Public Document Pack

Questions and Answers

Council

Thursday 15 October 2026

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West Berkshire Council

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

(A) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Paula Saunderson: 2

(B) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources by Paul Morgan: 3

(C) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Chris Giles: 5

(D) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Paula Saunderson: 7

(E) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Paul Morgan: 8

(F) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Paula Saunderson: 9

(G) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Paula Saunderson: 10

(H) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Paula Saunderson: 11

(I) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Corporate Programme by Paula Saunderson: 12

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

Question (A)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(A) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Paula Saunderson:

"The Latest Authority Monitoring Report that appears on the Web Page is for 2023 prepared in November 2024, therefore where is the one for 2024, will one be prepared for 2025 and if so when will these 2 years be visible to the Public, please, bearing in mind these are no longer submitted to Central Government?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing provided a written response:

The Authority Monitoring Reports bring together a set of indicators into one report and includes information on the Duty to cooperate, progress against the local development scheme (LDS) timetable, and housing delivery including five-year housing land supply. The reports are usually prepared annually in arrears. The reports for 2024 and 2025 have not yet been completed but are in development. This has been due to the peaks in workload and timing of the Local Plan Examination in public, adoption of the Local Plan Review in 2025 and the requirement to enter into new Local Plan making in 2026. However, the council has consistently published the annual five-year housing land supply report as a separate document, regularly updates the LDS timetable and updates the website with adopted neighbourhood plans. Therefore, much of this information is already in the public domain.

The AMR reports will be published once complete, but if there is some specific information required, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Planning Policy Team who will be pleased to assist you.

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

Question (B)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(B) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources by Paul Morgan:

"In September 2026, the Council borrowed a further £10 million (2 x £5 million) from the Public Works Loan Board with Maturity Dates of 5 April 2028 & 1 June 2028.

Can you please provide a full breakdown of where and how this £10 million will be utilised, for example: capital projects, loan repayment, Capitalisation Directions (EFS), Transformation, other use, etc."

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources answered:

The £10 million borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board in September 2026 was not taken out for a single project or specific purpose. Rather, it forms part of the Council's overall borrowing portfolio and supports the Council's underlying borrowing requirement.

During 2026/27, the Council repaid approximately £27 million of maturing PWLB loans. In managing its treasury position, the Council uses a combination of internal cash resources and external borrowing to fund its capital financing requirement and maintain appropriate liquidity levels.

Borrowing decisions are based on cash flow forecasts, market conditions, treasury risk management considerations, and the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

Therefore, it would not be possible to provide a breakdown demonstrating how the £10 million was spent as treasury borrowing is managed on a pooled basis across the Council's overall financing requirement.

The Chairman 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:

"Is the £10m used to pay unserviced debt rather than going to new Capital Projects?".

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources answered:

As mentioned, it is a combination of working capital requirements, but also when debt matures, we will repay it. As part of the treasury management strategy, no more than

30 per cent of our borrowing is short term, what we are trying to do is to minimize the weighted average cost of borrowing to us, roughly around 4 per cent.

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

Question (C)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(C) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Chris Giles:

"Following the fatal crash that occurred on 26th November 2025 between Burghfield Road and the Western Boundary of Reading Borough Council, will the Council urgently review safety measures on the Bath Road between the M4 JUNCTION 12 and Burghfield Road(RBC) including consideration of reduced speed limit to 30 MPH, and enforcing speed limits,improved on and off road signage, and enhanced street lighting! with urgent attention to tree ingress. West Berkshire Council has a major input because of the current boundaries.

In addition, will the Council commit to arranging a urgent multi - agency site meeting with relevant stakeholders to consider pedestrian and cyclist safety, including the use of footpaths, speed management, and signage, particularly in light of the use of cycles, e-bikes and scooters."

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

Mr Giles, thank you for your question. Following the tragic accident on the A4 at the Reading/West Berkshire Boundary, West Berkshire Council, Reading Borough Council, and Thames Valley Police undertook a joint investigation of the incident to understand how this incident occurred and what measures might be necessary to help prevent similar incidents in the future.

All aspects of the Highway were looked at including road surface condition, footway provision and condition, street lighting levels, road signage and lining as well as speed limits.

As a result of this investigation, there were a number of recommendations made within the Reading Borough side which they immediately addressed. There were no observations made at the time for the West Berkshire side. However, since the incident, we have undertaken measures to deal with vegetation growth along the A4 corridor as a preventive measure.

