that we are going out for a design statement on an artificial pitch, be it 3G or 4G. You know that there is another meeting next Thursday when I expect to be able to announce to the NCFG and Newbury Football Club what we think we can do in the short term and the medium term, and I am not going to rehearse it in public now. Until we have agreement of those parties we would be jumping the gun. You are asking questions ahead of time.

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Item (G)

Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024

(G) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Siena Woods:

“Will the Executive Member for Highways join with the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group, which campaigns on behalf of rail users in a large part of the west of your District as well as east Wiltshire, in calling for reinstatement of some or all of the pre-pandemic through train service with minimum delay and as part of this, ask the MP for Newbury to explain why BTPG has not heard from her in the two months since they last communicated with her on this matter?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Ms Woods, thank you for your question.

The introduction of the Express bi-mode trains on the Bedwyn – Paddington service was a welcome improvement, building on the electrification to Newbury in 2019.

Therefore, it was a major disappointment that these services were removed in 2022, following in the wake of the Covid pandemic and the need for GWR to cut costs. This led to the transfer of the bi-mode units elsewhere and the introduction of a diesel shuttle service between Bedwyn and Newbury, serving Hungerford and Kintbury stations. This largely resulted in the removal of direct trains to Reading and London, save only a small number of direct trains in the peak periods, with passengers often having to change trains at Newbury.

The Council strongly supports the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group in calling for the reinstatement of some, or all, of the pre-pandemic train services and has raised this in meetings with GWR where appropriate. This stance is consistent with the Council's emerging Local Transport Plan 4, which seeks to enhance the service frequency at both Hungerford and Kintbury stations.

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Item (H)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(H) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration by Paula Saunderson:

“Agenda Item 6. Paragraph 5.9 mentions an Ardent Sustainable Drainage Strategy for Bond Riverside, so please may the New Newbury Flood & Drainage Forum have site of this, what date was it produced please, and why was it (under the title of a Planned Flood Mitigation Plan) not attached to the Papers for the June 2022 Executive Meeting?”

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration answered:

Paula, thank you for your question.

The Council is happy to share the Ardent Sustainable Drainage strategy with the Newbury Flood and Drainage Forum and I will ask officers to action this. Ardent's report was produced in November 2023, hence why it was not included with the June 2022 Executive report.

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Item (I)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(I) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by John Gotelee:

“As landlord to many of the polluters what action has been taken by the council to reduce the levels of pollutants outlined in the Geo-environmental report on the results taken on the boreholes on the LRIE?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Mr Gotelee, thank you for your question.

It is not clear from the Geo-environmental report what the source of the pollution within the Bond Riverside site, therefore it is not possible to say if current or past tenants have contributed.

I can assure you that redevelopment of the site would be accompanied with appropriate levels of remediation.

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:

“Has any action been taken to see where the polluters are as there are many car sites on that industrial estate servicing cars and the pollution is basically related to vehicles so it would be a fair conclusion that some of your tenants are the polluters.”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

As I mentioned before we have got the results, and it is not possible to say from those whether current or past tenants have contributed to that pollution.

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Item (J)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(J) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Richard Garvie:

“It was recently revealed that the Council has no money available to spend on Faraday Road, and that any money spent on the facility will be through borrowing. Does the Council agree with me that now is the time to give the ground to the community on a minimum 25 year lease at a peppercorn rent to let the community begin fundraising and getting the ground up to standard for Senior football?”

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

As stated in my previous response to question F, we are really pleased that football is back up and running at Faraday Road and the Council will continue to work to improve the quality of the grass pitch for football use. A feasibility study will now be undertaken to inform options for further development of the ground. The outcome of this study will inform the refresh of the Playing Pitch Strategy

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Item (K)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(K) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Alison May:

“West Berkshire District Council's existing multi-million pound Private Funding Initiative (PFI) waste contract, reportedly valued at £550m, is due to expire on 30 September 2032. The Infrastructure & Project Authority (IPA) estimate that it can take up to seven years to adequately prepare for a PFI expiry. Can the council detail how they intend to regularly update West Berkshire citizens of their plans to transition their existing Private Funding Initiative (PFI) waste contract to align with the Council's Net Zero / Decarbonisation commitments?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Ms May – Thank you for your question.

