

Supplemental Items for Executive

Thursday 25 September 2025 at 6.00 pm
in Council Chamber Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

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Sarah Clarke.

Sarah Clarke

Executive Director - Resources

For further information about these items, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Sadie Owen (Principal Democratic Services Officer) on 01635 519052, e-mail: sadie.owen1@westberks.gov.uk

Further information and Minutes are also available on the Council's website at

www.westberks.gov.uk

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

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Item 5:

Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 25 September 2025.

Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.

A. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"On 28th July 2020 the London Road Industrial Estate Task & Finish Group Report came to OSMC and it included 2 Spreadsheets titled: a) Appendix 6D - Capital Cost Centre 87750 - totalling £571, 977.77 b)Appendix 6E - Expenditure Paid to Individual Organisations Involved with LRIE- totalling £6,182,493.14 Therefore, please would it be possible to either have these old Spreadsheets Updated or to produce Continuation Spreadsheets with no gaps in the chronology, including ALL Expenditure on ALL the WBC Lands in this Area, including those now known as Bond Riverside and the adjoining Public Open Space which includes a new football pitch? e.g., Avison Young, Ardent, Hemingway Reports. Sports Lab, and others."

B. Question submitted by Lee Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Does this council still stand by its Leader's claim that residents struggling with the 3 week bin collection move should "get a bigger bin."

C. Question submitted by Keith Hoddinott to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Appertaining to the enactment of Sections 3 & 42 of the 2010 Flood & Water Management Act , I request that WBC make representations through their nominee member to press the Local Government Association (LGA) & the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) to make strong representations to DEFRA to implement these clauses as a matter of urgency & "Duty of Care" to future home-owners / Council Tax payers."

D. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Referring to the list of budgets for projects under £250K, the top two are Speed restriction changes and Accident reduction works. Surely Speed restriction is part of accident reduction? Is this a case of salami slicing the budget to avoid the \$250K limit?"

E. Question submitted by Simon Pike to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"When will the Council approve/adopt the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, to replace the one dated 2010-2020?"

F. Question submitted by Phoebe Cowhig to the Leader of the Council:

"The Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund, managed by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, administers the Local Government Pension Scheme on behalf of West Berkshire. Employees of West Berkshire Council are

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automatically enrolled in this scheme. Research by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign has found that the Berkshire Pension Fund invests £134.8million in companies enabling or profiting from Israel's genocide, military occupation and apartheid against Palestinians. This includes companies supplying Israel with weapons and military technology used in its assaults on Palestinians, and companies financing and aiding the construction of Israel's illegal settlements in the West Bank. I understand that the LPPI asset manager for the Pension Fund monitors the Fund's portfolio against the UN OPT list, however companies supplying Israel with weapons and military technology fall outside of the scope of this list. 17 councils in England & Wales are now recognising their profound moral and legal obligation not to contribute to Israel's violations of international law, by supporting the divestment of pension funds from companies enabling Israel's crimes. Will West Berkshire Council join them by writing to Berkshire Pension Fund to call for divestment from companies enabling Israel's grave violations of international law?"

G. Question submitted by Paul Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"What date did the Executive approve the construction work for the Grazeley Solar Farm (anticipated value is up to £20M)?"

H. Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"With regards to the question below asked to the Executive on the 14th of December 2023. "Please would the Council confirm it will not make a decision on the Bond Riverside Regeneration Programme Review (Currently deferred on the forward plan) until it has calculated and published the three calculations below not included in the Ardent, West Berkshire Council, London Road Newbury Catchment Study, Report Ref. 195110-01 December 2019? a. The liters per hour green field runoff rate of the catchment area which outfalls into the Northbrook stream about 70 Hectares/172.9 Acres. (Report ref 2.4. Figure 2-2 Catchment Extent) b, The liters per hour urban runoff rate of the catchment area which outfalls into the Northbrook stream about 70 Hectares/172.9 Acres. (Report ref 2.4. Figure 2-2 Catchment Extent) C, The liters per hour flow rate of the enclosed Tesco culvert (Report Ref 2.9. Figure 2-9)"Answer -therefore calculations will be undertaken and suitable mitigations proposed through any planning applications.Please can the Council confirm that this is still the case, and has the council received any costings from drainage consultants to carry out the work?"

I. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

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"The published Council Strategy (page 16) states that in 2024 the Council will finalise plans for new Community Sports Stadium at Faraday Road and in 2025 /26 "Commission and build new Community Sports Stadium". If this is still a strategic objective, why is there no reference to it in the EX4542?"

J. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"From the paperwork included in the 28th July 2020 Meeting there is a chronology starting in May 2008 and lists of Consultants and other Parties and some Outputs, however it is impossible to identify whether, to date, a COMPLETE Geo-Environmental Study (not the name of a Company) has ever been conducted for London Road Industrial Estate Lands or for Bond Riverside (renamed at a Careers Event in February 2023), therefore can the Council please State whether a Full Geo-Environmental Study has ever been undertaken, thank you?"

K. Question submitted by Lee Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Does this Council have any plans for new anti-flooding infrastructure in rural West Berkshire? Such as Lambourn and Chaddleworth given we are the most vulnerable to it and if so will the council fund it or will it force local parish councils to foot the bill as the Conservatives attempted to do in Great Shefford?"

L. Question submitted by Keith Hoddinott to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Does the Council have an identifiable separate REVENUE COST CENTRE for its duties & responsibilities as the LLFDA & LDA for its area, including any riparian landowner responsibilities adjacent to watercourses (not incl. highways). If not, should not such a budget head be introduced, given the recently completed Flood Alleviation Scheme at Thatcham which will require ongoing future maintenance"

M. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources:

"If the council went into administration, what would happen to the main expenditure budgets, such as adult social care and SEND? Would there be cuts if so, what services are likely to be affected?"

N. Question submitted by Paul Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources:

"At the start of this Financial Year (2025/26) the General Fund was reported as being £10,597,414. Can the Council please confirm what is the current level of the General Fund?"

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O. Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"EX4725 says that in terms of policy this request for capital is for "the provision of additional 3G pitches is in line with the emerging West Berkshire Playing Pitch Strategy". Should the Council have combined the requirements, business case, budget, and funding requests for both the 3G pitch and new clubhouse / facilities to allow all stakeholders to review them together?"

P. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"Can the Council please tell me why it did not follow through with the full planning permission granted to Newbury Community Football Group for Faraday Road Previously?"

Q. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"The Council has within it, the responsibility for running and conducting the Governments Land Contamination Risk Management process, therefore has this Authority ever conducted a LCRM Tier 1 Risk Assessment for the Lands now known as Bond Riverside, and if so what was the result, please?"

R. Question submitted by Lee Allen to the Leader of the Council:

"Why is it that the Council has suddenly developed such an interest in the affairs of Tilehurst, Calcot, Pangbourne and Theale now there is a chance they could join Reading? When for years The voices of those out east were down the priority list, alongside us out in the rural areas?"

S. Question submitted by Keith Hoddinott to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"What was the revenue expenditure on these duties of staff costs & work content in 2024/25; & the revenue estimate for the current & future years."

T. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health:

"What is the average cost per patient of the councils mental health services?"

U. Question submitted by Paul Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources:

"The BBC has recently reported that Bracknell Forest Council, in response to the government's Fair Funding Review 2.0, claims that it will leave it with a "funding gap of at least £14m" by 2028-29. Has West Berkshire Council undertaken a similar review in response to the government's Fair Funding Review 2.0?"

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V. Question submitted by Keith Hoddinott to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Can the Council demonstrate its maintenance schedules for undertaking its riparian owner responsibilities in clearing debris (trees, branches, weed etc.), regular clearing of trash grills/screens, reinstating & repairs to banks etc in the area from Donnington downstream to the A4 (i.e.. the Spout Ditch & River Lambourn)."

W. Question submitted by Paul Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"EX4725 "Faraday Road 3G Pitch Development" is a well-prepared document that provides members and the public with a good level of detail together with the rationale and justification for additional funding required in the 2025/26 & 2026/27 capital programme. If successful, and in parallel with any planning application that will follow can the Council, please consider and confirm that it will undertake the following activities:

1) Undertake an unbiased and thorough evaluation of different business and operational models to guarantee that the football ground remains protected in perpetuity and remains viable and sustainable. E.g. Community Asset transfer, Long Lease, Short Lease, Fields in Trust deed, Council owned / managed, etc.

