

Item 4:

Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 22 May 2025.

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 Lee Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Will West Berkshire Council make it a priority to build more anti-flooding infrastructure in rural areas of West Berkshire seeing as we are the most vulnerable?"

B. Question submitted by Simon Pike to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"On 14th December 2023, I asked a question to the Executive on the status of a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order for Lawrences Lane between Thatcham and Cold Ash. The then portfolio holder replied that this would not be made permanent, but that other measures were being considered to make that narrow lane safer for pedestrians. What progress has been made on these developing and implementing measures?"

C. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"Name changes occur and using the correct Name for WBC/ Public Owned Lands within the Newbury London Road ESTATES DEA is very important to ensure the Public and Residents have a common understanding of what precisely is being referred to, so why has WBC LPA chosen to rename the wider LNODON ROAD ESTATES Dedicated Employment Area, and to use a name for this DEA that has previously been used for the smaller WBC Lands within the DEA, as I find this very confusing?"

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

"My understanding is the Council have commissioned Sports Labs Ltd to do a feasibility report on the viability of a 3G pitch at the Faraday Road Football Ground. Please can the Council confirm if an unredacted copy is going to be put in the public domain, and if so, when can the public expect to see a copy?"

E. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Could the Portfolio Holder tell me what the criteria is for households in West Berkshire to qualify for the larger size bin as part of the new waste strategy and how much that larger size bin costs?"

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

"Please provide full details / the report (i.e. the date, the EX-number, authority to enter into a contract / agreement etc.) of the original Executive Decision that approved the Northcroft (dry side) refurbishment project and its cost. For

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clarity I am requesting details of the original EX report authorising the Re-development of Northcroft Leisure Centre (dry side), which should be similar to the report provided for the Re-development of Northcroft Lido (EX4159) PDF 3 MB"

G. Question submitted by Alison May to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"West Berkshire District Council's (WBDC) Carbon Definitions Report (Appendix F, para 4.2) states: "The council is aiming to be a carbon neutral operation by 2030. This includes all scope 1, scope 2 emission and the scope 3 emissions from business travel and emissions from some of our contractors." The proposed Scope 3 emissions element is limited when noting there exists opportunities to identify and include other 'Scope 3 emissions'. How might the Council record and convey these limitations?"

H. Question submitted by Lee Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Does the new waste management programme involve a reevaluation of the current bulk waste collection programme's price of £63?"

I. Question submitted by Simon Pike to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

"When does the Council intend to next update its Infrastructure Delivery Plan?"

J. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"In a previous answer to a Questions about Bond Riverside I asked if a new Map could be issued showing the Planning Red Line Boundary, now amended to exclude the Public Open Space, and if necessary a Blue Line shown to illustrate the whole Tenure - therefore is this being progressed please?"

K. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"How much did West Berkshire Council spend on creating the new Waste Strategy? This would include consultation, consultants, experts and any costs that formed part of the planning and adoption of the new waste strategy?"

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

"It was stated that £5.4 million is planned to be spent in year (this FY) "redeveloping the dry side provision at Northcroft Leisure Centre, with further improvements to provision across the leisure estate (£648k)". Please confirm how this £5.4 Million was funded, e.g., reserves, short term loan, long term loan etc."

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M. Question submitted by Alison May to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Progress Review (Jan 2025) states: "...that transformation needed to be embedded across the organisation with strong leadership from the political leadership, CLT, and an empowered central team to drive and enable transformation activity." How might the Council's organisational structure be strengthened to deliver the numerous economic benefits associated with the Council's Environmental Strategy?"

N. Question submitted by Lee Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"As there is a new road Upgrade scheme being created by this Council will the program only focus on upgrades in and around Urban areas or will it also provide Upgrades to Rural roads?"

O. Question submitted by Simon Pike to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

"What weight does the Council give to Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework and accompanying Design Guide in developing planning policy and determining planning applications?"

P. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"The WBC Employment Lands now known as Bond Riverside currently has No Site Planning Policy to guide its future Redevelopment and, unlike Greenham DEA (Dedicated Employment Area) which has a LDO (Local Development Order), the wider London Road Estates DEA has no LDO, therefore how will the Next Steps for Bond Riverside Re-development be guided in the absence of any Planning Policy for the bigger or smaller Areas?"

Q. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"I recently launched a petition to ask the Council to pause the reduction in bin collection aspect of the new Waste Strategy. Thousands of people have signed at the time of writing within just a few days. As a result, West Berkshire Recycling have posted on various threads on social media that they are looking to give some people exemptions to the reduced bin collections. Can the Council tell me what circumstances would justify an exemption to the three weekly collection?"

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

"The contract for the Northcroft dry side redevelopment project was original placed with Alliance Leisure but due to the need "to take action to ensure the delivery of the redevelopment project of Northcroft Leisure Centre" the Council re-awarded the contract to "Everyone Active" in July 2024. What tender process was undertaken by the Council prior to the award of the contract to Everyone Active?"

