

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

Meeting: Council

Place: Council Chamber - County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN

Date: Tuesday 18 October 2022

Time: 10.30 am

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 10 October 2022. Additional documents are now available and are attached to this Agenda Supplement.

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Tara Shannon, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 718352 or email tara.shannon@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225)713114/713115.

This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

- 10 **Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendation - Audit & Governance Committee** *(Pages 3 - 4)*
- 18 **Members' Questions** *(Pages 5 - 22)*

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| DATE OF PUBLICATION: 14 October 2022 |
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Wiltshire Council

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**Statement from the Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel
regarding the Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendation - Audit &
Governance Committee**

The Independent Remuneration Panel was appointed in 2021 to undertake a full review of members allowances. This was debated by Full Council in July 2021.

It is best practice that the Panel produce annual reports considering any in-year changes required to the Members' Allowance Scheme. Changes may be prompted by amendments to roles, responsibilities, governance arrangements or government guidance that would warrant a review of a specific area of the scheme.

On 1 March 2022, following a resolution at the Audit & Governance Committee, the Panel was asked to consider the remuneration of a proposed Independent Co-opted Member of that committee. Full Council subsequently resolved to change the constitution to allow the addition of co-opted independent member(s) of the Audit & Governance Committee (17 May 2022).

The Panel met on four occasions between 8 April and 6 May 2022 and based its deliberations upon an assessment of the responsibility, accountability, time, and effort required for the role of independent co-opted member. The Panel considered a range of written and verbal evidence to support its conclusions.

In its Report last year, the Panel recognised the significant extra responsibilities in terms of the council's financial management and regulatory framework undertaken by the Committee and its Chairman - the Panel was therefore convinced that this is a significant role and that as the council has not previously had a similar position, the appointee will have a considerable impact upon the shaping, influence, and direction of the Committee.

The Panel therefore concluded that the independent person should receive remuneration. And given, that ideally the independent member should be someone with relevant experience, that remuneration should be at the higher end of the scale given to other independent members of committees.

John Quinton, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel

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Members Questions Update

Summary

1. A total of eleven questions from Councillors have been received since the last meeting of Full Council on 17 May 2022.
2. Details of questions submitted and the order they will be received at the meeting are shown at Appendix 1. Responses are included at Appendix 2.
3. Three questions were deemed by the Chairman to be operational in nature and in accordance with the constitution a response to those questions was sent by officers.
4. All eleven questions were received before the first deadline of 4 October 2022. Those not deemed operational were therefore guaranteed written responses as attached to this report.
5. The Chairman will go through the questions and responses as is customary, take them as read and giving the questioner an opportunity to ask one relevant supplementary question for each question submitted.

Tara Shannon, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Appendix 1 – Councillor questions summary

Appendix 2 – Questions received

Appendix 1 – Councillor Submitted Questions Summary

Questions will be received in the order listed below as specified in the Constitution.

Questions for Council (attached at Appendix 2)

| Ref | Questioner | Date Received | Written or Verbal | Subject | Cabinet Member |
|-------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---|--|
| 22-11 | Cllr Ruth Hopkinson | 27/09/22 | Written | Ukrainian Refugees - funding | Cllr Nick Botterill |
| 22-14 | Cllr Ian Thorn | 29/09/22 | Written | Permanent tribute to late HM Queen Elizabeth II | Cllr Richard Clewer |
| 22-17 | Cllr Trevor Carbin | 03/10/22 | Written | Fair Tax Campaign and Councils for Fair Tax declaration | Cllr Nick Botterill |
| 22-18 | Cllr Clare Cape | 04/10/22 | Written | Local Plan / Future Chippenham | Cllr Nick Botterill / Cllr Richard Clewer |
| 22-19 | Cllr Kathryn Macdermid | 04/10/22 | Written | Birds Marsh Link Road | Cllr Mark McClelland |
| 22-21 | Cllr David Bowler | 04/10/22 | Written | Standards for response times to enquiries | Cllr Ashley O'Neill |
| 22-15 | Cllr Ian Thorn | 29/09/22 | Written | Mini-budget affecting finances | Cllr Nick Botterill |
| 22-16 | Cllr Ian Thorn | 29/09/22 | Written | Support for retail tenants during the cost of living crisis | Cllr Richard Clewer |

Operational Questions – Officer response

| Ref | Questioner | Date Received | Written or Verbal | Subject | Cabinet Member |
|-------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 22-12 | Cllr Ian Thorn | 29/09/22 | Operational | Local Plan and design guide | Cllr Nick Botterill |
| 22-13 | Cllr Ian Thorn | 29/09/22 | Operational | Planning appeals | Cllr Nick Botterill |
| 22-20 | Cllr David Vigar | 04/10/22 | Operational | Open framework for day care | Cllr Jane Davies |

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Item 18 – Members’ Questions

