

Item 4:

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

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 William Beard to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity:

"What reviews will the Council or Environment Agency be making on recent flood events in Northcroft Lane."

B. Question submitted by Simon Pike to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:

"Does the Council have any record of discussions with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board that had taken place on the specific subject of the proposed GP surgery in Policy SP17 of the draft Local Plan prior to the date of its submission for examination? By "record", I mean an agenda that indicates a clear intention to discuss; or minutes, contemporaneous notes or other documents describing the discussions that had taken place

- By "specifically", I mean an explicit reference to the health centre in Policy SP17, and not just a reference to North East Thatcham, the Local Plan in general, or a meeting with an unspecified purpose or agenda."

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

"The Northcroft stream has been artificially re routed in Northcroft. The flood defences at Goldwell Park have meant the stream starts at Bayer and then is culverted via the Thames Water Sewer through the town centre taking surface run off water from around 170 acres of urbanised areas of the town. It also takes water artificially diverted from the Kennet through the Victoria Park pond. What if any of the water exiting the Thames Water sewer can be considered natural flow?"

D. Question submitted by Alison May to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement:

"West Berkshire District Council is a determining planning authority for the District Council's: a) own development (Regulation 3) which includes new schools, school extensions, road development and other types of development, b) Mineral Extraction & associated development - such as quarries, sand & gravel processing sites etc, c) Waste proposals including landfill sites, waste transfer/recycling sites & scrap yards etc. The absence of clearly defined guidance relative to Regulation 3 applications, including associated Regulation 3 Monitoring & Enforcement procedures, continues to expose West Berkshire District citizens to unforeseen financial and other risks. Can the responsible Executive member provide an explanation why they have been remiss in implementing the necessary policies and procedures relative to Regulation 3 planning applications, and secondly, to agree to postpone the determination of all Regulation 3 planning applications until such a time they have taken the

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necessary steps to introduce relevant and robust Regulation 3 policies and procedures?"

E. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Leader of Council; Executive Portfolio Holder for Public Safety:

"Had the withdrawal of the Local Plan been allowed, land agents, developers and Council staff estimated that we could have seen between 5,000 and more than 8,000 housing units applied for in Thatcham (700 Newbury Gap, 400 to 1,200 at Henwick Park depending on version of project they went with, 2,500 Thatcham North East, 1,800 Thatcham East Extension on land between A4 and railway to East of Thatcham, upto 1,500 at Colthrop, plus 700 units in smaller / infill developments around Thatcham and possibly hundreds of flats rumoured for the Regency Park Hotel Site) and around 600 homes in Theale (existing 100 plus upto 500 at Pincents Hill. Based on staff estimates, how many housing units does the Leader of the Council believe could have been applied for in Thatcham and Theale if Withdrawal had been successful?"

F. Question submitted by James Davies to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Young People's Services:

"As a parent who has children of primary school age, I would like to know what the council is doing about the appalling condition of the portacabins that children are being taught in at Falkland Primary School?"

G. Question submitted by Paul Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services:

"Can the Council please provide a complete list of all the individual projects that are included in the £64.8 million (or £69.5 million) capital expenditure programme for 23/24 and the £80.2 million capital expenditure for 2024/25. Can you also confirm how it is proposed to fund each individual project, for example: General Fund, reserves, Capital receipts, CIL/Section 106, External borrowing, Long term (PWL) etc."

H. Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"I noticed that an S.B.D Security System sign has been attached to the temporary harass fencing on the west side of the Faraday Road Football Ground. Can you please confirm when this temporary harass fencing will be removed so that full access can be provided to the public?"

I. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Regeneration:

"With respect to the regeneration of the LRIE are previous studies by Avison Young eg Their environmental study now being ignored?"

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J. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Leader of Council; Executive Portfolio Holder for Public Safety:

"Closing Willows Edge will be devastating to families and cutting or withdrawing other Adult Social Care services will be devastating. Given that the Leader of the Council told the Newbury News that he had found almost £280,000 to withdraw from the local plan review and that he had also identified approximately £1.6m to come up with a new local plan, can the Council consider delaying the closure of Willows Edge and any changes to Community Transport for Adult Social Care service users until 2025 and allow the community and other organizations to come together to propose an alternative solution to current service provision in West Berkshire?"

K. Question submitted by Paul Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services:

"There has been a lot of speculation / debate regarding the selling of assets in the Council's investment portfolio of £65.5 million (valuation @ 31 Dec 2022) which is split between commercial property portfolio of £52.3 million and general investment property of £13.1 million. Can the Council please confirm that it is considering the sale of assets (and is open to offers) in both its commercial property portfolio and the general investment property?"

L. Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"Cllr Tony Vickers in a letter in the Newbury Weekley News on 23/02/2023 made the following statement. 'If the Conservatives lose control of West Berkshire Council in May, on day one we intend to allow the Newbury Community Football Group to start to implement its planning consent to rebuild "equal or better" facilities at the Council's Faraday Road ground. Please can the Council confirm that is still the case/ intention?"

M. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Regeneration:

"How will the implementation of schedule 3 (Flood and water management act 2010) affect plot by plot planning for the regeneration of the LRIE?"

N. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Action, Recycling and Biodiversity:

"Given that the Council are planning to remove rubbish and dog waste bins around the District and proposing to only mow grassy areas and verges twice per year, have the council conducted risk / impact assessments in relation to impact on public health with the removal of dog waste bins and in relation to road safety with the reduction in mowing?"

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O. Question submitted by Paul Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services:

"Can the Council please confirm how it plans to use any funds realised from any sale of assets (e.g. General fund, capital receipts, etc.)"

P. Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Services:

"A Newbury today article on the 12th of July 2021 stated the following; The council is proposing to shut its offices at West Street House and West Point House and move all staff into its Market Street offices. Asked whether the council could relocate to the London Road Industrial Estate, Mr Carter did not commit but said: "The council will need a new office at some point. Market Street is going to be very expensive to maintain" "There's a political commitment to remain in Newbury and the town centre. We have had many people come and talk to us about what they could offer. It could be anywhere in the town centre, that might take three-five years to happen." Please may I ask, is the disposal of West Street House now part of an overall plan for a new purpose-built Council Office built on the Faraday Road Football Ground next to the Canal?"

Q. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"Following the scrapping of the Sports Hub which would have allowed Newbury FC to return to Newbury for the coming season in August, can the Council confirm that a spectator seating area, floodlights, adequate changing facilities, a bar plus food and drink facilities will be open at Faraday Road by August of this year?"

R. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel:

"Following recent flooding issues, can the Council assure residents that no cuts in funding will be made to flood prevention works, checking / clearing drains and gullies etc.?"