

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

16 January 2024

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation

Questions from Cllr David Vigar

To

Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military-Civilian Integration, Heritage, Arts, Tourism, Health and Wellbeing

Question (24-01)

How many Ukrainian individuals and families are now living in Wiltshire under the Homes for Ukraine programme?

Response

Under the Homes for Ukraine programme Wiltshire Council has supported the arrival of 1,589 individuals, of which 406 individuals remain in active sponsorship

Question (24-02)

Does the Council have a known total or estimate for the total number of Ukrainians living in Wiltshire who have arrived since February 2022?

Response

As an estimate we are aware of 1,589 individuals arriving in Wiltshire of which 273 have returned to Ukraine, 122 moved to another country, 54 rematched to another Local Authority area so as an estimate we have 1,140 individuals resident in the Wiltshire Council area

Question (24-03)

Does the Council know how many Ukrainian households have progressed from a sponsorship arrangement into rented accommodation in Wiltshire?

Response

624 individuals have secured private rented accommodation in Wiltshire

Question (24-04)

How much has the Council now received from central Government as a result of the 'tariff' payments of £10,500 per Ukrainian in 2022 and £5,900 since 2023?

Response

Tariff payments made for the year 22/23, total £13,836,475 can be found published below:

[Homes for Ukraine funding, March to May 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/homes-for-ukraine-funding-march-to-may-2022)

Homes for Ukraine funding, June to August 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Homes for Ukraine Funding, September to November 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Homes for Ukraine funding, December 2022 to March 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Due to ongoing reconciliation of tariff payments and lack of allocation advice from DLUHC, it is not possible to confirm current tariff only payments received for 23/24.

Question (24-05)

How much does the Council expect to receive in the future from central Government as a result of the tariff payments of £5,900 per Ukrainian in respect of those now living here but for whom that funding has not yet been received?

Response

Due to ongoing reconciliation of tariff payments and lack of allocation advice from DLUHC, it is not possible to confirm current tariff only payments received this financial year or expected to receive this Financial Year.

Question (24-06)

How much of the tariff funding has been spent?

Response

During 2022/23, £1,243,814 was spent
2023/24 (to Dec 23), £758,049 has been spent and we anticipate a further £5.8m on property acquisitions from now until March 25. Further forecasts being worked through for transport to school, furnishing grants, access to PRS, vetting, ESOL, community integration, employability training & mental health support.

Question (24-07)

In November 2022, the Council said that some of the Government funding would be utilised to enable Stone Circle Housing Company to purchase homes that can be used for Ukraine nationals now and for wider use into the future. How many homes have been purchased by Stone Circle for this purpose?

Response

The Local Authority Housing Fund was subsequently announced and, owing to the timescales, the use of those Government funds was prioritised. No properties have yet been secured through Stone Circle for this specific purpose as we are purchasing properties to be held in the Councils HRA and Ukraine funding to secure 8 properties with 8 identified or in progress this year

Question (24-08)

How much has Wiltshire Council been granted from the Government's £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund to obtain housing for those fleeing conflicts, including in Ukraine and Afghanistan.

Response

Wiltshire Council were granted £4.012m for the LAHF

Question (24-09)

How many homes has the Council acquired with its share of the Local Authority Housing Fund?

Response

The funding provides for 30 units split 24 Ukraine homes and 6 Afghan homes with 28 already completed

Question (24-10)

How many caseworkers is the Council now employing to:

- a) Support Ukrainian refugees as members of the Refugee Resettlement & Migration Service team?
- b) Support Ukrainian refugees in finding independent housing?
- c) Support Ukrainian refugees in finding employment?

Response

The Homes for Ukraine team that sit under the Refugee Resettlement & Migration Service employ 15 members of staff to assist with these tasks; 1 team manager, 2 senior caseworkers, 1 development officer (1 currently on maternity leave) and 10 caseworkers. All staff work on the elements asked above.

There is also 2 members of staff who sit within the larger housing directorate assisting with move on from host accommodation and tenancy support.

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Questions from Andy Janes

To

Cllr Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Finance, Development Management and Strategic Planning

Statement

SUBJECT - Nutrient Neutrality - 6 Ash Walk, PL/2023/02682 et al

Further to my earlier communications and your email of 8 December 2023 where you confirmed :-

"I can confirm that this report will come to Cabinet on 16 January" (Nutrient Neutrality).

