

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 14 OCTOBER 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 L M N Morales

“Many residents are very confused by lack of a current timetable for green waste collection, can the portfolio holder please confirm the schedule for future collections so bins are not put in the wrong weeks and confirm when it is expected that the fortnightly collections will resume.”

Reply from Councillor K M Davis

“As you are aware I wrote directly to all subscribers and Members in the middle of September to outline the current situation and confirm the reduced winter garden waste collection cycle. In Woking this reduced service began last month and the first collection took place between Monday 27 September 2021 – Friday 8 October 2021 and was well received. It is my continued expectation that a further garden waste collection will take place before Christmas and we will continue our commitment to proactively inform all subscribers in advance of future collections.

The national HGV driver shortage continues to impact our local waste and recycling collection service as it has over recent months. These pressures will continue. Locally there are discussions about the availability of gritter drivers and opportunities for seasonal work are evident. Without gritter drivers, we will be unable to safely collect any waste.

Despite the challenges faced, I am pleased to report that the strength of the partnership has enabled some significant actions to be achieved. Amongst many other avenues being pursued, drivers are being incentivised with recruitment and retention bonuses, employees are being offered referral fees for recommending friends and family for employment, members of the bin crews are being trained to become drivers through the in-house scheme and drivers are being sought through multiple agencies.

At this stage, it is too early to be precise on the exact date when the collection service will resume fully although the expectation is late spring next year.”

2. Question from Councillor W P Forster

“Following Lib Dem motion that was agreed in April 2021, Woking Borough Council committed to improving the subway under Woking Station.

Please can the Council provide an update on what refurbishment is planned, and when the work will take place?”

Reply from Councillor K M Davis

“We had hoped to have started the refurbishment works at this time. However, as the subway is a structure managed and maintained with partners it has been necessary to obtain formal approval for the works and unfortunately we are still awaiting for the necessary permission from Network Rail.

Currently the application has been approved by all parties at Network Rail except the fire engineer where it remains in progress. No timescale has been given except that they endeavour to complete applications within 28 days which has been exceeded in

this case.

The main part of the works is to remove all the stair nosings as these have become loose and damaged, the concrete steps will then be repaired and new reinforced stair nosings fitted to all the steps.

The missing wall tiles will be replaced and any previously painted surfaces will be decorated which will include some repairs to the walls where the plaster is damaged and an anti-graffiti coating applied.

Finally the tiled surfaces, the wall glazing as you enter the tunnel, signs and shelf areas will be cleaned down and the drainage cleared.

The works will take between 4 – 5 weeks, once approved by Network Rail, depending on contractor availability at the time.”

3. Question from Councillor S Dorsett

“Would the Leader of the Council update members on the steps she is taking to ensure that this administration’s commitment to engaging with residents continues to be delivered?”

Reply from Councillor A Azad

“Thank you Cllr Dorsett, your question is extremely timely. From the moment I became Leader of Woking Borough Council, my vision was to create a council in constant conversation with everyone it serves, with a culture of consultation and engagement embedded in the organisation.

I am proud of the progress we have already made in recruiting 750 residents onto our Residents Panel and creating the Woking Community Forum, our online engagement space. From future development to governance arrangements, this will be the place where people come to talk, discuss and engage. We have already gained invaluable resident input on matters, such as our Housing Strategy, emerging Woking town centre master plan, Planet Woking and Economic Development Action Plan.

Building on this excellent start, I’m very pleased to announce the launch of a comprehensive programme of engagement and consultation that will assist with the development of a new five year Corporate Strategy.

The Borough-wide consultation will assist the Council in deciding where to focus its resources over the next five years. Residents will have the opportunity to tell the Council what issues and services matter the most to them, and what improvements communities would like to see in the future.

As part of the consultation, a series of evening roadshows will be held during the coming weeks at venues across the Borough, led by Chief Executive, Julie Fisher, and myself. The roadshows will be held on:

- Thursday 21 October, Holy Trinity Church, Knaphill
- Tuesday 26 October, 7th Scout Group Community Hall, Woking Park
- Wednesday 3 November, Parkview Centre for the Community, Sheerwater
- Monday 15 November, Council Chamber, Woking
- Monday 29 November, St Mary’s Centre for the Community, Byfleet
- Monday 6 December, St Andrew’s Church, Goldsworth Park

Residents should visit www.communityforum.woking.gov.uk to book onto any one of these in-person events.

Complementing the roadshows is a questionnaire asking residents for their views on the Council’s future corporate plan and priorities. Whilst anyone can complete the questionnaire, 3,000 copies will be sent to randomly selected households across the

Borough.

All feedback gathered will be used to develop a new five-year Corporate Strategy. Information will also be shared with public sector partners and other community organisations to improve working relationships to make Woking Borough an even better place to live and work.

I urge residents to take this opportunity to engage with the Council and tell us what's important to them either by completing the questionnaire or attending one of the roadshows.”

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REPORT ENDS