

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 26 JULY 2018

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 G S Cundy

“The Home Office has just announced an £8 million fund for children affected by domestic abuse available to charities and councils to set up early intervention courses. Will the Council be applying for funding or assist your Sanctuary in making a bid?”

Reply from Councillor Mrs B A Hunwicks

“Your Sanctuary is in discussions regarding the possibility of submitting a county wide bid to build on the work that is already being delivered in Surrey to support children affected by domestic abuse. This is in conjunction with the other Surrey providers of domestic abuse support services and the key commissioners of these services.”

2. Question from Councillor L M N Morales

“How many voter ID card application forms were printed and handed out during the voter ID trial?”

Reply from Councillor D J Bittleston

“Local Elector Card (LEC) application forms were provided to local political parties on request. One party was issued with 200 application forms in March 2018. The form was also available to download from the WBC website. Unfortunately there are no records of how many people printed out the application form, however it has been recorded that there were 630 visits to the application webpage. Additionally, application forms were available and distributed at the various roadshows carried out in the run up to the election. At the roadshows Officers were also able to take the photographs of 10 electors who needed to apply for a LEC, a hard copy of which was sent to the elector to assist with their application. Additional forms were also sent out on request to electors (both in the post and by email) and were handed to electors attending the Civic Offices. The Returning Officer does not have the exact figure of the forms printed and handed out.”

3. Question from Councillor L M N Morales

“How many of the 43 Woking voter ID cards issued for this year’s election were issued using the attestation form method for each ward?”

Reply from Councillor D J Bittleston

“63 Local Elector Cards were issued for the elections on 3 May 2018. Of these, 12 applications were supported with an attestation to confirm the elector’s identity. 43 voters used their LEC when voting at the polling stations.”

4. Question from Councillor D E Hughes

“I understand that there are proposals for the relocation of Woking Community Transport base? Please can we have assurance that this time it will result in a tangible outcome, with a suitable long term location within the Borough. The issue of this successful organisation outgrowing its location was highlighted as urgent well over a year ago.”

Reply from Councillor C S Kemp

“I am well aware of the challenges that face Woking Community Transport in finding suitable alternative accommodation within the Borough. Due to their specific accommodation requirements, which includes the need to have a significant amount of secure bus parking, it has meant that the numerous potential sites that have previously been identified by Officers have unfortunately not been able to be progressed.

I can confirm however that discussions are taking place with Woking Community Transport on another recently identified potential site, which subject to suitability, availability and affordability could be progressed.”

5. Question from Councillor D E Hughes

“The work on Westfield Common which is funded by WBC and performed in partnership with Surrey Wildlife Trust seems to have come to a halt with the departure of the key employee. Could we have an update on what is happening in this area to get the project back on track?”

Reply from Councillor Mrs B A Hunwicks

“Officers are meeting with Surrey Wildlife Trust this week in order to agree a way forward. When we have a clear plan this will be shared with local Ward Councillors.”

6. Question from Councillor Mrs H J Addison

“Does the Leader of the Council agree with me that following recent newspaper headlines about Hoe Valley School, it is important to note publicly the efforts of our contractor Willmott Dixon in trying to make the school new building the best it can possibly be for the pupils and staff?”

Reply from Councillor D J Bittleston

“Throughout the duration of the project, Willmott Dixon has been fully committed to providing a high quality secondary school and new community leisure facilities. Willmott Dixon has worked closely with Woking Borough Council and the school to provide a development that enables both the school and leisure operator to function well on the same site. Willmott Dixon has also ensured both the school and leisure facilities have been delivered to the latest education and leisure design standards. The school were fully involved at every stage of this process. They are working closely with Council Officers and the school to ensure that snagging items are remedied quickly and have undertaken some works on behalf of the school outside of the contract. I think they are to be congratulated on an excellent project which provides a lasting legacy for Woking with 840 new secondary school spaces and superb sports and recreational facilities.”

7. Question from Councillor S Hussain

“Would the Portfolio Holder agree this years Party in the Park was once again a great success and becoming a County wide attraction.”

Reply from Councillor C S Kemp

“This year’s Party in the Park honoured the WW1 heroes and those who fought for women’s rights. The objectives were met in turns of celebrating the centenary and giving people an opportunity to learn more about the local history with regards WW1 and the Suffragettes. It was a full programme celebrating the theme and there was something for everyone to enjoy. Many local residents, schools and voluntary organisational groups participated. The local community organisations reported a positive response to their engagement with the public.

The turn out for the opening event was spectacular and many visitors turned out for it. Despite the very hot weather and a decision not to screen the World Cup still saw many people turn out for the event, especially returning after the football to see the film in the evening. Party in the Park is now firmly in the annual calendar as a family cultural event in Surrey.”

