

Agenda item no. 6 - Questions from members of the Council

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Cllr O'Driscoll, Ross West	The Section 106 agreement for the Orchards development provides for a footpath and cycle link to the Town and Country Trail. Why, following the MOD's indication that it intends to cease using the adjoining rifle range, has the Council not sought access to deliver this link, and can the Leader assure residents that its delivery is not being delayed to protect the future development value of Council-owned land?	Leader
Response: Thank you for your question. The Council remains committed to delivering the footpath and cycle link, recognising its importance to the local community in providing access to the Town and Country Trail. The Section 106 contribution for the scheme remains available, and we have actively sought to progress the link, subject to the necessary permissions and approvals. Although the Ministry of Defence has indicated that it intends to cease using the adjoining rifle range, the land remains in its ownership and the Council requires the MOD's agreement and the necessary legal access before the scheme can proceed. We have today (7 October) further written to the MOD to encourage progress in this issue. The Council's approach is therefore being driven by deliverability, land ownership and legal access, and not by any intention to protect the future development value of Council-owned land. I have asked that you are kept updated as this matter progresses.			
Supplementary question: It's disappointing it's taken 6 months to finally get a letter sent off to the MOD. I was emailing officers and councillors back in April and May this year and it was front page news on some of the local papers. Why has it taken so long? Why has it taken a member a question from a member of the public and a question from myself for the letter to the MOD to be sent this week, literally two days ago?			
Response to supplementary question: Thank you for the question from the member of the public and from the member. As soon as I heard about the situation I insisted that rather than plan a letter to the MOD that we write one instantly. When these matters are brought to my attention and I'm aware that there's a time lag it is unacceptable so these things need to be grasped. We all know how long we all know how long these projects take and any delay on our part is not going to help the situation. So you have my assurance that the matter will be pursued with more vigour and you've had that assurance heard today from Councillor Price that officers will have that constructive dialogue with the MOD to see if we can get this situation sorted out as much as possible and as soon as possible.			

MQ 2	Cllr Proctor, College	What actions has the council taken since the last council meeting on 24th July to accelerate the spend of the Section 106 backlog?	Cabinet member Culture and Environment
Response: The Council has taken a number of steps to improve the delivery of Section 106 since July including the following: • The integration of the Section 106 function within the Highways and Public Realm Team, enabling greater access to management structures, technical expertise, and delivery resources. • Strengthened collaboration and knowledge sharing with Planning Services to improve coordination and expedite planning and delivery processes. • The proactive pursuit of funding opportunities to supplement Section 106 contributions to enable delivery of larger or more comprehensive projects where costs exceed available s106 funding. • Enhanced stakeholder engagement and project development through attendance at parish and town council meetings and liaison with third parties to ensure priorities are understood and schemes are appropriately scoped at an early stage to expedite delivery. We recognise that there is still more to do and I am confident that the new management arrangements will help deliver more schemes.			
Supplementary question: It's good to see that tangible actions have been taken. Currently, the section 106 backlog increases at roughly half a million pounds a year. Will these actions reverse that trend and how long does the cabinet member estimate it will take to get the backlog down to 7 million pounds?			
Response to supplementary questions: It's hard to know exactly when this is change will be under review but what is known is that at the end of June the spend was £238,000. By the end of September that had gone up to £760,000. So the early indications are positive but clearly we'll be keeping that under review.			
MQ 3	Cllr Mason, Weobley	Not a day seems to go by without acknowledgement of the transformative, rapidly evolving, but existentially risky, nature of Artificial Intelligence. According to the minutes of the audit and governance committee in June 2025, the draft annual governance statement 2024/2025 reported that: "The council has an AI ethics and governance board comprised of membership across different areas of the council who have oversight to ensure ethical use and accountability, to evaluate the	Cabinet member Finance and corporate services

		risks and harms associated with AI. The board will evolve as this technology develops and the council's reliance on it increases or the way it is used changes...." And earlier that year, at the Scrutiny Management Board in March, the minutes suggest that the board's membership and terms of reference could be shared.	
Response: AI technology is developing at a rapid rate, and the council takes its use and any associated risks and harms extremely seriously. The AI Ethics & Governance Board has been incorporated into the work of the existing Information Governance Steering Group which meets bi-monthly. The Board's membership and ToR can be shared and are available through the link below: (Public Pack)SUPPLEMENT - Attachments to Member Question - MQ3 Agenda Supplement for Council, 09/10/2026 10:00			
Supplementary question: Thank you for the clarification as to how management of artificial intelligence within the council has evolved and for acknowledging the strategic importance of how the council uses AI. Of its nature, apparently small decisions about AI can have extremely strategic consequences, often irreversibly letting the genie out of the bottle, and that therefore merits a particularly democratic overview. Can you therefore please confirm as the portfolio holder responsible that you have sight of the minutes and decisions made and are comfortable with the recordkeeping and governance of AI related decisions?			
Response to supplementary question: I am the portfolio holder for AI and I can confirm that I have reviewed the latest minutes of the meeting which was held in June. There was no meeting in August and the last meeting in September and we're waiting the minutes to be typed up and I'll then review them. But I can confirm to you that I'm fully aware of all the issues.			