

Public Document Pack



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Please find attached Questions received after the publication of the agenda (Pages 3-4) and Readibus Outside Body report (Pages 5-6).

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QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

18 MARCH 2021

PUBLIC QUESTIONS RECEIVED AFTER DESPATCH OF THE AGENDA

CP7

Keith Kerr has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

My question relates to the Equality Plan on this evening's agenda. In May 2021 there will be local elections in Wokingham Borough for Councillors and a Thames Valley Police Commissioner. The control of Wokingham Borough Council is likely to be on a knife edge and therefore, keenly contested. Just under 12% of Wokingham Borough Council Residents are non-whites and they are generally clustered in concentrated areas of the Borough. As the current Leader of the Council. What will you tell them about how you and the Conservative led Council has positively engaged with the non-white community since their indignation about your Facebook post and your negative statements about Black Lives Matter Last Spring/Summer?

CP8

Pol Exeter has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

The BME Forum was "paused for the Council to find and fund an independent facilitator to take stock and reflect on its direction" by the acting Chair five months ago. What was the outcome of the independent facilitator's reflection and when will the conclusions be made public?

CP9

Jeffrey Hinds has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

As Leader of Wokingham Borough Council, you claimed that equality was hard wired into the Council's DNA. Of the £129,697,410 (million) budget of the Council for 2020/21, what percentage was allotted for equality initiatives, and how much was spent on equality initiatives for those with protect characters as defined under the Equalities Act 2010?

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES ANNUAL FEEDBACK FORM

MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2020-2021

Name of Organisation	ReadiBus
Name of Member	Guy Grandison
Capacity appointed, e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Trustee/director
Number of meetings called to attend	8
Number of Meetings attended	6
Reasons for not attending, if appropriate	Other Meetings, work commitments and paternity leave
<p>Please give a brief synopsis of the key areas covered by the Outside Body during the past Municipal Year.</p> <p>ReadiBus is the dial-a-ride bus service for people with restricted mobility in and around Reading. The bus service is for people of all ages who cannot make use of the mainstream bus services offered in the area. When ReadiBus started out, mainstream bus services and other forms of public transport were much more difficult for people with restricted mobility to use.</p>	
<p>What background /briefing information did you receive from the organisation on its constitution, aims, objectives etc and was it sufficient to enable you to carry out your appointed role?</p> <p>Before all Meetings, we receive additional information from the General Manager and other Trustees as to the operational capacity and financial stability of ReadiBus. This information is highly detailed and informative and should further information be required then all that is needed to be done is ask the General Manager for further information either before or during a meeting.</p>	
<p>Please indicate how effective you think the organisation is, e.g. has it met or contributed to the Council's Vision and Priorities and give examples to illustrate your reply?</p> <p>The past 12 months has been one of the most challenging that Readibus has faced in the forty years that the charity has existed.</p> <p>The covid pandemic impacted the organisation hard but through sheer determination and loyalty of the staff and trustees that the organisation has survived and helped thousands of its users and beyond get through the darkest days of lockdown. Myself and</p>	

the other board members are so thankful to the staff of Readibus in keeping users safe and connected throughout those dark times.

Financially Readibus is in a bit of a holding pattern with a balanced set of accounts but with traditional fundraising opportunities cut off new means have been explored and with Readibus keeping contract with its users the loyalty and support has grown over the past 12 months.

The Service contract with Reading Council a major source of income has been renewed and Readibus are satisfied and grateful for the continued support of Wokingham Borough Council. There is contention with another main council in the area which has reduction in service outside of the greater reading area and an impact on reputation.

The next 12 months as we move out of the Pandemic situation will I feel show that the investment Readibus has made in its people and users over the past 40 years will go bare dividends.

ReadiBus has some challenges ahead and is rising to meet them and they deserve the continued support of Wokingham Borough Council as they perform a vital community service to local residents and there is more that WBC can do to support them beyond the purely financial side.

It is a fantastically run organisation both in terms of passion and belief in what is being done and has been running in the great reading area for 40 years now.
long may it continue.

Do you think the Council should continue to be represented on this Outside Body?

Yes

Please state the rationale FOR OR AGAINST having a representative

They provide a vital community service for thousands of WBC residents.

Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful

Nothing currently

Representative: Guy Grandison

Signed: *Guy Grandison*

Dated: 16/03/21