The Council will ensure there is service continuity when the current PFI contract expires. Options are being considered for what the new arrangement could look like in future, with detailed analyses to commence from 2025/26.

The current contract is already aligned with the Council's Net Zero aspirations. Recent environmental improvements undertaken by our existing contractor include large-scale replacement of on-site lighting to LED options, installation of a bore-hole to minimise potable water usage, and using energy optimisation equipment (all at the Padworth integrated waste facility). Future updates will be provided to our stakeholders using channels such as the Environment Advisory Group (EAG) Open Forum, which is open to residents and community groups.

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Item (L)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(L) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources by Paul Morgan:

“In March 2024 it looks like the Council has borrowed £25 Million (5 x £5 Million) from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) on a short-term fixed maturity basis. Can the Council please provide a full breakdown of what this money has or will be used for?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources answered:

£25 million of PWLB financing was obtained in 2023/24 in order to support delivery of the Council's capital programme. Delivery against the Councils' capital programme will be detailed within the capital financing outturn report which is due to be presented at Executive in due course.

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Item (M)

Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024

(M) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Corporate Programme by Alan Pearce:

“Executive meeting 23rd May 2024 question in relation to agenda item 6. The Bond Riverside Programme Review EX4494 report says that (3.0) “The Depot Site is being reviewed by the Transformation Service as part of the Council accommodation review, and may require input from Property, Legal, Commissioning and Economic Development” (6.2) “potentially as part of the Council’s accommodation review” (6.4) “A separate report regarding this site is currently being prepared by the Transformation Service” Please can the Council expand upon and explain what is included in and what is meant by the Council accommodation review?”

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Corporate Programme answered:

The Accommodation Review was agreed for inclusion as one of the six projects to be led by the then newly-appointed Service Director for Transformation which was agreed at Executive in September.

The Review will consider all wholly Council-owned and controlled sites, of which the Depot Site is one, and develop a cohesive assets strategy for them. This strategy will aim to consolidate the Council’s estate and identify opportunities for efficiencies, savings or capital receipts while also enhancing the experience of customers accessing these sites.

No specific plans have been made to date but as the Depot Site is owned by the Council and is not subject to lease arrangements, it is appropriate to review its use through the Accommodation Review.

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:

“Just for clarification, that review then will be looking at possibly building new Council office buildings on there for Council staff – would that be right?”

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Corporate Programme answered:

At this point it is too early to say within the programme, but I do know that the review is ongoing.

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The Leader of the Council commented:

The thing to remember Sir is this Council has to do a lot of work before it can make any real public statement and you seem to be trying to tease out of us what we are going to do well before we have considered it. Think about it another way Sir, you have a personal interest of where you live in terms of that area, and we have 1,500 staff who have a personal interest in an accommodation review. I think it is fair to them to make sure that we do all the work before we make any public utterances whatsoever so we will not be drawn any further Mr Pearce.

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

Item (N)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(N) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration by Paula Saunderson:

“Agenda Item 6. 1. 2.1.d & 3 under Policy – mentions a LRIE Designated Employment ZONE & a LRIE Designated Employment AREA, where as the Submitted Local Plan Review currently under Examination refers to the bigger Area which includes some non-WBC lands as the London Road ESTATES Dedicated Employment Area (DEA), so are we making reference to the latter DEA which is listed in Appendix 4 of the Submitted Local Plan Review, the Map for which does NOT include the Open Green Space at the end of Faraday Road?”

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration answered:

The London Road Industrial Estates Designated Employment Area (DEA) is an area of land designated within the Local Plan for business uses. This area includes the majority of the Council owned land, now known as Bond Riverside, as well as the adjoining Riverpark Industrial Estate, but the DEA excludes the football ground.

During the preparation of the Local Plan Review, the Council (as landowner) had made representations during the Regulation 19 consultation to extend the DEA to include the Faraday Road football ground. However, this proposal was not taken forward in the submitted version of the Local Plan Review, which is why the map you refer to does not include the football ground as part of the Designated Employment Area.

The Report tonight seeks to withdraw the Council's representations to the Local Plan Review, making clear to the Inspector examining the Local Plan that the Council has since changed its approach to the football ground, and it is no longer available for employment development.