2) Provide a holistic project plan that identifies all key activities / critical paths required (including timescales) to incorporate and deliver an enhanced stadium / facility.

3) Urgently explore the sources and options available for external funding (capital and revenue) and understand the dependencies, caveats and impact on timescales associated with successful funding applications for both a 3G pitch and enhanced stadium facilities."

X. Question submitted by Keith Hoddinott to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Will the Council serve notice on other riparian owners using its LDA powers to require riparian owners to clear debris (fallen trees & branches etc.) from watercourses."

Y. Question submitted by Keith Hoddinott to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Will the Council provide an update to property owners on the progress being made in restoring the breached River Kennet bank at the far western end of Northcroft park adjacent to the weir."

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Z. Question submitted by Keith Hoddinott to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"There is public disquiet & concern at the delays in completing the "Peace Garden" in the Wharf. I understand this is due to EA lengthy deliberations over repairs to the river bank – can the Council provide an update & anticipated completion date.?"

AA. Question submitted by Keith Hoddinott to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

"The near future expansion of housing & commercial development to the north of Newbury & north-east of Thatcham; & the expected development on the Hampshire border at Wash-water ARE the Council's engineering & planning staff (together with other Council services staff) considering & outlining future highway ring road plans to encompass routes; (a) Washwater to A339 Newtown (parallel to the northside of the R.Enborne), & (b) from the A34/A339 north-east to Thatcham & southwards over the railway & river/canal & onto the A339 (Hants border). This infrastructure to accommodate the increase in traffic volumes using WBC schools & health services etc. & allay residents' traffic safety issues in Wash Common."

Item 14:

Member Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 25 September 2025.

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A. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"I'm sure you'll agree with your 2023 manifesto that said "The Liberal Democrats know that a good Council is one that can be held accountable for its decisions, and is transparent about decision-making". Given that a majority of residents told you that they could not cope with or would struggle at certain times of the year with 3-weekly black bin collections, can you be transparent now with residents and tell them what criteria they must meet to qualify for a larger black bin?"

B. Question submitted by Councillor Dominic Boeck to the Leader of the Council:

"Will the administration join the Conservative Group in calling on our MPs not to support Government's proposals to increase gambling tax which would cause severe harm to West Berkshire's racing industry?"

C. Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Public Safety and Capital Projects (Built Environment):

"What steps will the council take to ensure that there is no repeat of the "rave" that took place on Friday/Saturday September 5/6, which was allowed to continue for approximately seven hours, until 6.20am, denying a night's sleep to many thousands of residents of Newbury Wash Common ward and beyond?"

D. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health:

"Will you apologise to service users and staff of West Berkshire's resource centres for the months of uncertainty and stress caused by the administration's decision to review the provision of these centres?"

E. Question submitted by Councillor Dominic Boeck to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Rag Hill is a single lane country road in Aldermaston which is used by articulated lorries servicing an industrial logistics hub. The surface of the road and its verges are being destroyed and residents fear for their safety and their children's. What is being done to protect our residents and council's assets?"

F. Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"How much has the council spent on publicising the change to three-weekly black bin collections, up to and including the recent "Changes That Count" leaflet, personally addressed to residents and delivered by Royal Mail?"

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G. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources:

"Regarding the sale of the Council's commercial property assets, which have always generated a net profit to ease the burden on Council Tax payers, do you agree that a balance must be struck between the lure of a one-off capital receipt which could potentially fund some additional transformation spend in the short term or reduce the impact of EFS borrowing versus the long-term revenue streams we might be sacrificing which, under current PWLB restrictions, cannot be replaced and that all rental income sacrificed will need to be replaced with income generation or savings proposals to offset the lost revenue stream?"

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

"The all-party Speed Limit Review panel agreed in February 2024 to recommend a decrease from 50mph to 40mph on the stretch of the A339 from Newbury College to the Swan roundabout, which passes two schools and the Newtown Road recycling centre. Why has it taken 18 months for this proposal (and three others from the same meeting) to be sent out for consultation?"

I. Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Why are parked cars still being allowed to obstruct the north side of the Andover Road cycle path (and adjacent footpath) between Buckingham Road and St John's roundabout, Newbury, more than three years after the council, following a consultation with residents, provided parking spaces on the other side of the road and agreed that there would be "no parking" on the north side?"