

Supplemental Items for Executive

Thursday 21 May 2026 at 6.00 pm
in Council Chamber Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

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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



Supplemental Items
Executive to be held on Thursday 21 May 2026 *(continued)*

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.



Item 4:

Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 21 May 2026

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 Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources:

"Please could the Council point out the specific section or line item within the Capital Strategy 2026/27–2029/30 programme where the £1.25 million in capital funding for the proposed 3G pitch at Faraday Road is recorded?"

B. Question submitted by Tracey Fenner to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health:

"With regard to the recent proposal: "To cease directly providing adult respite in the community services, which will be commissioned from alternative providers".

Unfortunately I missed the consultation but looking at the results, it appears that 88% of respondents were from a particular ethnicity. Considering that the proposal was denied based on the feedback, I question that this process was sufficiently robust to carry such weight. For example, is it possible that the vast majority of the respondents were related/family members?

I would be interested to understand how a proposal that would save more than £29 000 per annum can appear to be so easily rejected. While I am considerate of the service-users' situation, I am also very mindful of the financial constraints that our council has to try to manage for the benefit of all."

C. Question submitted by Ian Hall to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"How much has been spent to date on the sports facilities at Faraday Road (including surveys) from the Lib Dems taking control of the council"

D. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"Within the Sites in the Local Plan Review (now adopted), how many new Outdoor Sports Pitches are planned to be delivered via Developer Agreements and/or Contributions?"

E. Question submitted by Keren Ben-David Rostholder to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services:

"Under the DfE HAF Statutory Guidance, the HAF programme is an educational tool designed to ensure children return to school 'ready to learn' and to develop new skills and resilience. For a child with an EHCP and complex needs, this enrichment is a critical extension of their education.Can the Executive explain why HAF is currently excluded from West Berkshire's SEND reform plans on the basis that it is 'not education'?"

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F. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Leader of the Council:

"At the executive meeting on 22nd May 2025, The Leader said: "We do try to answer a question with a straight answer". Would there be any caveats that would prevent a member of the public from being given a straight answer?"

G. Question submitted by Simon Pike to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

"Local Plan Policy SP14 stipulates that the Masterplan for the North East Thatcham development will be "prepared in collaboration with the applicant, relevant town and parish councils, the community and other stakeholders". Following the recent initial community engagement, how will the Council and its consultants developing the Masterplan progress this collaboration with stakeholders, and especially with the relevant town and parish councils?"

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

"In response to a public question raised at the Executive meeting on 7 November 2024, the Council provided details on the costs and commitments spent on the Faraday Road Football ground for the period November 2023 to November 2024. Please can the Council now provide a detailed breakdown of all ADDITIONAL costs, capital, and revenue, that has been, will be, or is planned for periods between:

a) 7 November 2024 and the end of May 2026, and

b) 1 June 2026 and the end of the 2026 / 27 football season (May 2027)"

I. Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources:

"Could the Council please confirm if the reprofiling of the £1.25 million capital funding into the 2026/27 financial year for the proposed 3G pitch at Faraday"

J. Question submitted by Ian Hall to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"Was the stadium that planning permission at Faraday Road (which was allowed to lapse) ever costed against the funds put aside for Sports Hub at Monks Lane ?"

K. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"Is there a Plan using any Existing S106 or CIL commitments to meet shortfalls shown in the new Playing Pitch Strategy, as the Annual Infrastructure FUNDING Statement does not list Development Sites and their agreed commitments?"

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L. Question submitted by Keren Ben-David Rostholder to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services:

"Furthermore, given the £38,485.10 surplus returned to the Treasury last year, why has the council failed to use its 15% discretionary funding allowance (approx. £60,172) to commission specialist providers like West Berkshire Mencap?"

M. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"Since 2003, there have been many visions to regenerate the LRIE as an economic powerhouse. Is the LRIE an area of missed economic opportunity?"

N. Question submitted by Simon Pike to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

"Who has the Council engaged to lead on the development of the Masterplan for North East Thatcham and to undertake the studies required in Policy SP14 of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Transport Assessment, Biodiversity Strategy and a Historic Environment Strategy and on primary healthcare and secondary education provision?" By "who", I mean the identity of the consultancy, consultant or other business in sufficient detail to be able to find their professional credentials through internet search (though I recognise that some individual consultants do not maintain an 'internet presence')."

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

"Has the council ever thought of allowing another sport such as Lacrosse or Hockey to be played at Faraday Road?"