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 statements that you made in your response are not reflected in the submitted document, so I don't think that you need to worry too much but I understand why you are undertaking the protocol. Now that we have a plot by plot approach the document attached to your document tonight has a red line around it. Would it not be more appropriate to put a blue line around this land now that it is not one planning

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application? In planning terms, the red line has a different meaning and I think we now need to change this to a blue line which would be more helpful for everyone.”

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration answered:

Thank you very much Miss Saunderson. I will take a look at that in terms of changing the colour.

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Item (O)

Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024

(O) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by John Gotelee:

“The building of the A339 / Flemming Rd junction increased the area of impermeable surfaces by nearly 1000 Sqm and subsequently increased the amount of surface water run off into the Thames Water Sewer. The sewer was already causing flooding of property downstream and since the addition of the extra surface water runoff, flooding has occurred several times. With reference to the Highways act 1980 chapter 66 section 100 (3) What compensation is payable to residents affected by flooding from highways activity?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Dear Mr Gotelee, thank you for your question.

I am pleased to let you know that the construction of the A339 junction with Fleming Road included mitigation measures to attenuate the flow from the additional impermeable surface. I can therefore inform you that as the additional flow is fully mitigated, no compensation is due.

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 addition of extra impermeable surface still creates more water coming off. With regard to betterment of the area, where's the benchmark?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

I believe your question was with regard to the A339 junction and therefore I am going to address that part specifically and I believe that you have had plans for that. The betterment that was done at that junction was around increasing the size of the pipes beneath the road construction to act as additional storage and attenuate the flow. So, there is betterment at that A339 junction.

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Item (P)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(P) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Alison May:

“West Berkshire citizens continue to increasingly contribute to reducing their waste arisings by ensuring their 'unwanted stuff' is either reduced, reused or recycled. West Berkshire District Council, being a registered Waste authority, is ideally positioned to contribute to further encouraging West Berkshire citizens, West Berkshire businesses, schools, colleges etc to adopt sustainable waste management initiatives. Can the council detail how they intend to further contribute to ensuring West Berkshire citizens, businesses, schools, colleges etc to maximise opportunities by ensuring 'discarded items' benefit from being appropriately reused, recycled or reduced?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Thanks for your question.

The Council has been promoting better resource management through waste reduction, reuse and recycling. Recent examples include the introduction of a paint reuse scheme at our recycling centres, and promotion of early education on waste matters within local schools, where officers make regular visits. We have also been long-standing supporters of the Community Furniture Project in Newbury, which does a great job in delivering reuse and social impact benefits. Promotion of resource efficiency will continue to be a focus area for the Council and will be covered in the emerging Waste and Resource Strategy for the Council, which will be consulted on later this year.

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Item (Q)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(Q) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Paul Morgan:

“Agenda Item 6 Forward Plan Ref: (EX4494) report: My question relates to section 6.6 of the report and is in two parts.

i) Can you please correct the first sentence to say that football pitch was available for teams to use from February 2024 (not October 2023).

ii) If the Council had adopted / progressed the NCFG planning approvals that was unanimously approved by the Western Area Planning Committee, over 2.5 years ago, do you think that this would have avoided doubts / questions / confusion regarding “what that project may become, and its timeline”?”

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

i) Fencing work was completed at the end of January, this meant that the facility was then available for allocation to local teams. Officers had a meeting at Faraday Road with CSA and Procision to discuss their use of the Pitch from February onwards. The suggested amendment can, therefore, be made.

ii) With regards your question concerning the previous NCFG planning application, it would not be appropriate for me to speculate on what may have happened following a decision taken by a previous administration, I will therefore respectfully decline to answer that part of your question.

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

Paul Morgan asked the following supplementary question:

“It’s a concern that you said it was a long-term aspiration for the Faraday Road Stadium. Why is it long term when it should be short term. It is in your manifesto and strategy so why is it taking so long to actually come up with a detailed plan for the provision of the replacement stadium at Faraday Road?”

The Executive Director of Place commented:

The Council's Strategy states that the Council will work with the local stakeholders to identify a plan for the end of 2024.

Paul Morgan asked the following supplementary question:

It is 2024, where is the plan?

