

Item 4:

Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 21 September 2023.

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 Ian Hall to the Portfolio Holder for Governance and Transformation:

"When the petition on charging was presented a number of signatures were moved as being non-local. Why was a complaint allowed against councillors when it too came from outside the area?"

B. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development:

"7.24. Avison Young Environmental study for the LRIE states:Pre-application consultation undertaken with WBDC as part of this study confirms that a surface water drainage strategy for the Site should be designed to accommodate the 1% annual probability storm event plus a 40% allowance for climate change. Where can one see this Surface water Drainage Strategy? Has one even been completed?"

C. Question submitted by Anna Karim to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity:

"I would like to ask if the Council will consider the impact of refusing renewable energy projects or refusing planning on improved buildings with better insulation on Global temperatures.

Background: West Berkshire Council declared a Climate Emergency on the 2nd July 2019.The planning department has recently refused renewable energy applications and applications that upgrade old uninsulated buildings (with fossil fuel heating systems) that would have significantly reduced residents' carbon emissions.I am petitioning the council to add a climate consultation step to the planning process. I would ask that the Council's Environmental Specialist or a member of the Planning department review all applications which are going to be refused to see if the application can be made acceptable to be passed on the grounds that the application has significant climate change mitigation impact.

Why now? We have seen significant flooding in the Pang Valley and forest fires in Sulham and Tidmarsh woods. Our farmers are having to deal with alternating periods of heavy rain and extreme drought and this is in the UK which is less affected than Southern and Central Europe."

D. Question submitted by Graham Storey to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"Will the council change current policy, and invest directly in newsocial housing for West Berkshire rather than relying on contributions from private developers?"

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E. Question submitted by Anthony Pick to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:

"Why have no decisions yet been made by the Council's Head of Planning on the recommendations to locally list eight heritage assets made by the West Berkshire Heritage Forum at its Selection Panel meeting on 27th October 2022, in accordance with the local listing process approved by Full Council on 27th September 2012 and jointly signed by the Council and the West Berkshire Heritage Forum on 26th October 2012; when will those decisions be made and when will entries for those listings which are approved be made on the Council's web site?"

F. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:

"For completeness of records please may I ask this Question which appeared as a Supplementary Question from me to question H in the Public Questions answered in the Executive Minutes of the Meeting held on the 9th February 2023, and to which I have not had a reply. "I'm glad to hear that the London Road Industrial Estate is in the Local Plan review despite page 84, paragraph 7.10 indicating that it isn't. In that respect it will need to comply with the NPPF, Chapter 14, paragraph 160. Your strategic flood risk assessment level one, addendum one, and your strategic flood risk assessment level two, site specific analysis for new one (NEW 1) which indicates that you must prepare a holistic flood risk assessment for the whole of the area within the red line and a drainage and waste water management plan. That's also indicated in the other policies. How are you going to do that please?" The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside answered: I'll refer to Officers and come back to you in writing."

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

"At the Executive Meeting on 6 July 2023 the leader of the Opposition claimed in his question that "The Council has announced that it will not commercially develop the former pitch at Faraday Road and instead use it for football matches, despite a superb alternative facility being shortly available at the Sports Hub. Can the council please confirm (or refute) Councillor MacKinnon's statement that an "alternative facility will shortly be available at Newbury Rugby Club"?"

H. Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:

"A new car park at the back of the Cinch storage unit on the London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE) has been completed on the 25th of July 2023. Please would the Executive Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement confirm if any of the additional Urban runoff is leaving the site underground via

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a Sewer that is connected to the main Thames Water Surface Water Sewer that services the LRIE?"

I. **Question submitted by Tom Marino to the Leader of the Council:**

"Is it acceptable for Councillors to publicly mock people who do not speak or pronounce English words correctly, particularly when English is not their first language?"

J. **Question submitted by Ian Hall to the Portfolio Holder for Governance and Transformation:**

"Is it right that complaints from people outside the area (and with no connection to our area) are allowed, and should the system be amended to prevent this type of incident?"

K. **Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development:**

"Avison Young Environmental study section 7.24 also states: WBDC has also commented that "infiltration Sustainable Drainage Systems and below ground attenuation storage will not be acceptable" and that "significant space will be needed for at-ground level Sustainable Drainage Systems. Could the Executive please explain the apparent incongruence of small SUDs under the road that we are told are planned by Ardent."

L. **Question submitted by Anthony Pick to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:**

"Why has no response yet been given by the Planning Service to the update to the Historic Environment Action Plan prepared by the West Berkshire Heritage Forum and submitted with a request for advice on the planning section in April 2022; when will that response be forthcoming, so that the revised document can be issued for consultation to Heritage Forum members?"

M. **Question submitted by Paul Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development:**

"In late July 2023, the Newbury Weekly news reported that "West Berkshire Council wants to spend £5.3m to remodel Newbury Wharf". Can the Council please confirm if there is any substance in this report and if yes, who is behind this idea (i.e., is it an old Conservative administration proposal; is it a new Liberal Democrats administration proposal, is it being driven by officers or members etc.) Thank you"

N. **Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Leader of the Council:**

"In an email from the Leader of the Council to me on the 9th of August 2023 on the overall long-term approach of the London Road Industrial Estate it was stated "Officers and members will meet but not with legal representatives" was

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this decision made by the Leader or by which officer and what was the reason for the decision?"

- O. **Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement/Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countyside:**

"Having opposed the Conservatives plans for a sports hub at Monks Lane isn't the refusal to quash the planning application a case of political hypocrisy?"

- P. **Question submitted by Anthony Pick to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:**

"In view of the recent applications to redevelop the Kennet Centre, and the new applications from the developers, what actions are the council taking to make sure that the Newbury Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (draft dated December 2021) is in place before a decision is taken on these plans?"

- Q. **Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development:**

"Please will the portfolio holder for Regeneration, Growth and Strategy Development answer my supplementary question from the 6th July 2023 Executive meeting, Public Question (G) "going from your previous answer it looks to me as if you think you can develop the London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE) purely on the free hold land that the Council owns, and meet drainage law, have you done any risk assessment of the risk of legal challenges on any planning permission on the LRIE that could hold it up because you can't meet drainage law without third-party land downstream"?"

- R. **Question submitted by Anthony Pick to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:**

"Given that west Berkshire has 53 Conservation Areas, of which only two have approved Conservation Area Appraisals; given the central role of such Appraisals in defining the heritage character of each Conservation Area; given that over half the 53 Conservation Areas were approved in 1970-73; and given the promises made in successive approved Local Plans that such Appraisals would be produced, so far with minimal result, when will the Council at last take this task seriously, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework, and put actions in place to develop those Appraisals, a task in which the West Berkshire Heritage Forum would be glad to assist where possible?"