In my email of 11 December 2023 to you I asked for clarification as the Schedule of Forthcoming Decisions for the Cabinet by 16 January 2024 was restricted to consideration to further funding of £850,000 from CIL to enable permissions already granted to remain phosphorous neutral and did not address the problem of Warminster being put into special measures or identify the process of how this was done. I saved the Issue Details, attached, as recorded on your website "Revised Nutrient Neutrality Strategy to manage phosphorous in the River Avon Special Area of Conservation and Setting the Price for the Council-led Scheme" - this identified Cllr Nick Botterill as Lead Member.

This does not seem to appear any more on your website or form part of this scheduled meeting contrary to what you advised in your email of 8 December? I have not received a reply from you or any update from the LPA Planning Officer to whom most recently I sent an email dated 14 December 2023. The issue may also overlay the portfolios of Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr. Caroline Thomas , Cllr Phil Alford and Cllr Nick Holder to whom I am copying this communication as if not already aware of this issue are now made aware. The agenda now seems to exclude this important issue for much needed new housing affecting not just my application as above but the whole of Warminster.

In accordance with Item 5 Public Participation of the Agenda for Cabinet Tuesday 16 January 2024 - I would request that this email be submitted as a question/statement to the Cabinet -

The Cabinet together with other key stakeholders, including Natural England, Wessex Water and the Environment Agency approved the Strategic Appropriate Assessment of Developments in Wiltshire Occurring in the River Avon SAC Catchment covering the period between April 2023 and 31st March 2024.

By email dated 18 May 2023 the LPA first raised the issue of Nutrient Neutrality with regard to my planning application and Warminster - "Since my last email, new information has come to light regarding the phosphate issues affecting the River Avon catchment in the Warminster area." Most recently the LPA have confirmed by email dated 9 November 2023 "the strategic Appropriate Assessment (AA) is currently on hold in Warminster, due to the need to find appropriate mitigation for managing phosphorus from the Warminster wastewater treatment works ... unless a bespoke, on-site means of managing wastewater is being proposed and considered acceptable."

So this issue seemingly only affecting Warminster has been allowed to remain unresolved for such an extended time frame apparently with no consultation to a full Cabinet meeting or remedial action being taken by delegated officers. My application is to develop a garden building to a two bed detached house. This is classified as Planned Development and the Cabinet have committed to providing full off-setting measures for such developments. For a single dwelling to have an on-site treatment works is contrary to Building Regulations and the responsibility of Wessex Water where the property to be developed is already connected to mains sewer.

I raised the LPA concern directly with the Director of Infrastructure Development for Wessex Water, Matt Wheldon who confirmed the Warminster Plant is operating well within the legal limits of their issued operating licence with ample headroom for all planned development. This was confirmed by the Environment Agency. Full details were within my email of 27 November 2023 to the LPA Officer dealing.

Save for a decision by the full Cabinet meeting I have asked the LPA who has the authority to take the whole of Warminster out of the AA and was it approved at Cabinet? I have received no answer and I trust this written request for inclusion in the forthcoming Cabinet meeting will provide the much needed clarity over this unresolved issue.

Kind Regards,

Andy Janes

Question (24-11)

Save for a decision by the full Cabinet meeting I have asked the Local Planning Authority who has the authority to take the whole of Warminster out of the Appropriate Assessment and was it approved at Cabinet?

Response

The requirement for nutrient neutrality arises due to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (England and Wales) 2017 (as amended), referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations'. Regulation 63 requires competent authorities to undertake an 'Appropriate Assessment' before granting an authorisation for planning permission if it is likely to have a significant effect on a site protected.

Natural England has advised that wastewater from new overnight accommodation in the River Avon (Hampshire) catchment has a likely significant effect on protected site. An Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken and one way to ensure that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the protected site is for new development to demonstrate phosphorus neutrality.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate phosphorus neutrality. So, whilst the council is helping by delivering mitigation projects where it can, the responsibility to ensure neutrality lies with the developer. The council's interim mitigation strategy seeks to bring forward mitigation projects that can help where it can. However, there are currently no council-led mitigation measures available for development in the Warminster area. It is because of this legal and technical reason that some developments are on-hold, rather than a matter for Cabinet approval.