

Questions under Procedure Rule 11.2 for Council

Q1. Question from Councillor Ennis to Cabinet Member for Leisure & Major Projects

“Given the importance of the New Skate Park Project in Burntwood to our community and considering that funding was confirmed by Burntwood Town Council as early as March and by Lichfield District Council in April, with no planning permissions required and the site being on District Council land, could you clarify why, nearly six months later, this project remains incomplete. Can you provide assurances on the timeline for its completion, given its significance to local residents and young people?”

Response from the Cabinet Member for Leisure & Major Projects

“Microsport were engaged in April 2024 to deliver a new skatepark at Burntwood Leisure Centre. In September 2024 the procurement exercise was completed and contracts awarded in early October 2024 with the first payment being made to the contractor so they could start the manufacturing process for the new skatepark, which is expected to take around 8 weeks. Installation will start in January 2025 and be finished by the end of January 2025.

6 months may sound like a long timeframe from approval to proceed to issuing of a the contract but there are a number of actions that need to take place for us to get to awarding of contracts.

1. Engaging with suppliers to ensure we draw up an appropriate design for the site is key and can take a number of weeks to complete.
2. Once we then have a suitable design for the site we have to engage with local users to see if the site will be useable to them. Engagement can take a number of weeks, and whilst we always try to deliver all users want, location and budget does not always allow this.
3. A redesign then takes place
4. The final scheme is put out to tender, the tender is then evaluated and awarded to the winning bidder.
5. Contracts are awarded and then works can be scheduled in.

The above is a high level process of what is happened to date and has taken place to ensure we deliver a fit for purpose and safe new skatepark for the residents of Burntwood to enjoy using.”

Q2. Question from Councillor Ashton to the Leader of the Council

“In the LWMTS annual report, we see in the section headed Directors’ Report, ‘Following the Council’s Internal Audit review of the company this year, we will engage with the Council over whether additional representation on the board should be introduced’. Can the Leader

please provide a concrete schedule and define the form this engagement will take, together with the current thinking on this matter by the Leader and Cabinet?"

Response from the Leader of the Council

"The Cabinet and I welcome the September 2024 internal audit findings into LWM governance arrangements, which concluded there was reasonable assurance and made four recommendations, one medium priority and three low priority. Cllr Andy Smith, the Shareholder Representative is engaging with the Chair of LWM, Cllr Alex Farrell regarding the recommendations. Initial discussions are positive, and it is envisaged that any changes will be actioned by the end of the financial year. In my view, the board membership should be as small as possible, while ensuring it is broad enough to be robust, and I know that is what both Cllr Farrell and Cllr Smith are looking into."

Q3. Question from Councillor Galvin to the Cabinet Member for Operational Services, Parks & Waste

"I am pleased to see investments already made in the parks of Burntwood and the plans to invest further. As you are aware in Burntwood Park £14500 has been invested in the netting to prevent stray balls, £6500 has been spent improving the car parking facilities and a further £2500 is allocated for the goal posts. I would like to ask what the timescale is that this football pitch at Burntwood Park be ready for the people to use? This is a valuable resource and as you know we have recently lost designated football pitches like this can I also ask reassurance that this money already spent will not be wasted due to the work not being completed?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for Operational Services, Parks & Waste

"Thank you for your question Cllr Galvin and I know we have spoken about this matter several times and been on site together at Burntwood Park as we share concern about the possible unintended consequences that the usage of this football pitch may have on residents, especially elderly people.

We also understand local concerns about possible anti-social behaviour and I therefore visited the Park on several occasions and also met with residents and also been in touch regularly by telephone with some of them and I also appreciate that you have informed me that you have increased your visits to the park too.

The council received a local petition in relation to this new proposed football pitch at Burntwood Park from nearby residents.

They are concerned about potential additional noise, balls being kicked against the walls of their homes and balls going into their gardens causing likely damage, and potential anti-social behaviour from youths congregating around the pitch on none match days.

In line with the council's petitions policy, this has been considered by myself as Cabinet Member for Operational Services, Parks & Waste.

