

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 29 JULY 2021

The following questions have been received under Standing Order 8.1. The draft replies, which are subject to amendment, are set out below.

“Councillors are thanked for their questions.”

1. Question from Councillor M Ali

This question will be dealt with under Part II of the agenda.

2. Question from Councillor J Brown

“With the Garden Waste collection being suspended for two weeks, would the Portfolio Holder please explain what contingency measures are in place, how subscribers are being compensated and what lessons have been learned from this?”

Reply from Councillor K M Davis

“In common with other Local Authorities and organisations, services have been effected by the national shortage of qualified HGV drivers. The suspension of garden waste collections is part of our normal planning arrangements to prioritise the core service of waste and recycling collections. The intention is that customers will have subscriptions extended to reflect the missed collection and every effort is being made to reinstate services from Monday 2nd August 2021.

As Portfolio Holder for Waste and Recycling, I made an informal statement at the last Executive and asked Officers to write to all Councillors, prior to the disruption so Members could begin to informally update their network and Ward. Website and social media information has been updated proactively, although our direct communications to customers was a little slower than we would have liked in the first week. From the start of this week, notes have been placed on garden waste bins by the crews as well as a direct mail out to customers.

Prior to this issue, the waste and recycling teams had coped really well in continuing to provide services and moving forward all Joint Waste partners are seeking to work together to share resources and support each other.”

3. Question from Councillor L M N Morales

“During the last year no members of the public have been able to attend meetings or have had limited numbers allowed only, though all have been able to view all public meetings online. How many views has each meeting had online in the last year and how do these numbers compare to the same periods over the previous 2 years pre pandemic?”

Reply from Councillor A Azad

“The Council has been webcasting Council and Committee meetings since 2013 and it is very encouraging to see the increase in viewing figures, particularly over the past year when members of the public were unable to attend in person due to Covid restrictions. The Council will continue to use technology to support engagement with residents, exploring new ways of informing residents of, and involving residents in, the work of the Authority. The Council’s webcasting system, for example, was recently used to stage a public engagement event with individuals joining over Zoom or watching the live webcast, and each year the Council broadcasts live the election Count and the announcement of results.

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Please see the table below which sets out the number of views for each public meeting webcasted in the last year (highlighted in grey). The webcasted meetings held in the same period over the previous two years are shown underneath for comparison:-

Meeting Type	Date of Meeting	Number of Views
Council	24 May 2021	179
Council	18 June 2020	113
Council	20 May 2019	107
Council	20 May 2021	209
Council	May 2020	Meeting cancelled
Council	16 May 2019	114
Council	8 April 2021	239
Council	April 2020	Meeting cancelled
Council	4 April 2019	120
Council	11 February 2021	415
Council	13 February 2020	184
Council	13 February 2019	152
Council (Special)	19 January 2021	166
Council (Special)	7 January 2021	506
Council	3 December 2020	443
Council	5 December 2019	200
Council	6 December 2018	243
Council	15 October 2020	250
Council	17 October 2019	604
Council	18 October 2018	260
Council (Special)	12 September 2019	119
Council	30 July 2020	259
Council	25 July 2019	447
Council	26 July 2018	219
Council (Special)	18 June 2020	113
Council (Special)	13 June 2019	50
Executive	15 July 2021	115
Executive	16 July 2020	173
Executive	11 July 2019	48
Executive	17 June 2021	164
Executive	22 June 2020	269
Executive	27 June 2019	34
Executive	6 June 2019	74
Executive	25 March 2021	305
Executive	March 2020	Meeting cancelled
Executive	28 March 2019	66
Executive	4 February 2021	117
Executive	6 February 2020	185
Executive	7 February 2019	111
Executive	14 January 2021	101
Executive	16 January 2020	64
Executive	January 2019	Meeting cancelled
Executive (Grants)	10 December 2020	68
Executive (Grants)	27 February 2020	142
Executive(Grants)	13 December 2018	215
Executive	19 November 2020	132
Executive	21 November 2019	212
Executive	22 November 2018	76

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Executive	8 October 2020	79
Executive	10 October 2019	169
Executive	11 October 2018	41
Executive	10 September 2020	126
Executive	September 2019	Meeting cancelled
Executive	13 September 2018	162
Licensing	15 June 2021	55
Licensing	June 2020	Meeting cancelled
Licensing	11 June 2019	66
Licensing	9 March 2021	36
Licensing	10 March 2020	39
Licensing	12 March 2019	26
Licensing	19 January 2021	46
Licensing	21 January 2020	41
Licensing	22 January 2019	65
Licensing	6 October 2020	83
Licensing	8 October 2019	36
Licensing	October 2018	Meeting cancelled
Overview and Scrutiny	12 July 2021	71
Overview and Scrutiny	13 July 2020	152
Overview and Scrutiny	15 July 2019	60
Overview and Scrutiny	7 June 2021	109
Overview and Scrutiny	15 June 2020	544
Overview and Scrutiny	17 June 2019	67
Overview and Scrutiny	22 March 2021	113
Overview and Scrutiny	March 2020	Meeting cancelled
Overview and Scrutiny	25 March 2019	40
Overview and Scrutiny	22 February 2021	84
Overview and Scrutiny	24 February 2020	409
Overview and Scrutiny	25 February 2019	52
Overview and Scrutiny	25 January 2021	66
Overview and Scrutiny	20 January 2020	119
Overview and Scrutiny	21 January 2019	35
Overview and Scrutiny	21 December 2020	82
Overview and Scrutiny	23 November 2020	78
Overview and Scrutiny	25 November 2019	80
Overview and Scrutiny	26 November 2018	40
Overview and Scrutiny	19 October 2020	81
Overview and Scrutiny	21 October 2019	104
Overview and Scrutiny	14 September 2020	86
Overview and Scrutiny	16 September 2019	96
Overview and Scrutiny	17 September 2018	43
Planning	20 July 2021	100
Planning	21 July 2020	97
Planning	23 July 2019	111
Planning	29 June 2021	167
Planning	23 June 2020	1458
Planning	25 June 2019	169
Planning	8 June 2021	130
Planning	3 June 2020	254

