

## Agenda Item 6

### Public Questions to be answered at the Council meeting on 17 July 2025.

Members of the Executive to answer the following questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the [Council's Constitution](#):

- (A) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Leader of the Council and Executive Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Communications by Richard Garvie:**

*“The Leader of the Council says all of the right things about openness and transparency, but the answers members of the public receive when asking questions to this Council often fall short by being vague, lacking in detail or avoid the question all together. Given that questions are now required ten days in advance to allow officers time to prepare a response, will the Leader of the Council make the commitment to ensure the pre-prepared answers actually answer the questions in future and provide sufficient details?”*

- (B) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation by Lee Allen:**

*“Have the councils (West Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse) decided where the HQ/Capital of the Council will be?”*

- (C) Question related to an item of business submitted to Leader of the Council and Executive Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Communications by Alan Pearce:**

*“Please would the Council give a comprehensive assessment relating to agenda Item 13 Annual Scrutiny Report 2024/25 Ref 4.3 Items of particular interest described in further detail.*

*The report states at 3.1.3 “The work of the Sports Hub Task and Finish Group is ongoing”.*

*However, the Task and Finish group completed its report in the first week of February and the report has not been progressed to the Executive. For some reason after five months, it would appear the scrutiny process has come to a standstill or stalemate, and this is the reason for my question?”*

- (D) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation by Simon Kirby:**

*“Please say how the council has spent its 2022 allocation of £1,000,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, saying please for each supported project whether it has been completed successfully.”*

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**(E) Question related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Paula Saunderson:**

*"Will the Local Transport Plan 4 to 2040 be a living document, as it will need to incorporate the Transport, Highways and Active Travel items from the Local Plan 2023-2041 Infrastructure Delivery Plan which is not yet finished? (e.g., A4 Bath Road in the vicinity of the North East Thatcham Site (SP14) plus new Sites RSA6 & RSA7.)"*

**(F) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Leader of the Council and Executive Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Communications by Richard Garvie:**

*"The Leader of the Council sought to correct what he described as an injustice relating to CIL payments when he took up his position. It has been brought to my attention that those who were overpaid housing benefits from as long ago as 12 years are facing demands to make repayments even though this error was made by the Authority. Can the Leader commit that residents will not be held accountable for the errors of staff and / or software and that any repayments demanded will be waived and those that were paid will be returned to those residents?"*

**(G) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health by Lee Allen:**

*"How can West Berkshire Council justify the proposed closure or outsourcing of the three vital day care centres – The Phoenix Centre in Newbury, Hungerford Resource Centre, and Greenfield House Resource Centre in Calcot – given their crucial role in supporting some of the most vulnerable residents in our community? These centres provide essential services, promote independence, and offer vital respite to families and carers. What assurances can the Council give that the needs of service users will continue to be met effectively, safely, and locally under any new arrangements? Furthermore, what guarantees will the Council provide to the dedicated staff at these centres many of whom have years of specialised experience regarding their job security, terms and conditions, and continuity of employment?"*

**(H) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Leader of the Council and Executive Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Communications by Simon Kirby:**

*"Is the Newbury Town Centre Steering Group" still in existence and steering the Newbury town centre strategy of the Town Centre Masterplan."*

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**(I) Question related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Paula Saunderson:**

*"The Action Plan at the bottom of LPT 4 to 2040 does not include any Highways works for these Rural arterial Roads which are often mentioned in Planning Meetings as being under pressure or having poor safety:*

- a. B4000 - Ermin Road*
  - b. Valley Road from Woodspeen to Lambourn*
  - c. B4009 - Long Lane along which there are several Sites included and suggested via the Local Development Plan*
- Therefore, can we realistically expect NO Improvements to these Rural Roads in the next 15 years?"*

**(J) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways by Richard Garvie:**

*"6,348 people signed petitions to request the change to three weekly bin collections. Many more declined to sign due to the level of personal information required to verify signatures are genuine West Berkshire residents. Given that this is not simply a case of "40 people on Facebook" opposing this change, will the Council now agree to pause the reduction in bin collections aspect of the new Waste Strategy?"*

**(K) Question related to an item of business submitted to the Leader of the Council and Executive Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Communications by Paula Saunderson:**

*"In the past this Report went to Governance Committee before coming to full Council and it also mentioned other important areas of work and scrutiny pertaining to the CONSTITUTION & work of the Monitoring Officer & Deputies such as the responsibility to:*

- a. Uphold the CONSTITUTION via Monitoring its Use*
- b. Reviewing its Operation*
- c. Ensuring its Principles are Upheld*
- d. Recommending necessary Changes*
- e. Ensuring Decisions are made Lawfully & Fairly*
- f. It is properly Maintained and Understood*

*Therefore, as this Report is constrained to Councillor Conduct & Ethics, how and when will there be a Report on the above Officer responsibilities for 2024-2025, including Part 12 - changes to Statutory Roles & Senior Management Structures, plus Matters that need including in the Forward Plan of the Governance Cttee and the Work Programme of the Constitution Review Task Group?"*

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**(L) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Richard Garvie:**

*"Will the Council make available all correspondence between Lee Dillon, Nigel Lynn, all elected members, West Berkshire Council Officers and developers of the proposed Eagle Quarter from the date of the last local election to present so that it can be established why this unpopular proposal was revived and the public can examine the finer details of discussions?"*

**(M) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside by Richard Garvie:**

*"Will the Council make available all correspondence between Lee Dillon, Nigel Lynn, all elected members, West Berkshire Council Officers, the operators of Faraday Road & Northcroft Leisure and contractors appointed for the large amount of public money spent on both facilities plus and documents related to procurement and / or appointments?"*

**(N) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing by Richard Garvie:**

*"It has been brought to my attention that the recipient of a recent planing decision went on to donate tens of thousands of pounds to the Liberal Democrats. Can the Council release all communication with that applicant from before, during and following the application specifically involving Nigel Lynn, Lee Dillon, all West Berkshire Council Officers and all West Berkshire Councillors? On behalf of his party, could the Leader of the Council convince officers of his political party to also provide all correspondence and documentation related to these financial transactions and what the money was spent on as an act of openness and transparency?"*

**(O) Question not related to an item of business submitted to the Leader of the Council and Executive Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Communications by Richard Garvie:**

*"Can the Council please make available to the public all election spending returns related to the two West Berkshire Parliamentary Constituencies from the 2024 General Election and in relation to the 2023 West Berkshire Council elections?"*