8. Question from Councillor J E Bond

“West Byfleet Recreation Ground – Consultation Funds

In a very recent email to me plus other councillors about the additional £240,000 offered in the current consultation, Cllr Kemp stated: “because of the ongoing agreement with Marsden’s (sic) there is no room to spend this money in location A until the outcome of the planning application has been determined.”

At the Executive Meeting on June 28th, Cllr Kemp stated: “This decision round the play area is totally separate from the planning process around the license premises that’s been suggested on the site.”

It is therefore important to clarify the following points:

- a) Is the additional £240,000 actually linked to any agreement with Marstons?
- b) If not, why is this money not available in location A?
- c) Was this extra money agreed by the Executive Committee and when was it agreed?
- d) Have Marstons already submitted a validated planning application, if so when?
- e) If the consultation is linked to an ongoing agreement with Marstons, it would not seem possible for residents to sensibly respond without access to this agreement. Can we therefore assume that the Part 2 documents from February 2017 are now fully open to the public?”

Reply from Councillor C S Kemp

“Set out below is the response to your detailed points:-

- a) No;
- b) Officers suggested the possibility of the alternative location and the alternative budget, that is what we have agreed to consult upon;
- c) The additional funds have not yet been approved, we will decide on 13 September;
- d) No. Marston undertook its latest consultation and is preparing its application, we do not have a specific date by which it will be submitted;
- e) The consultation is not linked to the Marstons Agreement and the documents which were presented and agreed at the meeting you attended in February 2017 remain confidential.”

9. Question from Councillor J E Bond

“West Byfleet Recreation Ground – Consultation Views

Will the petitions, protests and views already expressed by the many different local community groups be taken into account in the current consultation?”

Reply from Councillor C S Kemp

“The Council has not received a valid Petition, however The Leader of the Council has agreed that when the Executive considers the matter again following the consultation event, Rebecca Bradshaw and Emma Slaymaker, the initiators of the Petition, will be invited to address the Executive.”

10. Question from Councillor J E Bond

“Pollution on the Parvis Road in West Byfleet

Residents are asking about pollution on the Parvis Road next to the proposed new site for the playground. We know that monitors on the Parvis Road had the two highest emission levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) in Woking Borough in 2006 at 63.4 µgm-3 and 57.8 µgm-3 (NB the relevant Kings’ College report is available), where 40 µgm-3 is considered the safe maximum.

Since then one of the monitors has been moved back from the Parvis Road and the level dropped to 25.9, but the monitor on the M25 Bridge still registered 51.4 in 2016. While it might be possible that the high level on the bridge over the M25 is due to the M25 traffic, NO₂ is denser than air and the high level is consistent with the other reading taken in 2006 on the Parvis Road by Dartnell Park.

Are Executive Committee members comfortable with suggesting that a large children’s playground is moved to a very busy main road where such high levels of pollution have been recorded?”

Reply from Councillor Mrs B A Hunwicks

“In consideration of the proposed new site of a children’s play area towards the Parvis Road end of the recreation ground, this is unlikely to result in any significant environmental impact.

Harmful pollutants from vehicle exhausts, such as nitrogen dioxide, have a considerable dispersion rate on being exhausted, so much so that by the time they reach the pavement, levels are significantly reduced and would not present a health risk. The distance between the road and the proposed playground also includes vegetation, therefore Officers do not believe that children playing in the playground would be exposed to levels in exceedance of government guideline levels. Additionally, it is likely that children would be playing for a limited period within the playground meaning a short term exposure and therefore again the health risk from air pollution would be very low.

Earlier this week the Annual Air Quality 2018 report has been circulated for Members and records improving results for the 2017 period. The Parvis Road site now has an annual mean concentration of 22.2 for 2017 compared with the government objective of 40. The M25 site referred to has also reduced to 42.2 during 2017 from 51.4 in 2016.”

11. Question from Councillor J E Bond

“Gas-fired Electricity Generating Facility

A large number of residents have contacted me about the planning application for a Gas-fired electricity generating facility at the Camphill Industrial Estate in West Byfleet. They are very concerned about the environmental implications of this application.

Would an Executive Member like to make a comment on the noise, health and safety aspects of this application?”

Reply from Councillor A C L Bowes

“As this is a live planning application, it would not be appropriate to comment on matters which are still being reviewed and considered by Planning Officers. Clearly careful consideration will be given to all the detailed technical planning considerations associated with a proposal of this nature including impacts relating to noise and exhaust emissions.”

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REPORT ENDS