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Planning	4 June 2019	111
Planning	6 April 2021	309
Planning	12 May 2020	209
Planning	9 April 2019	190
Planning	16 March 2021	136
Planning	17 March 2020	465
Planning	19 March 2019	151
Planning	23 February 2021	137
Planning	25 February 2020	130
Planning	26 February 2019	105
Planning	2 February 2021	149
Planning	4 February 2020	65
Planning	5 February 2019	75
Planning	12 January 2021	421
Planning	14 January 2020	151
Planning	15 January 2019	265
Planning	8 December 2020	171
Planning	10 December 2019	84
Planning	11 December 2018	117
Planning	10 November 2020	172
Planning	12 November 2019	134
Planning	13 November 2018	209
Planning	20 October 2020	90
Planning	15 October 2019	153
Planning	16 October 2018	88
Planning	29 September 2020	163
Planning	24 September 2019	108
Planning	25 September 2018	63
Planning	8 September 2020	96
Planning	3 September 2019	76
Planning	4 September 2018	244
Standards and Audit	8 July 2021	54
Standards and Audit	23 July 2020	55
Standards and Audit	18 July 2019	32
Standards and Audit	4 March 2021	57
Standards and Audit	5 March 2020	40
Standards and Audit	7 March 2019	35
Standards and Audit	26 November 2020	51
Standards and Audit	28 November 2019	27
Standards and Audit	29 November 2018	7
Standards and Audit	17 September 2020	93
Standards and Audit	19 September 2019	18
Standards and Audit	20 September 2018	15
Standards and Audit	23 July 2020	55
Standards and Audit	18 July 2019	32
Standards and Audit	19 July 2018	10

4. Question from Councillor W P Forster

“On Monday 26th July, South Western Railway (SWR) launched a consultation on its December 2022 timetable.

SWR are seeking to take advantage of the reduction in travel following the pandemic to improve reliability by reducing services based on the May 2019 timetable. Although improving reliability is to be welcomed, as before the pandemic four out of the ten busiest train services in the country served Woking Station, any revised timetable should surely seek to improve matters for Woking’s commuters.

Please will the Council agree to respond to the consultation expressing its concern about loss of services for Woking Borough?”

Reply from Councillor C S Kemp

“I am aware that South Western Railway (SWR) has just published its December 2022 timetable for consultation. I will be liaising with Officers, who will be studying the timetable in detail to provide an appropriate response to the consultation. The Council’s response will seek to ensure that services for Woking residents are prioritised.”

5. Question from Councillor J R Sanderson

“Is a follow up planned with the Local Government Association (LGA) following the Corporate Peer Challenge which they conducted in November 2019 in order to consider progress on the recommendations of this report?”

Reply from Councillor A Azad

“The Council is making good progress against the recommendations of the Corporate Peer Challenge and a comprehensive report will be presented to a Special Council in January 2022 that details progress against the recommendations of the 2019 Corporate Peer Challenge. It is usual to conduct Peer Reviews every four to five years and therefore there will be a further review requested with the LGA in the 2023 Municipal Year.”

6. Question from Councillor D Roberts

“How many items are currently confidential (Part 2), what subject to they relate to and when where they placed in part 2?”

Reply from Councillor A Azad

“Since 15 October 2020 there have been eight confidential (Part II) items.

The Council aims to consider all matters in the public domain but sometimes this is not possible, particularly given the nature of commercial developments. The use of Part II will be kept to a minimum and carefully considered by the Monitoring Officer in line with the statutory framework.

The Council adopted a Confidentiality Protocol on 15 October 2020. The Protocol provides that full details of Part II items of business shall be included in a register of Part II items maintained by the Monitoring Officer. The Register is available for inspection by Members of the Council and the designation of Part II shall be reviewed by the Monitoring Officer on an annual basis.

The Register holds 8 separate reports in total. A summary of these matters are listed below.