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The Leader of the Council commented:

Mr Morgan, I am going to refer you to the answer that I gave to Mr Pearce. You were in the meeting that we had three weeks ago and we have another meeting next week. There is a steering group and I am a bit puzzled at your disquiet and that you bring questions here that you know that you can address through the NCFG next week. That is when those answers will come forth and then there will be public statements. I am not going to be a hostage to fortune here when there is a programme of activity. I was the one who introduced the steering group so that we had the momentum to get these questions answered.

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Item (R)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(R) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration by Paula Saunderson:

“Agenda Item 6. The Review makes several mentions of the Gateway Plaza Development which is a mixed development and has been offered up as a late including in the Local Plan Review, however the Advertised Site includes Lands for which WBC is not the Land Owner, so how will the Cumulative Impact of Development on the Surface Water Network in wider Catchment Area be dealt with, please?”

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration answered:

Paula, thank you for your question.

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment submitted as part of the local plan process includes a cumulative impacts assessment which can be viewed on the Council's website. This includes a catchment-level assessment of Cumulative Impacts of Development on Flood Risk.

In addition, the flood risk impact of individual developments will be considered as part of the planning application process.

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 Ardent sustainable drainage strategy for Bond Riverside presumably covers that part of the London Road Estate's DEA, whereas the Gateway Plaza would have a little bit in there and a bit outside of that. I'm just a little concerned that we might have some gaps somewhere because this all goes into a much wider catchment area. Maybe once we have reviewed the first paper would it be possible to come back to you with a couple of questions. Would that be ok?”

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration answered:

Yes Ms Saunderson. If you take a look at the report that we will be sending through and then we can review again.

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Item (S)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(S) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by John Gotelee:

“The A339 / Flemming Rd junction was screened and determined not to need an Environmental Impact assessment, yet It has striking similarities with the infamous Glasgow bridge to nowhere which after a judicial review was found to need an EIA. Please could the council confirm that before any work is undertaken to regenerate any plot of the London Rd estates a full Environmental Impact Assessment will be carried out?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing answered:

Any planning application that meets the threshold of the Environmental Impact Assessment regulations will be screened.

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:

“Isn't it automatic that a development of that size you are not allowed to salami slice which is what appears to be happening there. Aren't you courting disaster without an EIA?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing answered:

If an EIA is required an EIA will take place.

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Item (T)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(T) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration by Paula Saunderson:

“Agenda Item 6. Under Section 5 – Flooding & Drainage - The Review makes no mention of the Surface Water Pollution of the Northbrook & pollution in the underlying Aquifers which have both been the subject of investigations, so why is that, and are there any tasks within the Project Work Plans to try and identify the Sources of the Pollutants please?”

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration answered:

Ms Saunderson, thank you for your question.

The report submitted to Executive under item 6 is a fairly high-level report which details the proposed management and governance arrangement for taking forward the development of Bond Riverside, as part of the Newbury Masterplan process. It does not go into detail on specific issues such as pollution. However, the project team are aware of the pollution issues and will give this due consideration through the delivery of the project.

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:

“So, we can expect to see little chunks of work in the project work plans in relation to the pollution of the aquifers and of the Northbrook?”

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration answered:

There is actually a discussion about these areas at the Environment Advisory Group on Tuesday night and a paper will be brought forward with recommendations through the Executive so I am sure that we will see some of these points covered through that.

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Item (U)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(U) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration by Paula Saunderson:

“Agenda Item 6. The Review mentions in several places that Flood Risk & Mitigation will be dealt with through the Planning Process so are the Project Team aware that the WBC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2, which is submitted in evidence in the Local Plan Review, calls for a whole site (excluding the Green Space) Flood Risk Assessment & a Surface Water Drainage Strategy and that seems to be contra to the recommended Plot by Plot basis, so how will the Cumulative Impacts of these Developments be Assessed, please?”

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration answered:

Thank you for your question, Ms Saunderson.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment submitted as part of the local plan states ‘At the planning application stage, a site-specific flood risk assessment and surface water drainage strategy will be required’. Therefore, any application submitted will need to demonstrate how flood risk and surface water is managed. It will also need to take into account the sustainable drainage strategy produced by Ardent.

