

Item 5:

Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 19 March 2026.

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 John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Who is paying for the ongoing repairs and maintenance of the rain gardens in faraday Rd?"

B. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"FRFG - 3G PITCH FUNDING -

The 2 previous 2026-2027 Budget Meetings raised there is no provision or Line Item in the Capital Budget for ?1.25m Capital Spend agreed under EX4725 in September 2025, so please clarify:

a.) What type/Source of External Funding is being provided for the pitch

b.) Whether the totals within the Capital Budgets Appendices B & C will be amended to reflect this Expenditure on a Capital Project?"

C. Question submitted by Ian Young to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

"I've just been reading that homelessness in West Berks has increased from 100 households to 163 in 1 year. Do you recognise and agree with those numbers, and if so, what plans are there to increase social housing to address this?"

D. Question submitted by Isabel Smith to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

"The Council owns a 2-bed bungalow property which has been vacant since 2024. Niki Hinman (NWN) reported on 8th March 2026 that 48 families were in emergency accommodation and stated this was 'non West Berkshire housing stock'. Can the council please explain why this property, owned by them is being allowed to deteriorate and not; a) being used as emergency accommodation or b) been added to the Homechoice list for people to bid on"

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

"So far, this financial year (up to the end of February 2026) the Council has borrowed £70 Million (15 separate loans) from the PWLB on a short-term basis (between 12 months and 21 months). Can you please provide full details of how and where this £70 million (15 separate loans) has been allocated / used by the Council."

F. Question submitted by Ben Holden-Crowther to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"The November update email to Parish and Town Councils stated that the North East Thatcham Masterplan will fix the locations of the access roads, but

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detailed traffic modelling will be delayed until the final planning application stage. Why is this critical traffic data being delayed?"

G. Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources:

"Please could the Council point out the specific section or line item within the Capital Strategy 2026/27–2029/30 programme where the £1.25 million in capital funding for the proposed 3G pitch at Faraday Road is recorded?"

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

"Access air quality data provides communities with the opportunity to interpret the levels of types of pollutants being dispersed throughout their local area. Noting the UK Government's launch of a new interactive dashboard designed to make air quality information more accessible to the public, can the Council provide citizens with an update of the frequency and types of measured pollutants submitted to UK's Air's portal?"

I. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Economic Development and Regeneration and Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation:

"Is the cafe culture promoted by the extension of pedestrianisation a success?"

J. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways:

"Both The Infrastructure FUNDING Statement issued in December 2025 and the Capital Budget Spreadsheet 2026- 2030 have 2 Line Items in relation to Drainage & Flood Risk coming from Mixed Sources Of Funding, so please can Flood Groups have a brief outline of which Areas/Rivers/Wards this expenditure is likely to directed towards, and how these are chosen, thank you?"

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

"How much does the Council anticipate it will need to borrow in FY 2026/2027?"

L. Question submitted by Ben Holden-Crowther to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

"Recent correspondence from the Council says that the public consultation for the North East Thatcham development will be run by consultants paid for by the developers. Have these developer-funded consultants been appointed yet?"

M. Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources:

"Could the Council please confirm if the reprofiling of the £1.25 million capital funding into the 2026/27 financial year for the proposed 3G pitch at Faraday

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Road requires a formal vote at a Full Council meeting before it can be officially authorised for expenditure?"

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

"Council's response to a public question on the subject of Proposed Local Wildlife Sites (pLWS) confirmed the significance of protecting and enhancing environmentally sensitive areas (ref: Council meeting, 28 November 2024, public question C) . Subsequent to the publication of the above response, the Council updated their online map to reflect pLWSs located within WBDC's jurisdiction however it has been noted the Proposed Local Wildlife Site layer is once again hidden. Will the Council agree to rectify with immediate effect?"

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

"There is only a few weeks left to insure the football ground meets the ground grading requirements for Step 6 to ensure Newbury Town FC can be promoted. Can the portfolio holder confirm he has read the ground grading requirements and set out to me tonight what the Council is doing to ensure ground grading requirements are met by the 31st March deadline?"

P. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Leader of the Council:

"What or who determines whether a manifesto pledge is acted on or not?"

Q. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Leader of the Council:

"Why does West Berkshire Council choose to have an Executive Committee made up purely of members rather than a Cabinet?"

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

"Has the Council submitted PWLB lending Access Forms for 2024-2025; 2025-2026 and 2026-2027?"

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

"Minuted item 201, as noted within the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee minutes dated Tuesday 1 July 2025, states: "201 (water companies as statutory consultees) - the letter had been sent by Councillor Stuart Gourley to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting that water companies be made statutory consultees for major planning applications. A response is awaited.". The illegal spillage of sewage impacts upon the health and wellbeing of communities whilst equally impacting upon the natural environment. Can the Council provide a progress update on the letter sent to the Secretary of State?"

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

"Given that the Council are currently working towards a new Playing Pitch Strategy, why has only £1.3m (all of which Council funded) been allocated for the next three financial years? Surely the proposed budget doesn't reflect the actual needs identified in your draft strategy, including the Henwick masterplan, the £1.25m you say you want to spend at Faraday Road nor the ever increasing deficit of playing pitches (grass and all weather) in the District?"

U. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside:

"At a meeting of Newbury town council on 12/12/2022, Councillor Foot proposed that the council resolve to prohibit the use of artificial grass on any land owned by the town council and further resolved to approach West Berks Council and request that they follow a similar approach and ban the use of artificial grass (turf). As the portfolio holder for sport, he is now supporting the planned artificial pitch at Faraday rd. Could he say whether he still holds his views of 2022, or explain his recent change of views?"

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

"Can I now ask the Leader of the Council, has he ever seen the pavements, rubbish bins and green spaces / vegetation growth in District looking this bad at any point in the last thirty years?"

W. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

"Re HP8 - when referring to Developing a Delivery Plan from the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan which document(s) are you referring to please and will it take into account the latest NPPF Definitions of (Main) Town Centre, Edge of Centre, and Out Of Centre?"

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

"Re HP8 - In their May 2024 Meeting the Executive voted to bringing the Regeneration of Sites within Bond Riverside within the Management of the wider Newbury Town Centre Masterplan programme, therefore have the Boundaries of the Main Town Centre been redefined to include these previous Edge Of Centre Sites and will this new Delivery Plan include the Sites mentioned in EX 4494?"

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Y. Question submitted by Paula Saunderson to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing:

"Re HP5,HP6,HP8,HP13,HP14,HP17,HP18,& finally HP22 - re NEWBURY CLAYHILL WARD - All these High Priority Measures have the potential to impact Newbury Clayhill Ward and without any progress on the Newbury Neighbourhood Plan, more of Newbury Business Park being turned into flats, 2 Rivers and their floodplains still on Flood Alerts, Capital Items in relation to the A4, or any Information available since the decisions made in EX4494, would it be possible to issue some sort of statement to show the Direction this unfortunate Newbury Ward is likely to be subject too."