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

"As well as Sources Of Funding via S106 & CIL Developers Contributions, will the Council also be seeking GRANT Funding from various sources including Central Government (e.g., the Football Foundation) to deliver Pitches and Facilities within the lifetime of the new Playing Pitch Strategy?"

Q. Question submitted by Keren Ben-David Rostholder to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services:

"Will the council now commit to using this ringfenced funding to secure the specialist 1:1 placements needed to meet the 'urgent' holiday provision goals identified in your own 2024-2029 Strategy?"

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Scrutiny review of called-in decision: Response to Council Motion: decisions following public consultation

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	21 May 2026
Resources and Place Scrutiny Chairman:	Councillor Carolyne Culver
Report Author:	Stephen Chard
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4761

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Executive of the outcome of the scrutiny review of this called-in decision.
- 1.2 This is provided in accordance with Part 6.9, Paragraph 17 of the Council's Constitution.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 For Executive to be informed of the outcome of the scrutiny review of this called-in decision. The Scrutiny Committee resolved to let the decision stand as per the Executive's resolution. It can therefore be implemented with immediate effect.

3 Supporting Information

Background

- 3.1 At the Council meeting on 16 October 2025, a Motion was presented advocating that an explanatory statement should be published when a decision is made that is contrary to the option preferred by public consultation. The Council referred the Motion to the Executive for more detailed consideration.
- 3.2 At the Executive meeting on 19 March 2026, the Executive considered a report setting out the proposed response to the Motion and rationale for it. Following debate with the opposition, the Executive resolved to approve the recommendations:
 - (a) That the Executive is informed that The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 require local authorities to provide a record of relevant decisions, the reasons for decisions and any options considered but rejected.
 - (b) That the Executive resolves to strengthen how the outcomes of consultations are reported through the Council's consultation database.

Scrutiny review of called-in decision: Response to Council Motion: decisions following public consultation

- 3.3 On 26 March 2026, Councillors Ross Mackinnon, Dominic Boeck, Paul Dick, Paul Kander and Richard Somner put the Monitoring Officer on notice that they wished to call in this decision. They stated:

In our view the Executive report's recommendation is based on a flawed analysis, in particular:

5.6 The Council's web-based database provides a comprehensive overview of consultations undertaken, providing details of the background, any proposals, the implications and impact, how somebody can contribute and what will happen following the consultation. However, it's not possible to see at a glance, looking at the list of consultations, what the broad outcome was in relation to the public's feedback. This can be easily rectified by categorising each consultation with an outcome as follows:

- (a) Proceed - modified: proposal amended following consultation feedback.*
- (b) Proceed - unmodified: implemented as originally proposed following consultation.*
- (c) Did not proceed – this may be linked to the consultation or for other reasons.*
- (d) Decision pending: yet to be determined.*
- (e) No decision required: not linked to a specific decision but providing contextual feedback that informs future service delivery.*

The proposed categorisation does not provide clear information of which decisions have been made contrary to the option preferred by public consultation.

Also flawed is the conclusion in 6.2:

It would be possible for the Council to issue an additional statement setting out information relating to the decision, the alternative options considered and the rationale for that decision. However, this option was rejected as it represented duplication of information already made available to the public.

The information requested by the Motion is not duplicated anywhere else in an easily accessible format.

- 3.4 We propose an alternative course of action, being that the Executive resolves to accept the original motion and that a short statement be posted on an appropriate page of the Council's website when a decision is made that is contrary to the option preferred by public consultation.

Scrutiny Review

- 3.5 The Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee considered the call-in request at its meeting on 12 May 2026. This took the form of:

- An overview of the Executive's decision from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jeff Brooks, which included an update on the enhancements that have been made to the information provided on the Council's website following consultation exercises.

Scrutiny review of called-in decision: Response to Council Motion: decisions following public consultation

- An explanation of the reasons for the call-in from the call-in Members and their proposed alternative course of action which, in summary, is the request for a short statement to be posted on the Council’s website when a decision is made that is contrary to the option preferred by public consultation.
- A question and answer session, and debate on the matter.

3.6 At the conclusion of the debate, the Scrutiny Committee resolved to let the decision stand as per the Executive’s resolution. It can therefore be implemented with immediate effect.

4 Appendices

None.