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:

“Yes, that is why I think it is important to remove that red line because if you are looking at a plot by plot, and the strategic flood risk assessment level one, appendix one, is all about cumulative impact assessment, but it doesn't have a methodology in it. So, unless there is a methodology in the first paper that we referred to, we are missing an understanding of how that cumulative impact will be assessed because it is not just Bond Riverside, there are other bits in the London Road Estate's DEA. I will write to planning and ask what the methodology is for doing a cumulative impact assessment where a series of plot-by-plot developments are coming forward”.



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

Item (A)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(A) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Councillor Chris Read:

“There are now a number of significant planning breaches within the Parish of Woolhampton in the Ward of Bucklebury, to the east of Woolhampton village along the A4. Woolhampton Parish Council and myself understand the Planning Enforcement team are looking into these issues and would like an update and an understanding of the next steps from the Council on this problem to ensure unapproved development and planning breaches are properly managed.”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing answered:

Thank you for your question.

I am aware that a number of alleged breaches have been reported to the Council about activities in this area. The Council is investigating these and will be shortly visiting the sites to understand the position. I believe that the Executive Director of Place has recently contacted you and interested residents to explain the next steps in this investigation and the timescale for this. I believe that she has suggested an approach to feedback the outcome of the investigation and next steps to you and local representatives.

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

Item (B)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(B) Question submitted to the Leader of the Council by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

“In January, the Council announced on its website that Cllr Dillon would be “taking a sabbatical” from his role as Leader, and “The new arrangements will be in place until after the election has been held - which must be held by January 2025 - at which point they will be reviewed by the Executive group.” Why have the arrangements been changed despite no general election having taken place?”

This question was withdrawn at the meeting.



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

Item (C)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(C) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services by Councillor Dominic Boeck:

“In a recent survey for the Times, this council was ranked 181st out of 317 local authorities for Finance. What steps is the lead member for Education taking to make sure our schools receive the capital funding they need?”

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services answered:

Thank you, Cllr Boeck, for your question.

As you will be aware the amount of capital funding available to spend on our schools is determined predominantly though not exclusively by the level of grant funding that the Council receives from the Department for Education.

West Berkshire Council uses a range of data and intelligence sources underpinning local and national challenges, to prioritise activity and identify capital investment needs. We have an annual process for obtaining schools' views on their urgent and priority maintenance needs as well as identifying opportunity to develop and deliver wider capital investment projects.

Once capital investment priorities have been established Business Cases and Funding Bids are developed and submitted for consideration for inclusion into the wider Council's Capital Programme.

Where appropriate wider funding opportunities are explored, these may include CIL and Section 106 funds, and would also include applications to national initiatives including where applicable the free school programme.

As portfolio holder for children, I am motivated and committed to ensure our children in schools across west Berkshire learn and develop in the right environment to support their needs. This is why this administration are progressing projects that were delayed in recent years.

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

Item (D)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(D) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Councillor David Marsh:

“Will the executive member for housing ask the officers to draw up a register of all residential properties that have been left empty for 12 months or more? The aim would be to work with the owners, whether housing associations or private, to get these homes back into circulation to provide much-needed accommodation in the district.”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing answered:

Empty homes are such a waste of a valuable resource. When people are crying out for homes this sort of situation should be addressed as a matter of extreme importance. The Council has committed to developing an Empty Property Strategy in 2024/25. Part of this exercise will be to develop a register of all empty residential properties.

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 David Marsh asked the following supplementary question:

“That is the first time that has ever happened, that I have asked a question at Executive and someone has said ‘yes’. Just to make you aware that it isn’t just 12 months, that was just my suggestion, but there are properties, certainly in my ward, that have been empty for five years with associated problems of rats and ensuing issues for the neighbours.”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing answered:

You are right, there is a similar property in Hungerford with the same situation. It is a travesty that properties are being left empty for that amount of time, but we are addressing it.

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

Item (E)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(E) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration by Councillor Tony Vickers:

“How can this Council help Benchmark remain in West Berkshire, where it was established with the help of Habitat’s Sir Terence Conran in 1984 on his land near Kintbury, having since become a major part of our rural economy, gained an international reputation in design using sustainable timber, but whose lease ending in 2027 is not being reviewed?”