From Councillor Ruth Hopkinson, Corsham Ladbrook

**To Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Development Control,
Strategic Planning, Finance, Procurement and Commissioning**

Question (22-11)

- a) How much money has been provided to Wiltshire Council to support Ukrainian refugees?
- b) Where does this appear in the budget?
- c) How much has been expended?
- d) Since a lot of the work to house them was done by existing staff volunteering to change departments, has this money been reallocated to the supporting departments e.g. highways

Response:

- a) To date £5.9m of grant funding from government has been received by the Council to support Ukrainian refugees, paid at a rate of £10,500 per person to enable councils to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into local communities.
- b) The grant funding and associated expenditure appears within the service line titled Whole Life Pathway, and is separately ring-fenced in a specific budget code for Homes for Ukraine.
- c) To date £1.1m of external costs have been spent but further internal costs such as staffing costs are being assessed and will be funded by the grant.
- d) Analysis is underway to identify the cost of staff supporting the Ukrainian Refugee support work and that will be funded from the grant.

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From Councillor Ian Thorn, Calne Central

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Question (22-14)

What plans are there for a permanent tribute to the late HM Queen Elizabeth II in Wiltshire?

Response:

Wiltshire Council plans to plant a tree in tribute to the late HM Queen Elizabeth II. This will form a part of the successful Queen’s Green Canopy (QGC) which is a UK-wide tree planting initiative which continues until the end of the current tree planting season in March 2023. The tree will be planted in front of County Hall, Trowbridge and will use compost derived from flowers that were left in the period of mourning. It is intended a small ceremony will be held in the autumn to plant the tree, with the Leader, Chairman and Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire present.

Looking more widely, at present it is not known what other plans may be put in place by various public, private, and voluntary organisations to mark the life and contribution of HM The Queen to the country. Wiltshire Council will seek to support these plans as they become available in due course.

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Item 18 – Members’ Questions

From Councillor Trevor Carbin, Holt

**To Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet member for Development Control,
Strategic Planning, Finance, Procurement and Commissioning**

Question (22-17)

What’s your opinion on the campaign for fair tax run by the Fair Tax Foundation, and should Wiltshire Council sign up to the [Councils for Fair Tax declaration](#)?

Response:

The Council supports appropriate payment of all taxes due. Taxation is levied in order to fund a huge array of public services as well as seeks to counter financial inequalities, both locally and nationally.

My understanding is that the Fair Tax Foundation is primarily focussed on corporation tax which is a tax payable by companies following a complex legislative framework. The definition of profit for corporation tax purposes is set out in legislation and is not the same as the profit/loss shown in a company’s annual accounts.

Wiltshire Council as a local authority does not pay corporation tax although it deals with many entities which do. All taxes should be paid in line with the law and the regulations in place and being in breach of these leads to significant consequences which can include criminal proceedings. Wiltshire Council will not knowingly engage with entities which are in breach of their legal obligations whether that is with respect to matters of taxation or indeed any other aspect.

The Council’s Corporate Procurement Strategy provides a robust framework for the council and focuses on the delivery of corporate and social goals, using transparent processes. The council commits to meeting its obligations to ensure that all procurement activity addresses relevant social, economic and environmental standards, and that entities the council contracts with meet their legal obligations.

The Council also sets out its support for appropriate taxation and a zero tolerance approach in its Anti-Tax Evasion Policy.

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Item 18 – Members’ Questions

From Councillor Clare Cape, Chippenham Pewsham

To Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet member for Development Control, Strategic Planning, Finance, Procurement and Commissioning and Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Question (22-18)

Please provide a comprehensive updates to Full Council on the following:

- a) Progress to date on the Local Plan; the expected date of publication for Reg 19 consultation; and the expected date that the Local Plan will take effect. Please explain the reasons for the delay and the impact on planning applications during the interim.
- b) Wiltshire Council’s position on the remaining “Half a HIF” (Future Chippenham project). We are aware that the project has been paused awaiting the Homes England decision, what is the reason given for this extended delay? We know that “non-abortive” or sunk costs by Wiltshire Council have been stopped; please report these costs incurred to Full Council for full transparency.
- c) What is the relationship / dependency between the delay to the Local Plan and the delay to the “Half a HIF” (Future Chippenham)?
- d) What work is taking place to address the 5 year land supply issue; and to negotiate down the target housing numbers for Wiltshire which are considered by many to be excessive?

Response:

- a) Good progress is being made on the Local Plan Review and it remains a priority for the Council. The Environment Select Committee on 20 September 2022 received an update on the Local Plan, at which it was reported that a revised timeline would be published this month through an updated Local Development Scheme on the Council’s website. This is likely to push back the start of consultation until summer 2023. The reason for this is to ensure that

the draft Plan is based on a sound and robust evidence base. In the interim, planning applications will continue to be determined against the adopted Local Plan for Wiltshire, which comprises a number of documents, and any relevant made neighbourhood plans.

