

Item 12:

Member Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 8 February 2024.

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 Adrian Abbs to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"Is the administration making best possible efforts to deliver a full replacement for the Faraday road football club within this election cycle? i.e a solution that was similar to the approved application from NCFG."

B. Question submitted by Councillor Howard Woollaston to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"The first and only Stage 3 Review of the Playing Pitch Strategy was published in June 2022 which recognized a shortfall of 11 3G pitches, which has only been partially relieved by the new pitch at Denefield School and the one under construction at John O'Gaunt School in Hungerford. Since then, there have been further successes by both Men's and Women's national football and rugby teams and the Paris Olympic Games this year is likely to raise even greater enthusiasm for playing field games on pitches. Can the Portfolio holder confirm that the Stage 3 Review is a priority, whether the latest review has been completed and if so when it will be published?"

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

"Can you explain what you mean when you say that residents expecting services like emptying dog waste bins and grass cutting is a "sad aspect of life"?"

D. Question submitted by Councillor Dominic Boeck to the Acting Leader; Strategy, Communications, Governance and Transformation:

"Are you concerned that decisions you make as Acting Leader may not be proper under the constitution, and therefore subject to costly legal challenge?"

E. Question submitted by Councillor Richard Somner to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:

"Your Local Plan withdrawal report says "There is also a risk that with the decision taken out of the Council's control, the quality and necessary infrastructure would be reduced." – is that a risk you were genuinely willing to take?"

F. Question submitted by Councillor Jo Stewart to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:

"Your Local Plan withdrawal report says "Planning applications for sites proposed to be allocated in the Plan are highly likely to come forward as demonstrated by the North East Thatcham Consortia which has confirmed its intention to submit an application in mid 2024. Other developers have also confirmed that they are preparing to submit applications. As the current evidence base for the Local Plan Review supports these proposals in principle, it will be difficult for the Council to substantiate refusal against the principle of development. If allowed at appeal,

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the Council will have limited control over the development reducing the quality and infrastructure provision.” (Page 11). If you had been successful in withdrawing the Local Plan, does this mean the site would have likely been developed anyway with limited control?”

G. Question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

“Which groups are the administration talking to about running the football ground at Faraday road in the near mid and long term.”

H. Question submitted by Councillor Howard Woollaston to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:

“Do you agree with the line in your Local Plan withdrawal report that says: “Planning applications and appeals are highly likely to be submitted relating to unallocated sites which could be considered more favourable if the plan does not progress.” (Page 7)”

I. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:

“Before publishing your manifesto commitment to ‘fix the Local Plan’, did you ask any planning officers or legal officers for advice on how this might be deliverable?”

J. Question submitted by Councillor Dominic Boeck to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:

“Your Local Plan withdrawal report highlights that the Council would likely lose a lot of planning appeals which would incur significant costs “not including the potential for the award of costs against the Council for unreasonable behaviour” (Page 11). Do you condone that the Council would have acted with “unreasonable behaviour”?”

K. Question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity:

“Why, after nearly 9 months, do we still not have an updated and simple to understand waste user journey available to the public. I asked for this when I took on the portfolio and was assured Veolia already had something when I met with them months ago.”

L. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity:

“Do you think the standard of the Council's flood response justified your Executive colleague Cllr Lewis's public rebuke “Please can you extend the services and attention towards Purley too. WBC has a larger area than Newbury and Thatcham”?”

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M. Question submitted by Councillor Dominic Boeck to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Young People's Services:

"In October 2023, officers wrote to Falkland Primary School to tell them that because of delays in council's financial approval process, the project to provide vital, new classrooms will be delayed indefinitely. This fully-funded project was due to start last summer. What have you done to put the teaching and wellbeing of the children of Falkland Primary School first?"

N. Question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity:

"When will we see the first micro hydro proof of concept?"

O. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"Given the recent flooding in the District, do you still think it sensible to propose a reduction in gully cleaning?"

P. Question submitted by Councillor Dominic Boeck to the Acting Leader; Strategy, Communications, Governance and Transformation:

"Falkland Primary School has been waiting five years for the replacement of their portacabins and for urgent repairs to their main buildings. What assurance will the Deputy Leader give that this work will be completed by May 2026, as your Capital Programme has it scheduled?"

Q. Question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"Why have we not fixed the only two fast chargers in the Kennet parking garage opposite WBC market street offices?"

R. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Acting Leader; Strategy, Communications, Governance and Transformation:

"What is the constitutional basis for the Leader to take a sabbatical and for you to hold the title "Acting Leader"?"

S. Question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity:

"Is the administration minimising, where they can, the cost per kWh on charging infrastructure WBC control? If it is minimising costs, what do they consider to be the break even cost."

T. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Leader of Council; Executive Portfolio Holder for Public Safety:

"Do you consider that you have been able to carry out the role of Leader for the last eight months?"

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U. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

“Residents reported a dangerous pothole on Common Hill near Bradfield on 16 January. By 19 January it had already caused 2 minor accidents and was not repaired despite residents being informed it had been. I contacted you and senior officers about it on the evening of 19 January. Despite chasing twice I did not receive even an acknowledgement of my communications until 24 January. Later on 24 January the hole was filled with a temporary repair, which had already begun to fail by 26 January. Can you explain why these failures occurred given your manifesto commitment to fix all potholes properly first time, and all dangerous potholes within 72 hours?”

V. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Leader of Council; Executive Portfolio Holder for Public Safety:

“Do you regret taking the position of Leader of the Council given your decision to leave after only 8 months in the role?”