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration answered:

The Council is committed to supporting all types of business and enterprise to enable a prosperous and resilient District. The Council has been supporting the company to find alternative accommodation offering advice about where the company should focus its efforts to secure new premises in a way that is likely to be supported through the planning system and signposting to possible options. Benchmark also attended the rural business forum that was held last year which gave them an opportunity to engage with local stakeholders and establish available opportunities.

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

Councillor Tony Vickers asked the following supplementary question:

“Do you think it might be possible in an instance like this for the Council to fast track processing an application which is of such significance to the economy? I am not saying we should make sure that we should pass any planning application but when it does come through, I think it is in the wider interests of the public locally that we fast track things like this”.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration answered:

We have had meetings with the Director of Place and one of the senior planning officers and we are well aware of the priority for any business, including Benchmark.

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

Item (F)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(F) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Councillor Howard Woollaston:

"I am delighted to see £1.2 Million allocated in the Capital Budget for a new Library in Thatcham , an initiative commenced by me as Portfolio Holder for Culture in the previous administration . Could the current Policy holder provide an update on the proposed location and likely timescales?"

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

There is a clear aspiration for a new library in Thatcham as identified through the Thatcham Masterplan and Thatcham Strategy. The Council is in the process of reviewing options to deliver community facilities in Thatcham Town Centre. The funding identified in the capital budget will help to support the implementation of this review.

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 hope you get on with it very quickly".

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

Item (G)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(G) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

"In the Liberal Democrat manifesto for the May 2023 elections, you promised to immediately return the Faraday Road pitch to bookable football space. How many hours of football have been played on the pitch since May 2023?"

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

Councillor Mackinnon, thank you for your question.

Given the neglect under the previous administration a significant amount of work had to be undertaken to return the pitch to a playable condition. This was admirably managed by the Council's Countryside team. In total 40 hours of football has been played on the site, this would have been more had we not suffered from one of the wettest winters on record, which had a significant impact on playing pitches regionally.

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:

"Congratulations on your first Executive. You mention the neglect of the previous administration and that is clearly not a description I would recognise. In fact, were it not for an ill-advised judicial review supported by members of the then Liberal Democrat administration the Sports Hub would have been opened well in advance of the election last year. If it had been, a total of 4,368 hours of football could have been played in the year from May last year to May this year compared with 40 as you have just advised me now. Still think it was a good idea?"

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

Thank you very much for your observations. Obviously I will take a note of those.

The Leader of the Council commented:

Yes, I do think it was a good idea because it was supported by the people of Newbury and the football community without any doubt whatsoever Councillor Mackinnon, and they will be happy with the 40 hours and that will go up to the 4,000 in time.

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

Item (H)

Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024

(H) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Councillor David Marsh:

“What progress has been made on reducing the speed limit on the A339 between Newbury College and the Swan roundabout from 50mph to 40mph, as agreed by the Speed Limit Review on February 29?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Thank you for your question. I am slightly surprised that you feel the need to ask this question at Executive, given that you are a member of the speed limit review group and would be aware of the process and timescales for implementing speed limits.

The Network Management Works Programme for 2024-25 was approved by Individual Decision earlier this month. I can confirm that the proposal to reduce this particular speed limit was added to the programme. It is therefore intended to complete the project this financial year, but I do need to point out that there are three other approved speed limit proposals that were identified before this one and we will be dealing with those first.

You will be aware that making changes to speed limits is a time-intensive process that includes a statutory consultation. If any objections are received, this will further lengthen the process and may result in the proposals being subject to a further formal decision-making process.

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 David Marsh asked the following supplementary question:

“It is because I am a member of the panel that I am asking the question Councillor Gourley. Anyway, all I would say is could you endeavour to expedite this as fast as possible? The last time I was involved with one of these in my ward which was the reduction from 40mph to 30mph in Andover Road, took many months to happen and people were very frustrated by that. There is a real desire, particularly from parents of children at Highwood Copse school and St Gabriels for this to happen as soon as possible.”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Yes, as someone with young children I fully understand why making our highways and footways a safe place to be is important and we are fully intending to complete this in

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

the current financial year. There are other schemes in the pipeline that were ahead of this one and there is the caveat that any objections may lengthen the process.

