

WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 28 July 2014

AGENDA ITEM 8

Questions from Members

1. Question from Councillor B Pollock to the Cabinet Member for Environment

Now that the ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) system is operational or about to become operational across most car parks operated by Wycombe District Council, can the Cabinet Member tell me how many Blue Badge applications have been received from residents and how many of these have involved the issuing of cards for use at pay machines?

Verbal reply to be given by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Mrs J Teesdale

2. Question from Councillor A Turner to the Leader of the Council

At a previous Council meeting it was clearly stated that there was no need for a High Wycombe Town Council, as the Cabinet always agreed to proposals put forward by the High Wycombe Town Committee. How is it then; that a recent request from the Town Committee for an enhanced payment of CIL monies, 25%, rather than the mandatory 15%, was refused by Cabinet?

Verbal reply to be given by the Leader of the Council, Councillor R J Scott

3. Question from Councillor M Knight to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

We are concerned about the increasing pressures on the infrastructure of East Wycombe. These pressures would be exacerbated by some of the proposals in the Local Plan like an additional junction of the M40 and additional housing provision on a Site of Special Scientific Interest in Gomm Valley.

In the case of the proposed junction 3a we are told in the Local Plan Consultation Document that it would "provide the other half of junction 3". This effectively means that those roads between junction 3 and the new junction would become part of an extended motorway junction. These roads are both residential roads and form the major routes in and out of East Wycombe. Indeed the Local Plan Consultation Document states traffic modelling shows an increase in traffic on the London Road, Kingsmead Road and Abbey Barn Lane.

If these proposals go ahead it seems as if East Wycombe will become essentially one big motorway interchange, concreted over and devoid of any green space. Residents will be blighted by congested roads, constant traffic noise and intolerable levels of pollution.

I commend all the work officers have put into the consultation and continue to put in as they develop our new Local Plan.

Would you agree that any new Local Plan should be looking at creative solutions to increase the amount of affordable housing and employment opportunities but in a way that does not involve eliminating important green places such as Gomm Valley and bringing gridlock to East Wycombe?

Verbal reply to be given by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability, Councillor D A Johncock in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability.

4. Question from Councillor R Colomb to the Cabinet Member for Community

The reopening of the Lido on the Rye with enhanced facilities by Fusion under the terms of a long lease was yet another example of this Council delivering its promises at no cost to the local taxpayers.

However, there is one niggling problem over Fusion's management arrangements for the car park which forms part of the complex.

On 8th May this year we received training on car parking and it was made clear to Members that WDC did not make any profit from enforcement. This does not seem to be the case regarding Fusion's management of the Rye Lido Car Park, where the contract for operating it is held by Civil Enforcement Ltd, a Liverpool firm.

Parking charges are minimal. Enforcement is vigorously pursued and there is some doubt as to whether the correct legal procedures are followed particularly after the recent appeal by a Beaconsfield resident to POPLA (the Parking on Private Land Appeals body).

This reflects badly on Wycombe District Council and has caused great disquiet among my constituents.

Would the Cabinet Member take this up with Fusion and see if more equitable arrangements can be made?

Verbal reply to be given by the Cabinet Member for Community, Councillor Mrs J Adey

5. Question from Councillor A E Hill to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

We have heard about the proposal for a new junction on the M40 between Loudwater and Junction 4 Handy Cross, has any consideration been given to the creation of a Junction 4a?

This could assist the opening up of the Booker Area, and take a lot of traffic from an already congested area of Daws Hill and Heath End Road the only east/west route to this proposed junction.

It would also help to expand the specialised aero employment at Booker Airpark. Not to mention that it would also help traffic going to Oxford from Marlow, the H.G.V.'s from Cressex Business Park and help reduce traffic on Handy Cross Junction, which we all know is extremely busy at the best of times. Surely this would be a win for our town and residents? It does seem the most obvious choice.

Verbal reply to be given by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability, Councillor D A Johncock in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

6. Question from Councillor T Snaith to the Cabinet Member for Community

Now that the new Cabinet Member for Community along with her deputy for Housing have now been working together in the role for several weeks, I'm sure the council is expecting great things from the new team!

Can the Cabinet member please tell the Council how she plans to improve the services in her remit for the benefit of residents?

Verbal reply to be given by the Cabinet Member for Community, Councillor Mrs J Adey

7. Question from Councillor M Hanif to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

WDC Local Plan has been one of the biggest talking points across the area since it was released in January this year. There are some controversial issues such as, junction 3A has received mixed reviews, residents of Princess Risborough believe that their village doesn't need the huge development proposed, and concern was expressed about WDC consultation process in which residents in some areas didn't get the leaflets so they have not seen the plans. Some have complained about the lack of details within the leaflet. With such public concerns and uncertainties how WDC propose to move this plan forward?

Verbal reply to be given by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability, Councillor D A Johncock in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

8. Question from Councillor Ms P Lee to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

Could the Cabinet Member for Planning please advise why the slides presented to members at the seminar on the Local Plan, differed from those presented to the Stakeholders; as several key slides appeared to have been omitted from the Stakeholder presentation?

Verbal reply to be given by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability, Councillor D A Johncock in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

9. Question from Councillor Ms J D Wassell to the Cabinet Member for Community

The retention of the Wycombe Museum on the existing site and the additional funding is to be welcomed. Hopefully, this will not preclude the Museum going out with exhibits into community locations. Has this decision been influenced by the debate on a Unitary Council as there are 'uncertainties' as to whether the Council Offices will be required in future?

Verbal reply to be given by the Cabinet Member for Community, Councillor Mrs J Adey

10. Question from Councillor A E Hill to the Leader of the Council

Is it fair that the Group Leaders take precedence over Members when asking questions at full council, as Members could put a question in first?

Verbal reply to be given by the Leader of the Council, Councillor R J Scott

11. Question from Councillor M Knight to the Leader of the Council

Is it time that WDC consider the situation regarding DBS checks for councillors?

Mandatory checks for all councillors may seem burdensome and councillors could regard it as unnecessary for them. However, by the very nature of their role in serving their constituents most councillors will almost inevitably find themselves from time-to-time in positions where they have direct contact with children, young people or more likely, vulnerable adults.

Whilst our position is not unlawful it may not be satisfactory. There may be a risk to community and the Council's image and reputation if the Council does not take reasonable steps to assess and mitigate the risk of councillors with convictions having access to vulnerable people.

The Disclosure and Barring Service gives no direction about councillors, other than for those with specific responsibility for children's services or vulnerable adults.

For all other councillors this leaves a grey area to be decided by each authority. The authority could be left exposed as it cannot be aware of all the activities of its councillors.

Will you agree with me that taking into account our general duty of care and the low cost of checks we should implement these for all councillors?

Verbal reply to be given by the Leader of the Council, Councillor R J Scott

12. Question from Councillor Ms J D Wassell to the Cabinet Member for Community

Bucks County Council will be holding a Scrutiny exercise concerning their grass cutting contract on 30th September 2014. They have already agreed to produce a 'user friendly' map of the areas they are responsible for. It is hoped that Wycombe District Council will participate in the Scrutiny, work collaboratively and ensure that any map includes the areas of responsibility for Housing Associations and the District Council. Can you confirm that you will be actively engaged with this process?

Verbal reply to be given by the Cabinet Member for Community, Councillor Mrs J Adey