There are no plans to alter or change the current speed limit along the A4 as a result of the investigation into the incident, especially as excessive or inappropriate speed was not considered a contributary factor in the incident.

Cross border discussions on the promotion of cycle routes and their usage are something we are developing with Reading Borough and is being managed by our Active Travel Team.

Regarding the enforcement of the usage of these facilities, this remains as previously advised to yourself in that it is something out of the control of both neighbouring Highway Authorities and is something you need to continue to raise with the Police.

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

The Chairman 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?"*

Chris Giles asked the following supplementary question:

"Why is there no accountability for speed enforcement, road safety, and accident reporting on the Bath Road, between the M4 and Reading boundary".

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways answered:

I have highlighted a number of steps that have been taken between the three parties involved. I do believe there is accountability.

Enforcement of speed is a Thames Valley Police job that we support and provide the highways they require to do that. Both Reading and West Berkshire Council have made the changes needed to the road conditions and layout.

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

Question (D)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(D) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Paula Saunderson:

"WBC Infrastructure Funding Statements (IFS) issued in December each year, do not include details that are held within the CSV Files which show how much each CIL Qualifying Development is contributing and to which individual Projects/Schemes that funding has been allocated down to the last penny. Hence when a price for a schemes is announced it is not possible to see which Approved Planning Applications are contributing? When the next one is prepared will you be making the CSV Information Available?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing provided a written response:

The amount of CIL paid in relation to individual developments is not currently published as part of the Infrastructure Funding Statement, although this information can be provided upon request.

However, it would not identify which developments have funded particular infrastructure projects. This is because CIL receipts are pooled and used to fund a wide range of infrastructure projects rather than being attributed to individual schemes.

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

Question (E)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(E) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Paul Morgan:

"The Council recently uploaded the Playing Pitch Strategy Delivery Plan (September 2026) that was produced / provided by Stuart Todd Associates (STA). Can you please confirm the costs to the Council for this report."

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

Thank you for your question. I can confirm that the Council paid Stuart Todd Associates £48,074.89 for the development of the Playing Pitch Strategy and Delivery Plan. That commission also included work on the drafting of the Henwick Worthy Masterplan, reflecting the close relationship between the two projects and the way in which each informed the other. Combing the work provided a cost effective and joined up approach whilst ensuring consistency across the Strategy Delivery Plan and Masterplan.

The Chairman 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:

"So you can't provide a breakdown of how much the playing pitch strategy was part of that? Also, have you looked at the plan they provided".

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

That is a matter for Stuart Todd Associates how they break down those costs. We are not party to that information. And yes, I have.

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

Question (F)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(F) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Paula Saunderson:

"Students are seeing submission of new Local Transport Delivery Plans (LTDP) to Cabinet/Executive Committee Meetings elsewhere, as these were due to DfT by 18th September, after Drafts were sought in March 2026, therefore will WBC be preparing a Final LTDP, and how, who and when will this be agreed and publicised?"

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways provided a written response:

Ms Saunderson, thank you for your question. The Council will be submitting an updated Local Transport Delivery Plan by the end of the month (31st October) which is the deadline for submission. It will be published once submitted. This will be an updated version of the preliminary submission from March this year. Everything within the submission is subject to approval through the Council's budget setting process and does not require separate approval.

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

Question (G)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(G) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Paula Saunderson:

"Under the Environment Act of 2021 there is a requirement for English Local Authorities to deliver a Biodiversity Report to DEFRA to comply with Biodiversity Duty, with the first Report, for the period ending 1st Jan 2026, due within 12weeks, after which subsequent reports must be published at least every 5 years. Students cannot find the 1st Report on the WBC Web Site, so has it been prepared and when will it be available for study?"

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways provided a written response:

Thank you for the question, Ms Saunderson. The Council continues to implement measures towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity. In addition to working with other Berkshire authorities to develop the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, West Berkshire Council has been delivering improvements locally. Relevant information can be found on the Council's website at: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment - West Berkshire Council

Reporting on the Biodiversity Duty to DEFRA is a relatively new requirement, and various authorities are at different levels of compliance based on factors such as availability of internal resources and monitoring software. The Council is currently putting together its report, and this will be uploaded on our website and shared with key stakeholders in due course.