- b) Discussions have taken place with Homes England regarding the original GDA and the Council's preference to support and promote a scheme to the south of Chippenham and as such a revision of the GDA. The Council's request is being considered by Homes England internal processes and at present there is no timescale as to when a decision will be reached. The Council has published total spend on Future Chippenham in response to a previous question to Cabinet on the 27 September 2022 of circa £ 12.956m as of that date. As stated work on future Chippenham has paused subject to the outcome of discussions with Homes England. It is not possible to report on "non-abortive or sunk cost" until the discussions have been concluded. When discussions are concluded the outcome will be reported to Cabinet to ensure full transparency.
- c) There is no relationship between the two.
- d) Alongside updating the Council's Local Plan, the Council is seeking to improve Wiltshire's five-year housing land supply position by working with developers to bring forward allocated and permitted sites, through approving new planning applications for homes in the right locations and supporting communities to bring forward new sites for housing through their neighbourhood plans. The five-year housing land supply for Wiltshire is assessed against the figure that comes from the Government's standard method, which is set out in national planning policy and guidance. As such, there is no ability to negotiate these down.

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From Councillor Kathryn MacDermid, Chippenham Hardenhuish

To Councillor Mark McClelland, Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste, Street Scene and Flooding

Question (22-19)

- a) As the local member for Chippenham Hardenhuish, may I expect to be informed of the opening date of the link road at Birds Marsh; and be involved at the opening event? Will you confirm that this will happen?
- b) What speed limit has been decided for the Birds Marsh link road?

Response:

- a) The link road was opened on 7th October without ceremony.
- b) The speed limit has been agreed as 40mph.

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Item 18 – Members’ Questions

From Councillor David Bowler, Royal Wootton Bassett South & West

To Councillor Ashley O’Neill, Cabinet Member for Governance, IT, Broadband, Digital, Licensing, Staffing, Communities and Area Boards

Question (22-21)

Have standards been set in relation to response times to enquiries from members of the public and Councillors? How is this monitored so consistent standards are met? What is the acceptable response time to members of the public enquiries?

Response:

Paragraph 6.5.8 of Protocol 1 of the Wiltshire Council Constitution (Member-Officer Relations) states that:

Emails and telephone calls [from Members]:

- *will be acknowledged within two working days of receipt, giving details of an alternative contact if the officer concerned is absent from the office;*
- *a substantive response will be provided within ten working days of receipt. If that is not possible an explanation will be given as to the reason for the delay, what action is being taken, and when a response will be sent.*

Article 3 of Part 2 of the Wiltshire Council Constitution (Articles) sets out rights and responsibilities of Members of the Public. At Para 3.1.4 it states:

Members of the public have the right to:

- *contact the Council by telephone, post, email, fax or in person. An acknowledgement will be sent within 2 working days, and a full response to all written correspondence within 15 working days from the day your correspondence is received. Where legislation dictates otherwise, e.g. Freedom of Information, different timescales may apply. If that is not possible an explanation will be given as to the reason for the delay, what action is being taken, and when a response will be sent;*

Monitoring is carried out within the service or team responding.

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From Councillor Ian Thorn, Calne Central

**To Councillor Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member for Development Control,
Strategic Planning, Finance, Procurement and Commissioning**

Question (22-15)

How has/ will the Chancellor’s mini budget affect council finances?

Response:

At this point there is insufficient information to fully understand the effect of government’s ‘mini budget’ announcement last week. Of note and more concern is the effect of the significant increases in inflation seen nationally which are under constant review, and an assessment of the impact has been included in the recent Q1 budget monitoring report presented to Cabinet on 27 September. Updates to these assessments will be included in the next report due to be presented to Cabinet in November. Announcements from government on the department spending allocations will be under careful review as we move towards the Autumn budget statement and Provisional Finance Settlement expected in December.

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Item 18 – Members’ Questions

From Councillor Ian Thorn, Calne Central

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Question (22-16)

What more can be done to support Wiltshire Council’s own retail tenants during the current cost of living crisis?

Response:

We recognise that the last few years have been very difficult for businesses and this looks like to continue into the immediate future, and we are committed to doing what we can to support the local economy. As a landlord, we did not agreed to any rent reductions during the Covid pandemic but have provided support to businesses in other ways – through business rates reliefs and grants, this approach also applied during these difficult financial times.

The Council cannot provide discounts from the market rates for individual businesses, as the retail units in Calne are part of our commercial investment portfolio for the purposes of generating income that goes towards supporting council services. That part of the Council lets units at a market rent, and we have no vacant units within our retail portfolio in Calne.

As part of the Cost of Doing Business workstream officers are considering how best to support the retail and wider economy, building on the successful network and partnerships with businesses to ensure that intelligence on impacts to the local economy is gathered and shared appropriately, and that businesses are signposted to the support they require. Intelligence will look particularly on the 6-month support timescale, and what sectors may face particular challenges beyond that period.

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