S. Question submitted by Alison May to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"West Berkshire District Council's (WBDC) Environment Strategy - 2025 Refresh identifies behavioural change as a relevant factor in the effective and efficient delivery of a Local Government authority's Environment strategy. Transitional Behavioural change is reliant upon the willingness of the individual, being the organisation (the Council) and each Council member representative (the individual) - how might the Council seek to imbed behavioural change which is an imperative transformational component?"

T. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"The Redefined Bond Riverside land is no longer showing on the Government PDL/Brownfield Register and has therefore been removed, so is there an intention to re-register it or will it no longer be available for Flatted Developments, and solely for Employment?"

U. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"West Berkshire Council are currently working on plans to merge with Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Council as part of devolution proposals, the latter has the second best recycling rates in the Country. If we truly want better recycling rates, would it not be better to aspire to what they do with their collections and recycling process?"

V. Question submitted by Paul Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources:

"Can the Council please provide details of the terms associated with the £16 Million emergency loan recently received from Government, i.e. what is the interest rate being charged, is it based on a "fixed maturity" basis and over what period (when does the initial loan need to be repaid) etc"

W. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

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"In the past the Government have run a funding scheme for Public Lands for Re-developments which have become stuck and need funding to release them, this latterly being the BLRF (Brownfield Land Release Fund), and as Bond Riverside has effectively been stuck in Planning Terms for many years, have any bids been put in for Funding under the various phases of this funding stream which has been running in one form or another since 2018? <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-of-new-homes-to-be-built-as-government-unlocks-brownfield-sites?>"

X. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Families and larger households are already struggling with fortnightly collections. These people are already trying to recycle everything they can to ensure they can fit everything in their bin every two weeks. Given that we will likely face another waste reorganisation with the merger of the Council into two other Councils, can we not just pause the reduction in bin collections aspect of the waste strategy until we can formulate a joint waste strategy with Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Council?"

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

"Can the Council please confirm when the Northcroft (dry side) refurbishment project was submitted on the Forward Plan to the Executive?"

Z. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"Both Web Pages on the 2 different Web Sites that exist for Bond Riverside have not been updated for some time: The New Site on the Business Hub was last Updated in Feb 2024 (<https://www.businesswestberks.co.uk/bond-riverside-london-road-industrial-estate>), however it does NOT have the latest posting up of: (https://westberks.gov.uk/media/61296/Bond-Riverside-Place-Making-Strategy/pdf/DRAFT_Place_Making_Strategy_-_Sept_2023.pdf?m=1738751875817), as this has recently appeared on the bottom of The Old Site, <https://westberks.gov.uk/lrie> , therefore please can both Web Sites have the same Information, or can they be rationalised back to one Web page on One Web Site, thank you?"

AA. Question submitted by Richard Garvie to the Portfolio Holder for Public Safety and Capital Projects (Built Environment):

"I was disappointed to learn that Hungerford and the Downlands is losing it's very well thought of Police Inspector and as a result will be left with two police officers and two PCSO's to cover that area. Has the Council made any representations to Thames Valley Police to object to this decision?"

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BB. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health Integration:

"I commend the Council for production of a 3 year Carers Strategy, thank you, and I am wondering whether the relevant Service Directors of Adult & Children's Social Care would support having a Strategies Performance Measure which relates directly to our wonderful West Berkshire Unpaid Carers as I could not spot anything specific in the Strategies Performance Measures reviewed and voted for under Council Decision C4615 on the 15th May 2025?"

CC. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health Integration:

"The Office of National Statistics UK Census undertaken on 21st March 2021 was able to identify 7.8% of the West Berks population aged over 5 provide some form of Unpaid Care = 11,941 Carers, with this broken down as follows: a) Under 19 hours per week: 4.4% = 6736T, b) 20-49 hrs per week: 1.3% = 1990, c) 50+ hrs per week: 2.1% = 3215. These full figures are not included in the Carers Strategy and Wokingham have also been able to break these down into Age Groups, therefore what does the Portfolio Holder think about the 11-12% Reach of WBC involvement with Carers, and only 88 Carers completing the Consultation on the Draft Carers Strategy?"

DD. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health Integration:

"I know from personal experience as a Family Unpaid Dementia Carer that one of the most important pieces of information to know when contacting WBC for the first time is how long it is likely to be before your Loved One and yourself can have their Needs Assessments, and again there appear to be no Performance Measures in relation to these timescales or targets to benchmark against, so how would Adult & Children's Portfolio Holders feel about having a Performance Measure along these lines?"

EE. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health Integration:

"Many of the Actions in the Strategy will enhance the lives of local Unpaid Adult & Child Carers, again thank you, however we do have a concern around the 3215 Carers who are undertaking over 50 hours of Caring per week and I would like to understand how the NHS & Social Care Interact together specifically to ensure the Needs of this Group of Carers are catered for, therefore would the new Health & Social Care Scrutiny Committee be receptive to exploring this as a Topic for Scrutiny, or would it be a matter to raise with the WBC Health & Wellbeing Board?"