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

Question (H)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(H) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Paula Saunderson:

"Have we missed out on potential Sources Of Funding for Social and Affordable Housing because we have been unable to react to the Homes England New Way of Working which was Outlined in the December 2025 Berkshire Prosperity Board (BPB), and does the Portfolio Holder think the new Pan-Berkshire Proposal put forward at BPB on 21st September 2026 will mean we can increase our supply of Social Rental Housing within West Berks?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing provided a written response:

No, we have not missed out on potential sources of funding from the Social and Affordable Homes programme. The council is in regular contact with Homes England, who administer the funding and is also receiving support from the Local Government Association to develop our approach to Social and Affordable Home delivery within the District. Should a project be identified that would meet the eligibility for funding, the Council will ensure that it takes the appropriate steps. The proposed pan-berkshire approach is supported by the Council and our presence on the Prosperity Board and input into the work, will ensure that any next steps have West Berkshire's housing needs in focus as well as pan-berkshire with the ultimate aim to increase the supply of affordable and social homes for rent.

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

Question (I)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(I) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Corporate Programme by Paula Saunderson:

"Are there any plans to improve the RESOURCING & TIMELINE COMMITMENTS required to Agree A Delivery Plan, which Outline the Financial Requirements and the Sources of Funding, the Human Resources requirement , and Physical Resources required, and in which timelines? The recently publicised Playing Pitch Strategy delivery Plan is an example with missing Data."

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Corporate Programme:

Thank you for your question.

We agree that delivery plans should, wherever possible, set out the expected financial requirements, funding sources, resource implications and delivery timescales. However, many strategies cover programmes of work that will be delivered over a number of years. In those circumstances, it is not always possible to provide detailed business cases, confirmed costs or fully developed resource plans at the outset. These are often developed as individual projects progress and are subject to future funding decisions and approvals.

Our approach is therefore to include as much information as is reasonably available when a delivery plan is prepared, while developing more detailed proposals as specific projects move into implementation.

In relation to the Playing Pitch Strategy, further detail on costs, funding and delivery arrangements will be developed as individual projects are brought forward through the Council's decision-making processes.

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

(A) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Councillor Dominic Boeck:..... 2

(B) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources by Councillor Howard Woollaston:..... 4

(C) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Councillor Dominic Boeck:..... 5

(D) As Councillor Dominic Boeck was satisfied with the response given to Question C, he withdrew submitted Question D. 7

(E) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Councillor Dominic Boeck:..... 8

(F) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services by Councillor Dominic Boeck: 10

(G) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Councillor Dominic Boeck:..... 11

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

Question (A)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(A) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Councillor Dominic Boeck:

"Government-funded plans for the multi-billion pounds Future Materials Campus (FMC) at AWE's Aldermaston site will see planning applications coming forward soon.

How will the council support and engage constructively with residents, local councils and businesses on this enormous development?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing answered:

Before answering, I want to define the Future Material Campus; it is the renewal of the existing facilities, manufacture of nuclear components, storage of material, improved science and analysis capabilities and new nuclear material recoverability capabilities.

The Council is currently engaged in pre-application discussions with AWE under the terms of a Planning Performance Agreement.

The new NPPF says proposals for major development should be informed by early engagement with neighbours and the local community, as well as with the local planning authority, statutory consultees, infrastructure providers, and other relevant bodies where appropriate, where appropriate. This pre-application engagement should be proportionate to the nature of the proposal and those likely to be affected by it.

It is for the applicant to undertake pre-application engagement. For the FMC project Planning Officers were invited by AWE to attend on behalf, of the Local Planning Authority, four public engagement events arranged and organised by AWE in the summer. Residents, businesses, local ward members, and local parish councils were also invited.

AWE also has a local liaison committee that includes local parish and district/borough councils, which is also attended by the ONR and Environment Agency.

The application is expected to be accompanied by a Statement of Community Involvement that details the public engagement and identifies how the proposals have addressed these where appropriate.

When a planning application is received, consultation and publicity will also take place in accordance with the normal requirements of the legislation and council policy.

The Chairman 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?"*

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

Councillor Dominic Boeck asked the following supplementary question:

"As a Member of the LLC, I know what they are telling the Councils and it is very high level. What engagement will West Berkshire have with the community, because, of course, it will be the Council who assess and determines the applications when they come forward later this year. I would expect the Council to directly consult the Parish Councils and local community".

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing answered:

As this is currently in the pre-application stage, there is currently no need to do that. Pre-applications are a confidential process between the applicant and the Council, so at this stage no. In the future, yes, and we expect a statement of community involvement.