Clearly as a caring council, we have listened to these concerns and our ambition is to therefore put in place a series of mitigating measures including additional planting, the moving of benches and a slight amendment to the location of the pitch lines, in order to address neighbour concerns.

The pitch size is designed for younger teams and we are engaging with local teams who we are confident should operate the use of the pitch to a very high standard.

We also plan to monitor the use of the pitch initially to ensure concerns about potential anti-social behaviour are addressed and the community is reassured.

Our next planned visit to explain all this to the residents is set for Thursday 17 October.”

Q4. Question from Councillor Bennion to the Cabinet Member for Housing & Local Plan and the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Ecology & Climate Change

“Residents of all three parishes of Mease Valley Ward and Elford face the prospect of the construction of a sewage pipeline from Packington in Northwest Leicestershire to the River Tame near Elford. Disruption to farm businesses and landowners (I declare an interest as the proposed route crosses my land) and for some, the uncertainty regarding future access to irrigation water, is likely to result in economic loss. For residents, both the disruption and the future likelihood of an increase in flooding events, as a major driver of the project is the unlocking of development upstream in the catchment of the River Mease in Leicestershire, are major causes of anxiety. Can the portfolio holder assure me that this Council will act in support of residents and businesses in the affected parishes, by pressing for a review of the decision by the Secretary of State, or if the project does go ahead using all its available power and influence to defend the interests of local businesses and to oppose further development upstream where that is likely to exacerbate flooding downstream in Lichfield District?”

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing & Local Plan and the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Ecology & Climate Change

“Unfortunately Local Planning Authorities have no direct jurisdiction over the laying of sewage pipe networks, as no planning permission is required for these works. As Cabinet Member, I'm happy to meet with you to discuss this situation in more detail.”

Q5. Question from Councillor Bragger to the Cabinet Member for High Street & Economic Development

“What has been the impact of introducing parking charges in the evening on:

- Use of the car parks
- Local hospitality business trade and staff parking

- Organisation that use evening volunteers

Has the Council had any discussions with the current owners of the precinct about returning to the Council managing their car parks with the same charges regime as Council car parks? This would be easier for visitors and residents.”

Response from the Cabinet Member for High Street & Economic Development

“The council introduced evening charges into the city in January 2024. We track footfall in the city on a monthly basis and in general footfall has been increasing month on month, with an average 5% increase overall since the charges were introduced, and a 7% increase in evening footfall when compared to the previous year.

Whilst these figures are not an absolute indicator, when you consider the recent new businesses, openings including Ricco and Loren, The Quill and Scholar, and The Beacon, all of whom rely on evening trade and staffing, together these would suggest that the evening parking charges we introduced are not a significant issue for their trade or their staff.

Whilst we had a couple of concerns raised when the charges were first introduced, we’ve not had any recent feedback in relation to the impact of the charges on voluntary organisations. If however, Councillor Bragger or any other councillor has any specific concerns they would like to share with us, we will happily feed these into any future review of car park charges we carry out. We regularly review car park charges to ensure we support local businesses, organisations and residents who use our city car parks, as well as bring in sufficient income to support the car parks’ ongoing maintenance.

I can confirm that the council has not been in any discussions regarding managing the Three Spires Shopping Centre car parks.”

Q6. Question from Councillor Bragger to The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Ecology & Climate Change

“As the UK Shared Prosperity Fund comes to an end in April 2025, I understand there is a risk not all the money will be spent as planned. I also understand that under current rules any unspent money will have to be returned. What plans have been made to ensure any unspent money is redirected to projects in the district?”

Response from The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Visitor Economy, Ecology & Climate Change

“The Cabinet is committed to ensuring that all UKSPF funds are spent by the end of the financial year. Funds are fully allocated, project leads are submitting monthly updates, and the project board, chaired by Cllr Silvester-Hall, is closely monitoring delivery. In the event that a project will not be able to spend its full allocation, the project board will redirect the monies to other projects in-line with the agreed outcomes in our Investment Plan.”

Q7. Question from Councillor Taylor to Cabinet Member for Community Engagement

“With the recent news that Karen Green is moving on from the role of Commander of Lichfield Police, could the cabinet member give us his thoughts about the lack of stability in the senior leadership of our force?”