Background Papers:

Report and appendices provided to the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee on 12 May 2026.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

Report is to note only



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Item 16:

Member Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 21 May 2026

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

A. Question submitted by Councillor Dominic Boeck to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services:

"A WBC press release on 10 April said "A key milestone was the decision to bring the School Improvement function in-house, backed by an investment of £325,000."By how much did the School Improvement function's budget increase following this 'investment'?"

B. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Governance, Commercialisation and Disabled Community Liaison:

"Yet another Extraordinary Executive meeting has been scheduled for 11 June. In the last full calendar year under the previous administration (2022), there were no Extraordinary Executive meetings. By contrast, in the most recent full calendar year under this administration (2025), there were three Extraordinary Executive meetings. Already in 2026, and only five months in, two Extraordinary Executive meetings have been called. This sharp increase raises a serious question: are there issues with the Council's governance, or is there a deeper issue driving this growing reliance on extraordinary meetings?"

C. Question submitted by Councillor Howard Woollaston to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"What estimate has the Executive made of the one-off and recurring costs of local government reorganisation, and where would those costs fall if expected savings do not materialise?"

D. Question submitted by Councillor Dominic Boeck to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services:

"What steps did the administration take between May 2023 and March 2026 to improve the poor attainment of deprived children at KS2, a situation that you said at the recent Children and Young People Scrutiny meeting that you 'inherited'?"

E. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Leader of the Council:

"Why was the Extraordinary Council requisitioned by Conservative members on 29 March to debate pedestrianisation delayed for nearly 7 weeks, to be held after the publication of the administration's decision on how to proceed was published on 14 May?"

F. Question submitted by Councillor Howard Woollaston to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources:

"Can you provide an update on the output of the financial improvement group, which started meeting recently and has input from external financial experts?"

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

"In light of West Berkshire's concerns about reduced government funding settlements as pointed out at the extraordinary meeting in January, what specific areas of council spending are currently considered financially unsustainable without transformation or service reduction over the next three years?"

H. Question submitted by Councillor Howard Woollaston to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources:

"Which single financial risk keeps the Executive most concerned about the Council's position over the next two years?"

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

"How much additional council tax has the average household paid since 2023, and which services are demonstrably better as a result?"

J. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Leader of the Council:

"Does the Executive accept that leaks of sensitive reports, such as that relating to pedestrianisation, undermine public confidence in both the competence and integrity of the Council's administration?"

K. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"In a TV interview on 1 April, you (Cllr Pemberton) said the following regarding the pedestrianisation trial:

"It is a trial and not something we've looked at previously for pedestrianisation over this period of time, but generally speaking I think the response that we're getting now is positive".

(<https://www.facebook.com/ThatsTVThames/videos/we-obviously-want-to-make-a-decision-as-quickly-as-we-possibly-canportfolio-hold/1198891685464513/> - 0.15 – 0.26).

Given the overwhelming majority of responses to your consultation were negative, and your own leaked briefing note showing no economic benefit, why did you make this comment?"

L. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"In an answer to a public question at Executive on 19 March, you (Cllr Pemberton) said: "The data also suggests that there was also a significant

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increase from visitors outside Newbury and Thatcham. So, 36 per cent of that spend was from visitors coming into the town and spending more on retail.”

Yet the leaked internal report (as published in the Newbury Weekly News on 26 March) said: “The report also admits analysis of the amount of people going into town, conducted by company Place Information, detected ‘no uplift’ in weekly numbers.”

Why did you suggest an increase in visitors and retail spend in your answer, when your report confirmed the opposite on both counts?”

M. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

“I received the agenda and reports (including pedestrianisation) for this meeting on publication at exactly 4.00pm on 13 May. The Newbury Weekly News published a detailed article referencing the pedestrianisation report’s contents with comments from Cllr Gourley at exactly 4.00pm on 13 May. Were the media given access to the report, and notified of the Executive’s decision, before Members and the public?”

N. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

“Can the Executive guarantee that the ongoing commitment to some form of pedestrianisation and the masterplanning exercise referred to in the report will not become an open-ended financial commitment requiring further capital exposure in the context of an already strained financial position?”

O. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

“What is the capital cost of implementing the PPS in full and how much revenue provision would need to be made available to finance borrowing of that scale should external funding not become available?”

P. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

“On Sunday, I tried to book the Faraday Road pitch for 90 minutes of adult football. There was no availability at any time for the rest of May, June and July – so I gave up. When is the next available slot to book at this pitch?”

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

“What external assurance exists for the sequestration assumptions being used in the Environment Strategy?”

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