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

Question (B)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(B) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources by Councillor Howard Woollaston:

"Does the Executive Member regard borrowing tens of millions of pounds simply to support day-to-day expenditure as a sustainable financial strategy for West Berkshire?"

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources answered:

Thank you for your question.

Yes, I agree, it is not a sustainable financial strategy for central government to force 35 local authorities, including West Berkshire, by their unfair funding formula to borrow up to £1.5bn this financial year to fund day to day expenditure.

The Chairman 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:

"What's concerning is the ongoing impact of this. You must be looking at how you are going to finance the repayment of this debt".

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources answered:

We have had an extensive week of looking at budgets. One of the things we are looking at are the choices we have, of either becoming the party of austerity (which has not worked) and cut everything to the bare minimum, or we make sure we fund the services which the residents want and ensure West Berkshire continues to be a great place to live. We are looking to make sure we support those services with funding through Exceptional Financial Support (EFS).

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

Question (C)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(C) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Councillor Dominic Boeck:

"AWE have compared the scale and complexity of the proposed FMC development with London 2012.

What specific assurance can the lead member give that Council has sufficient planning, emergency planning and other relevant technical resources and expertise to undertake a thorough assessment of the application, including its implications for residential safety, emergency preparedness and amenity within and around the Aldermaston DEPZ?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing answered:

We take the safety of both residents and AWE very seriously, so that is a given.

The pre-application engagement and anticipated planning application are being managed through the agreed Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). A PPA is a voluntary agreement that sets out a clear timetable and process for handling a major or complex planning application, helping all parties work together towards a timely decision. It can also enable the recovery of costs associated with managing the application, helping to ensure sufficient planning and specialist resources are available to support an efficient decision-making process. We do get some costs back from doing a PPA.

As with any planning application, the proposal will be assessed on behalf of the Council by a team of qualified professionals to ensure that all relevant technical, environmental, and specialist matters are considered and independently evaluated. This assessment may be undertaken by in-house specialists or, where appropriate, by externally appointed consultants with relevant expertise. The application will also be overseen by the Council's Strategic Developments Planning Lead given its significance.

The process will include consultation and engagement with the Council's Emergency Planning Service and the Office for Nuclear Regulation in relation to matters of emergency preparedness and public safety. Public amenity is an ordinary planning consideration within the expertise of planners but will be supported where necessary by consultation with relevant experts, for example the Highways Authority with regard to anticipated traffic generation and routing during construction.

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

Councillor Dominic Boeck asked the following supplementary question:

"My concern, and that of the community, is the scale of the project. Everyone understands the importance of it in relation to national security, and no one wants to obstruct the process. People are concerned about the impact the project will have on their lives. I am encouraged by your response about the need for technical expertise, but I want assurance that the planning service will act quickly to ensure internal and external resources are made available".

The Portfolio Holder for Public Safety and Capital Projects (Built Environment) answered:

I can give you that assurance and take personal responsibility to keep and eye on that application.

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

Question (D)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(D) As Councillor Dominic Boeck was satisfied with the response given to Question C, he withdrew submitted Question D.

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

Question (E)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(E) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Councillor Dominic Boeck:

"What evidence will the Council publish to demonstrate whether its new Planning Enforcement Plan is improving the speed and effectiveness of planning enforcement?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing answered:

The revised Planning Enforcement Plan introduced a new prioritisation framework designed to ensure that cases with the greatest potential harm are investigated most quickly. Because enforcement cases vary significantly in their complexity and the route to resolution, the most meaningful measure of speed is the time taken to investigate a complaint and complete an initial assessment. This is a commonly used performance measure across planning authorities.

Measuring effectiveness is more complex and cannot be demonstrated through a single statistic. A significant proportion of investigations conclude that no breach of planning control has occurred, in which case the appropriate outcome is to close the case with no further action.

Where a breach is identified, outcomes may include determining that formal action is not expedient, securing a voluntary resolution, or, where necessary, taking formal enforcement action.

The Council is therefore looking to publish a range of performance indicators, including response times, investigation outcomes, and the use of formal enforcement powers. Officers are currently exploring the most effective way of presenting this information so that performance can be monitored transparently over time.

While the revised plan has only been in operation for several months, the early results are encouraging. Average response times for Priorities 1 to 3 and within target.