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Meeting	Date	Report(s)
Full Council	15 October 2020	Recommendations of the Executive of 8 October 2020. (Three separate property management reports and one Local Authority Company report. These reports are listed below as reports to the Executive on 8 October 2020) Confidential transaction report.
Full Council	25 March 2021	Commercial tenant management report
Executive	8 October 2020	Three separate property management reports. (Recommendations to Full Council) Local Authority Company report. (Recommendations to Full Council)
Executive	8 April 2021	Question to Executive
Taxi Licensing Sub Committee	19 July 2021 and 22 July 2021	Four separate reports by Officers in respect of individual taxi drivers.

Full details of these matters can be found in the Register.

The Monitoring Officer is undertaking a review of Part II items which pre-date the introduction of the Register and shall ensure that they are recorded and reviewed in the same manner.”

7. Question from Councillor E Nicholson

“I and others have not received a timely response from questions raised on behalf of residents at the last Woking Joint Committee held on 23rd June 2021. The next planned joint committee is scheduled for 10th November 2021.

Does this council agree

- A) That to wait until November 2021, a period of four months for a response at the next joint committee is both too late and indicates a lack of responsiveness and urgency to residents and councillors’ questions
- B) That where suitable a written response should be forthcoming to the councillor who submitted the question within 28 days either providing a response or outlining why the response is delayed
- C) Does this council therefore agree that in order to offer more responsiveness, and to better address residents’ questions, that the joint committee should convene more frequent meetings than the current reduced number of three times a year.”

Reply from Councillor C S Kemp

“The Woking Joint Committee’s Constitution outlines the process in which Members questions to the Woking Joint Committee are received and answered. The Constitution stipulates that if the Chairman is unable to answer any question at the meeting he/she may send a written answer to the Member asking the question. It also stipulates that all questions and answers should be recorded within the minutes. The Constitution does not stipulate a timeframe in which a response should be made but a timely response or explanation for the delay is expected. I can confirm I have now chased the relevant county officer for the response to your question.

The County Council facilitates the Joint Committee and sets the frequency of the meetings.”

8. Question from Councillor A-M Barker

“Who are the current occupiers / users of the former Ypod premises on Chobham Road?”

Reply from Councillor C S Kemp

“We have some great news about a new theatre group making Woking its home. Peer Productions, whose vision is to use theatre to transform young people’s lives, will be a great addition to the Borough and offers a lot of synergy to our newly created Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Peer intend to move into the Ypod as sole occupier from September 2021.

Until then, the YPOD is being used by:

- Streetvibes - a dance company that engages with over 300 young people each week;
- Lost for Words - a community theatre company which mainly targets the youth;
- Woking Youth Theatre - provision of drama for youth; and
- Family Services - the outsourced service from SCC for family service provision.

All of these groups have been found new homes, taking advantage of the fantastic new facilities we have opening in the Borough. Street Vibes will have a new home at the Eastwood Centre in Sheerwater from September. Lost for Words are moving their school to Woking Leisure Centre in the main with their shows moving to the new theatre, Buzz. Woking Youth Theatre will also be using a mix of Woking Leisure Centre and Buzz.

Family Services in the long term move to the new Community Campus in Sheerwater but in the interim will continue to work from Sythwood and the Centres for the Community.”

9. Question from Councillor A-M Barker

“Is it correct to say that Network Rail will not build the planned fly over rail line at Woking as part of the upcoming replacement of Victoria Arch?”

Reply from Councillor C S Kemp

“The timing of the proposed fly over or grade separation and platform works proposed by Network Rail remains uncertain at this point in time. The Covid pandemic has created uncertainty as to when these works will take place, but it is clear that the works remain a future infrastructure priority for when demand is sufficient.

Network Rail have published a report “The South West Main Line (SWML) Strategic Study Phase 1 2021” - [South West Main Line Strategic Study \(networkrail.co.uk\)](https://www.networkrail.co.uk).

This report is set against the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic that has seen changes that encompass the way people work and travel. In its report, Network Rail state that it is not possible to know when and to what extent passengers will return to the rail network post COVID-19. The Strategic Study outlines a range of future demand scenarios and highlight that although in all demand scenarios there is the potential need for additional services by the mid to late 2020s, it is recognised that there is unlikely to be the funding or the time to deliver any of the enhancements identified through this study in that period.

However they also point out that the SWML was already considerably over capacity and the intention is to make sure that the industry does not wait until pressure on current infrastructure becomes intolerable and supply once again is outstripped by demand for

investment decisions to be made.

The Woking Area Capacity Enhancement (WACE) is identified as one of the next steps for Network Rail within the report, stating that Woking Junction is a significant constraint across the whole of the SWML and has previously been highlighted as an inhibitor to increasing capacity across the route. The (WACE) scheme seeks to resolve the network capacity issues at Woking which are known to prevent any future unlocking of capacity on the SWML, as well as improving the reliability of services operating through this area. It would benefit operational performance and reliability as well as facilitating future uplifts in services on the inner section of the SWML.

It is clear from previous analysis that the service operated prior to the Covid-19 pandemic was at the limits of what could be run through Woking Junction and station in a robust and resilient way. The report recommends that Woking Area Capacity Enhancement (WACE) remains a future infrastructure intervention for when demand is sufficient that additional trains above what was previously operated are required.”

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REPORT ENDS