Response from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement

“We are of course hugely disappointed that Karen Green is moving onto new challenges at the police headquarters, however we wish her the very best of luck in her new role and look forward to seeing her excel at helping the force to drive forward positive transformation and change. Karen is being replaced by Paul Finlayson who is a hugely experienced officer who has worked alongside Karen to support Lichfield District for many years, including playing an active role in the district’s community safety partnership. We look forwards to continuing our already positive relationship with Paul and his team into the future.”

Q8. Question from Councillor Norman to the Cabinet Member for Housing & Local Plan

“When an application is granted “temporary planning permission” in order to safeguard the character of a site, in accordance with Policy BE1 of the Local Plan Strategy and the National Planning Practice Guidance, how many times can this temporary permission be further granted, and can he give me three examples where this has happened more than twice for an application in Lichfield District?”

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing & Local Plan

There is no statutory limit on the renewal of temporary permissions for developments. However, in terms of enforceability a development without the benefit of planning permission may become immune from formal action if it has been in situ for more than 4 or 10 years – dependent upon the type of development (i.e. if it is a domestic dwelling or a commercial/business use). In consideration of the merits of assessing a renewal of a permission, the expediency of repeated renewal versus finding a permanent solution is always sought and encouraged.

Applications given temporary permission more than twice are listed below. Significantly, there are only another 2 instances where temporary permission has been granted twice.

Site Address	
Marketing Suite,	

Wellington Crescent Fradley Park Lichfield	
Reference	Proposal
02/00969/FUL	Erection of a temporary marketing suite and security cabin
07/01090/FUL	Renewal of permission 02/00969/FUL: Erection of a temporary marketing suite and security cabin
12/01098/FUL	Renewal of permission 07/01090/FUL: Erection of a temporary marketing suite and security cabin
17/01526/FUL	Renewal of permission 12/01098/FUL: Erection of a temporary marketing suite and security cabin

Site Address	
Haselour Hall Haselour Lane Harlaston Tamworth Staffordshire B79 9JT	
Reference	Proposal
11/00789/FUL	Change of use of stables and land for use as stud farm; erection of temporary agricultural and equine workers dwelling and retention of small stable block
15/00019/FUL	Retention of temporary mobile home for agricultural and equine worker (approved under planning permission 11/00789/FUL)
18/00417/FUL	Retention of temporary mobile home for agricultural and equine worker (three years) and continued equestrian use of land
20/00515/FUL	Permanent retention of a three bedroom equestrian/agricultural worker's dwelling (mobile home)

Site Address	
Land For Parking At Units 14 & 15, Gorse Lane	
Reference	Proposal
98/00497/FUL	Renew temporary permission for the storage of vehicles using runways and adjacent land
00/00968/FUL	Storage of vehicles using runways and adjacent land
02/00021/FUL	Renew permission 00/00968/FUL - Storage of vehicles using runways and adjacent land

Site Address	
Longson Hall School Longdon, Rugeley WS15 4PT	

Reference	Proposal
L900115	Temporary permission for portacabin for classroom
L920295	Renew permission L900115 temporary classroom
L930500	Renewal of permission L920295 temporary classroom

Q9. Question from Councillor Evans to the Leader of the Council

“The pavilion at Redwood Park, owned by Lichfield District Council and leased by Platinum Boxing is, in my view, a building that has great potential as a much-needed community space in Burntwood. I commend Platinum Boxing for the work they do with young people in particular, so I would like to ask the Leader if he will look at Redwood as an under-utilised asset, with a view to maximising its potential?”

Response from The Cabinet Member for Operational Services, Parks & Waste

“As the cabinet member responsible for parks, I have, together with Cllr Andy Smith, commissioned vision statements for each council-owned park across the district, setting out their potential and opportunities, as well as identifying funding options.

These statements will be developed through engagement with local ward councillors, clubs, user groups and local residents.

A first vision statement has recently been completed for Beacon Park, and Redwood Park will be the second vision statement we prepare, with work kicking off this week.

The vision statement will aim to address the recognised issues with the Pavilion and ensure the potential of the park and Pavilion are maximised.”