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

Item (I)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(I) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Councillor Howard Woollaston:

“Given the issues with flooding and raw sewage in the roads in my ward in Lambourn for three months and I know other wards down the Lambourn Valley and the Pang Valley, what extra resources can be provided both human and financial to try to ameliorate the situation? The Officers are doing their level best but are hideously under resourced after what has been the wettest February and April since records began in 1835 and I understand one of the 5th wettest Winters over the same period. This is an emergency!”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Councillor Woolaston, thank you for your question.

I fully appreciate the difficulty the recent flooding has caused across the District, indeed my own ward has been dramatically affected like your own and I therefore fully understand the urgency. Officers and consultants are in the process of carrying out S19 reviews into the impact of the flooding which will be reported to Scrutiny Commission later this year. This will inform our plans to help mitigate the impact of this flooding going forward and I am very happy for you to be involved in that process. We are also pressing other flood risk authorities, the Environment Agency and Thames Water, for action to improve their infrastructure.

With regards financial support, I am pleased to let you know that the Council has given out over 50 Community and Business Recovery grants, distributing over £90,000 to those in our communities directly impacted by the flooding. We are also helping over 30 residents with Property Resilience grants, which allows those whose properties were flooded internally to claim up to £5,000 each for resilience measures.

I hope this reassures you that we are doing all we can.

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 would like to take up your offer of being involved in the process. Clearly the major problem has been extraordinarily high levels of groundwater. Since submitting this question, we have had the wettest April on record. Thankfully the budget suggestion of cutting drain and ditch clearance was stopped but can the Council expand this going forward and try to explore actions and obligations by riparian owners?”

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

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Yes absolutely, I'm a big believer that everyone has a personal responsibility to act in the correct manner and I am pleased to say that we recently recruited two new members to the drainage team and we have also moved and re-resourced one FTE within the team in light of the amount of work that is set to go on. I will of course warn residents that we expect another challenging winter in 2024, so any action that can be taken now to protect their properties and businesses is something that I would strongly advise.

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

Item (J)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(J) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

“How much money has the Council spent on the Faraday Road pitch since May 2023?”

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

Cllr Mackinnon, thank you for your question.

The Council spent £230k restoring the pitch to a playable surface, which included pitch preparation, fencing, goal catchers and changing rooms.

Since opening, a further £7k has been spent on additional timber bollards to prevent access, also on cycle stands and routine maintenance.

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:

“So £237k in total, for a sum total of forty hours of football, which I calculate to be just under £6,000 per hour. Compare that to the Sports Hub which would have cost under £90 per hour. Given that we have already discussed tonight that we are missing out on hundreds of jobs on that site in addition to this astronomical cost per hour of football isn't it time to admit that you got this one wrong?”

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

I would refer you back to the earlier reply I gave that as you know the pitch was in a very poor state when it was taken over by our new Administration, so it did take quite a lot of preparation to get it back to anything like a playable surface. Of course, as you well know any comments that you may have about the spend obviously can be taken up with Scrutiny later.

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

Item (K)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(K) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services by Councillor David Marsh:

“What plans does the council have to encourage schools across West Berkshire to participate in Walk to School Week from May 20-24?”

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services answered:

Thank you, Cllr Marsh, for your question.

The Walk to School Week is now almost at an end. I am sure all of us in the Chamber this evening will understand the importance of promoting active travel and encouraging children and young people to walk and cycle to school.

Where it is possible for families, active travel is affordable, delivers significant health benefits, and has been shown to improve wellbeing, mitigate congestion, improves air quality and has no carbon emissions at the point of use. This results in happier and healthier residents and visitors, as well as lasting local economic benefits. However, for working parents this is not always possible.

West Berkshire Council through public health and education colleagues support and work with schools to promote Walk to School Week. Information was shared with schools well in advance of the week and all were encouraged to participate. Of course, this year it has come hot on the heels of SATs and amid GCSEs so children and colleagues across our schools are very busy.

We will continue to promote Active travel all year round and we have lots of information on our web pages that sets out a range of actions that can be taken to improve and encourage active travel for all our children.

