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

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## Member Questions to the Council

16 March 2023

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<b>Question (A)</b>	Council Meeting on 16 March 2023
<b>Relevant Officer(s):</b>	Eric Owens / Bryan Lyttle

**(A) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside by Councillor Lee Dillon (asked by Cllr Erik Pattenden):**

*“Why are we paying the consultants for the Newbury Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal when it is full of inaccuracies and they have not followed Government guidelines and consulted local councils?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

Thank you for your question.

The consultants were asked to produce a draft Newbury Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal for consultation as part of the work done on the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan.

The Newbury Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal is a draft document that has now been widely consulted on. The consultation included Newbury, Greenham, Shaw-Cum-Donnington and Speen Town and Parish Councils, and over 4,558 individual properties inside the conservation area who were directly contacted and informed of the draft appraisal and asked to comment.

As set out in chapter 2 paragraph 2.1 of the appraisal “This document covers all aspects set out by Historic England’s 2019 guidance on Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management”. This is elaborated in paragraph 2.9 which outlines the consultation process for this draft document.

**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 Lee Dillon asked the following supplementary question:**

*So this Newbury Town Centre conservation has been outstanding for years if not decades. Was it published as draft as when we reviewed it and saw the number of inaccuracies and how it did not follow guidelines we were surprised.*

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**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

As I said in my initial response it's got draft mentioned and this would have been said when it went out.

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<b>Question (B)</b>	Council Meeting on 16 March 2023
<b>Relevant Officer(s):</b>	Bryan Lyttle

**(B) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside by Councillor Adrian Abbs:**

*“How many organisations and residents made representations in the Regulation 19 consultation on the draft Local Plan, and when does the Director of Place expect the review of the representations to have been completed so that they can decide whether they think it is ready for independent examination?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

Approximately 700 individuals or organisations have made responses to the Regulation 19 Consultation on the Local Plan Review 2022 – 2039 Proposed Submission Document.

Appropriate resources have been brought in to consider the responses and it is anticipated that this will be completed in the near future .

**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 Adrian Abbs asked the following supplementary question:**

*Resources is an interesting word to use given our planning department considering the planning department is meant to be overworked. Given extra resources have been brought in how much is it costing in overtime in this rushed manor to bring the consultation together?*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered:**

None of this work is relaxed and is appropriately focused and worked upon. I don't have the figures and are happy to have them provided but as per previous questions I don't think this would be recorded.

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<b>Question (C)</b>	Council Meeting on 16 March 2023
<b>Relevant Officer(s):</b>	Sean Murphy / Katharine Makant

**(C) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development by Councillor Steve Masters:**

*“Is the growing demand on Foodbanks across West Berkshire an indication of a healthy economy?”*

**Councillor Masters had requested e written answer.**

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<b>Question (D)</b>	Council Meeting on 16 March 2023
<b>Relevant Officer(s):</b>	Neil Stacey / Andrew Reynolds

**(D) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning Transport and Countryside by Councillor Phil Barnett:**

*“Although the past few weeks have been dry , over the Christmas and New year period very wet , resulting in many West Berks road surfaces cracking up and pot holes appearing Therefore can the executive member for highways and the environment identify if the council will be able to fill in all potholes ( which meet the Councils criteria )before the onset of summer”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning Transport and Countryside answered:**

Councillor Barnet, thank you for your question.

It is usual that roads will deteriorate more during the winter months and the travelling public will see more potholes. However I can confirm that all Highway defects identified on public the network, whether from a routine safety inspection, or report from a member of the public, will be assessed and repaired in accordance with the Council's criteria.

As an administration we are keen to build on our excellent track record in highway maintenance and road repairs. We know that our roads are vital to the economic and social success of the District. We have therefore committed to spend an additional £7m on highway maintenance over the next 3 years which will ensure the resilience of our road network for years to come.

**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 Phil Barnett asked the following supplementary question:**

*Will the windfall and additional money put forward be enough to overcome the large amount of cracks and potholes that have appeared in the last few weeks.*

**The Portfolio Holder for Planning Transport and Countryside answered:**

We look at the money we have and officers produce a rolling programme and they will continue to review and if extra money comes in it would be used appropriately and to answer the question there would never be enough money.

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<b>Question (E)</b>	Council Meeting on 16 March 2023
<b>Relevant Officer(s):</b>	Clare Ockwell

**(E) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships by Councillor David Marsh:**

*“How many voters in West Berkshire do not currently have the requisite voter ID for the council elections on 4 May”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships answered:**

This is unknown. Nationality it is believed that approximately 98% of people have one of the required forms of ID.

**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 David Marsh asked the following supplementary question:**

*As elections are on everyone's minds and you consider turnout last time, in Tilehurst and Purley it was 33% Clayhill was 27% even in wards where it was highest such as Ridgeway at 47% that's still less than half the voters. Why would you support something that makes it harder to vote.*

**The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships answered:**

Voter ID is not new in the UK its been in Northern Ireland for a while and hasn't had a material impact on turnout. The vast majority already have acceptable ID and there is a national campaign, we are also doing things locally and I am not concerned about turnout.

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<b>Question (F)</b>	Council Meeting on 16 March 2023
<b>Relevant Officer(s):</b>	Clare Ockwell

***(F) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships by Councillor David Marsh:***

*“To date, how many voters have applied to the council for a Voter Authority Certificate”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships answered:**

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**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 David Marsh asked the following supplementary question:**

*That doesn't sound like many. The Conservative chair of the LGA said last week that we remain concerned that election staff will be overwhelmed by enquiries. Do you not have any concerns that he may be right?*

**The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships answered:**

I haven't heard of any concerns and if they arise they will be dealt with appropriately.

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<b>Question (G)</b>	Council Meeting on 16 March 2023
<b>Relevant Officer(s):</b>	Clare Ockwell

***(G) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships by Councillor David Marsh:***

*“What is the estimated total cost to the council of implementing voter ID for the council elections on 4 May, including additional officer resources, training of polling staff, publicity material, and issuing Voter Authority Certificates”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships answered:**

A new burdens funding grant for West Berkshire has been received £27,844 from DLUHC for the period to 31 March 2023. After the 1st April 2023, a further allocation of £54,970 will be issued. The cost of the additional burden is unknown at present.

**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 David Marsh asked the following supplementary question:**

*That's a lot of money, someone must be paying for something that is not needed. Can I ask that this be a matter for the Governance Committee consider to my attempts to get it on the agenda have been ignored. This should be looked at on the effects on the elections department, could a commitment be given that this will be looked at.*

**The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships answered:**

I don't think this will be on the next agenda but should I still be Portfolio Holder after the election I will take advice from officers.

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