The Council has also used its formal enforcement powers where appropriate during the current financial year, including serving:

- 6 Enforcement Notices
- 3 Temporary Stop Notices
- 21 Planning Contravention Notices

In addition, the Council successfully secured the continuation of an injunction at Aldermaston following an extended High Court trial and recently obtained a further interim injunction relating to a site in Tidmarsh. These cases have required substantial

officer time and demonstrate the Council's willingness to take robust action where serious planning harm is identified.
Taken together, these measures will provide a broader picture of both the speed and effectiveness of the planning enforcement service than any single performance indicator alone.
I would add that, on our member planning portal, there is a form about enforcement. It is not highly detailed, but it does provide an indication about the things being monitored.

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

Councillor Dominic Boeck did not ask a supplementary question.

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

Question (F)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(F) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services by Councillor Dominic Boeck:

"What measures will the Council publish to enable members and residents to judge whether its SEND reforms are improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND?"

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services answered:

We want families, residents, and Members to feel confident that our plans for SEND are clear, joined up and focused on what really matters. Once our Reforms Plan has been approved by the DfE and following the mid-point review of our SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2024–29, we will bring both plans together into a single document. We will also publish a high-level action plan so that everyone can easily see what we want to achieve and how we will measure progress.

Being open about the differences these reforms are making is very important. The action plan will include clear measurable targets and regular evaluation of progress, including with parents and carers involved along the way – I know that the DfE will be watching. This will help us understand whether the programme is offering good value for money and most importantly, whether it is making a real and positive difference to the experiences, opportunities, and outcomes of children and young people with SEND and their families.

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

Councillor Dominic Boeck did not ask a supplementary question.

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

Question (G)	Council Meeting on 15 October 2026

(G) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Councillor Dominic Boeck:

"What is the Council doing to ensure that residents of rural communities have equitable access to library services?"

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

West Berkshire Libraries is committed to ensuring that residents in rural communities have equitable access to library services through a combination of library buildings, digital services, outreach activities, home delivery services and partnership working with local communities.

Library services remain available to all residents through the district's network of libraries, while the eLibrary service provides 24/7 access to e-books, e-audiobooks, newspapers, magazines, and other online resources through BorrowBox. The library service also supports digital inclusion through free Wi-Fi, public computers, digital skills support, and access to the National Databank.

Following the closure of the mobile library service, West Berkshire Libraries developed a more flexible service model to meet the needs of rural communities. Working in partnership with parish councils, pop-up libraries were introduced in Basildon, Compton and Leckhampstead during 2025, with further locations established in Aldworth, Speen and Shaw-cum-Donnington in 2026. Discussions continue with other parish councils about introducing additional sessions in their communities. These pop-up libraries provide access to current library stock, reservations, reading recommendations, digital support, and information about other Council services. They have proved popular, attracting new users and enabling residents to access library services closer to home.

Residents unable to travel to a library due to age, disability, caring responsibilities or transport difficulties, can request the At Home Library Service. Through a team of DBS-checked volunteers, books and other library materials are delivered directly to residents' homes, ensuring that those who are housebound can continue to access and benefit from library services.

The service has also introduced a Children's Community Bookshelf in Basildon, providing local families with convenient access to a regularly refreshed collection of books within their own community. Community bookshelves, alongside pop-up libraries and other outreach services, form part of the package of support available to town and parish councils.

In addition, library bookshelves have been introduced at leisure centres, including Kennet, Thatcham, Cotswold, Willink, and Burghfield. These provide easy access to

books for residents and help raise awareness of library membership, encouraging people to sign up for a library card and make use of the wide range of free online resources available through the eLibrary if they are unable to visit a library regularly. This is very helpful for parents use whist their children are doing activities.

Library staff also undertake outreach visits to community venues, care, and retirement settings, including Gilbert Court and locations in Kintbury, helping residents access books, reading opportunities and library services closer to where they live. Staff attend community events, coffee mornings, family activities, and other local venues to promote services and engage with residents who may not otherwise use the library service.

The Council continues to work closely with town and parish councils, Public Health, Family Services, and community organisations to identify local needs and develop services that best support rural residents. Through this combination of physical library provision, digital access, community-based services, outreach activities and home delivery, West Berkshire Libraries aims to ensure that all residents can access a comprehensive and efficient library service, regardless of where they live in the district.

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

Councillor Dominic Boeck asked the following supplementary question:

"Would you agree to undertake a ward level survey of access? My concern is rural residents who suffer digital isolation".

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

I will talk to my team and try to get that information for you.