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

Item (L)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(L) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources by Councillor Howard Woollaston:

“Could we be told the total borrowings from the Public Works Loan Board to the Council during the 2023/4 Municipal Year , the interest rate payable , the term of the loan and what it is being used for in each instance?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources answered:

During financial year 23/24 £25 million of borrowing was accessed from the Public Works and Loan Board. The terms of loans undertaken range between 14 to 18 months. The weighted average interest rate for loans undertaken in 2023/24 was 5.4%. Loans accessed during the year have been used to finance capital expenditure incurred.

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

Item (M)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(M) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

“In the Liberal Democrat manifesto for the May 2023 elections, you promised to introduce cheaper parking. How much cheaper is parking in West Berkshire than in May 2023?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Councillor Mackinnon, thank you for your question.

The Council has had to consider parking charges in light of the very difficult financial situation we have found ourselves in.

In our manifesto we promised to consider lower cost and possible free parking in certain locations.

Following the consultation last year, we had to take the difficult decision to increase many of our parking charges. These new charges are currently being introduced. However, I am pleased to say that, in line with our manifesto, we have been able to include reductions at some key locations to encourage longer dwell times in some of our town centre car parks.

For example, Goldwell park in Newbury is now free up to the first 3 hours. All day parking in Station Road, Hungerford has reduced from £6 to £3 and season tickets in Pangbourne, Hungerford and Newbury are now cheaper than in previous years giving much better value for regular visitors. There are many other examples that I would be happy to share with you.

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:

“So overall in total is parking more expensive or cheaper now than in May 2023?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Our manifesto and delivery plan which you supported back last year talk about targeted packages of lower cost parking and I have just described to you a few places where we have delivered on that.

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

Item (N)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(N) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Councillor Howard Woollaston:

"I am getting various questions about the charging structure at our Leisure Centres and specifically at our pools, the lido and Cricket and the new dance Studio in Hungerford. I appreciate that the new Management Contract is designed to at least break even for the Council , but given that the lido and dance studio were fully funded and a major contribution made for the 3G artificial pitch at John O'Gaunts School in Hungerford under my time as Portfolio Holder for Leisure under the previous administration, sharp increase seem inappropriate at the end of the cost of living crisis even though inflation is now back under control , the economy is expanding and significant tax cuts have been made under this Conservative government."

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

We are delighted that the lido project has been delivered for the use of local residents and that other projects are being developed which will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our residents. Prices are reviewed on an annual basis and the Council and Everyone Active, our leisure operator, strives to ensure that both prices and concessions are aligned to local market rates ensuring that all sections of the community are able to access the facilities. Everyone Active also provides free or cheaper access to identified groups to increase participation. I was in a meeting yesterday with Everyone Active executives and this topic amongst others was discussed.

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 do not but I am just concerned because I have been contacted by numerous residents concerned about the increase in costs."

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

Item (O)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(O) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

“What progress has been made in the investigation of a Low Emission Zone for Newbury, as promised in your May 2023 manifesto?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Councillor Mackinnon, thank you for your question.

You are probably aware the Council is currently developing its local transport plan. As part of the development of the plan excellent progress has been made in investigating ways to reduce the impact of HGV's on our town centres and reducing emissions in urban areas such as Newbury.

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:

“What progress has been made in the investigation of a Low Emission Zone specifically?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

I refer you back to my answer in that we have been reviewing impact across our road networks as part of that local transport plan and that includes road networks around Newbury.

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

Item (P)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(P) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

“How many pets have been given away as prizes in West Berkshire since May 2023?”

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

There is no requirement on event operators to inform the Council if they intend to give away pets as prizes. West Berkshire Council does not permit the giving away of pets as prizes on its land. The Motion before Council was to confirm that position and also write to parish councils asking them to consider doing the same. That has been done.



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

Item (Q)	Executive Meeting on 23 May 2024
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(Q) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

“How quickly has the Council fixed dangerous potholes during the year since May 2023, and how does this compare to the year to May 2022?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Thank you for your question. Given the concern expressed by residents over the management of our roads by the previous administration, the Liberal Democrat administration commissioned an independent review of how the Council goes about identifying and fixing potholes.

This review has now been completed and has identified several clear recommendations which will improve our roads for our residents which the Highways Service are implementing. These changes will be announced in the coming weeks, and I look forward to sharing them with you.

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 is not remotely an answer to the question asked.”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

You will hear more in the coming weeks in relation to our plans for how we manage the highways.

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