

Item 13:

Member Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 23 May 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 Chris Read to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

"There are now a number of significant planning breaches within the Parish of Woolhampton in the Ward of Bucklebury, to the east of Woolhampton village along the A4. Woolhampton Parish Council and myself understand the Planning Enforcement team are looking into these issues and would like an update and an understanding of the next steps from the Council on this problem to ensure unapproved development and planning breaches are properly managed."

B. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Leader of the Council:

"In January, the Council announced on its website that Cllr Dillon would be "taking a sabbatical" from his role as Leader, and "The new arrangements will be in place until after the election has been held - which must be held by January 2025 - at which point they will be reviewed by the Executive group." Why have the arrangements been changed despite no general election having taken place?"

C. Question submitted by Councillor Dominic Boeck to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services:

"In a recent survey for the Times, this council was ranked 181st out of 317 local authorities for Finance. What steps is the lead member for Education taking to make sure our schools receive the capital funding they need?"

D. Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

"Will the executive member for housing ask the officers to draw up a register of all residential properties that have been left empty for 12 months or more? The aim would be to work with the owners, whether housing associations or private, to get these homes back into circulation to provide much-needed accommodation in the district."

E. Question submitted by Councillor Tony Vickers to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration:

"How can this Council help Benchmark remain in West Berkshire, where it was established with the help of Habitat's Sir Terence Conran in 1984 on his land near Kintbury, having since become a major part of our rural economy, gained an international reputation in design using sustainable timber, but whose lease ending in 2027 is not being renewed?"

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

"I am delighted to see £1.2 Million allocated in the Capital Budget for a new Library in Thatcham, an initiative commenced by me as Portfolio Holder for

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Culture in the previous administration . Could the current Policy holder provide an update on the proposed location and likely timescales?"

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

"In the Liberal Democrat manifesto for the May 2023 elections, you promised to immediately return the Faraday Road pitch to bookable football space. How many hours of football have been played on the pitch since May 2023"

H. Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"What progress has been made on reducing the speed limit on the A339 between Newbury College and the Swan roundabout from 50mph to 40mph, as agreed by the Speed Limit Review on February 29?"

I. Question submitted by Councillor Howard Woollaston to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Given the issues with flooding and raw sewage in the roads in my ward in Lambourn for three months and I know other wards down the Lambourn Valley and the Pang Valley , what extra resources can be provided both human and financial to try to ameliorate the situation? The Officers are doing their level best but are hideously under resourced after what has been the wettest February and April since records began in in 1835 and I understand one of the 5th wettest Winters over the same period. This is an emergency!"

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

"How much money has the Council spent on the Faraday Road pitch since May 2023?"

K. Question submitted by Councillor David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Family Services:

"What plans does the council have to encourage schools across West Berkshire to participate in Walk to School Week from May 20-24?"

L. Question submitted by Councillor Howard Woollaston to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources:

"Could we be told the total borrowings from the Public Works Loan Board to the Council during the 2023/4 Municipal Year , the interest rate payable , the term of the loan and what it is being used for in each instance?"

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M. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"In the Liberal Democrat manifesto for the May 2023 elections, you promised to introduce cheaper parking. How much cheaper is parking in West Berkshire than in May 2023?"

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

"I am getting various questions about the charging structure at our Leisure Centres and specifically at our pools, the lido and Cricket and the new dance Studio in Hungerford. I appreciate that the new Management Contract is designed to at least break even for the Council, but given that the lido and dance studio were fully funded and a major contribution made for the 3G artificial pitch at John O'Gaunts School in Hungerford under my time as Portfolio Holder for Leisure under the previous administration, sharp increase seem inappropriate at the end of the cost of living crisis even though inflation is now back under control, the economy is expanding and significant tax cuts have been made under this Conservative government."

O. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"What progress has been made in the investigation of a Low Emission Zone for Newbury, as promised in your May 2023 manifesto?"

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

"How many pets have been given away as prizes in West Berkshire since May 2023?"

Q. Question submitted by Councillor Ross Mackinnon to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"How quickly has the Council fixed dangerous potholes during the year since May 2023, and how does this compare to the year to May 2022?"