

CITY OF SHEFFIELD

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 6TH APRIL 2016

COPIES OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THERETO

Questions

Answers

Questions of Councillor Colin Ross to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Julie Dore)

1. In relation to the Devolution Deal, when will you be able to share details of “local agreement” on governance arrangements?

The governance arrangements are currently being developed.
2. Will there be any further consultation on the Devolution Deal? If so, what form will this take and how will the public be involved?

The consultation on the initial deal has been concluded. There will be statutory consultation led by Government on the new governance arrangements.
3. Given that the target date for announcing a partner for the Retail Quarter was September 2015, when can we expect an announcement on Sheffield Retail Quarter, given promised dates have already been missed?

We made an announcement on this issue last week, the full demolition of the Grosvenor House Hotel block is to start within three months and have issued notices with current tenants to leave the building. We are in active conversations with John Lewis and expect to announce the first phase of the SRQ very shortly involving retail and a major blue chip company.
4. Are all 3 of the consortia still actively involved or have any been eliminated?

No-one has been eliminated.
5. Do you believe that city wide bodies paid for through tax payer’s money should be politically neutral?

The Sheffield Executive Board’s website states

Function

Sheffield Executive Board (SEB) exists to provide leadership within the city on issues of city-wide significance, and to advocate for Sheffield collectively to Government, the European Union and other national and international forums.

The SEB is comprised of leaders

from across the private, public, voluntary, community and faith sectors in Sheffield. It is a non-statutory body which can also be characterised as the "Group Board" for Sheffield's public services, each of which continues to operate independently within their own accountability framework.

The SEB will ensure that the principles of fairness, social justice, cohesion, sustainability and opportunity are central to all its activity.

For those interested in the work SEB are doing in Sheffield, follow this link to download and read the Board's [Annual Report](#)..

The Board has up to now been chaired by myself, I do not believe it has been a particularly political environment

6. Would you please make a statement on the appointment of former Home Secretary and Labour Lord David Blunkett as Chair of the Sheffield Executive Board?

It was agreed by the Sheffield Executive Board that we would move to appoint an independent chair and Lord Blunkett has taken on that role, at the request of the Board.

Lord Blunkett clearly has a fantastic array of experience and skills that he can use to benefit the city in this position and I look forward to working with him.

Sheffield Executive Board made a statement when this was originally announced, you can contact them for a copy of this.

7. Could you please state what open process was undertaken to appoint the new chair of the Sheffield Executive Board and where and when was it advertised?

I did not oversee this process myself and did not personally input into the appointment process, however, I was consulted on the proposal to appoint Lord Blunkett. If you would like details on this I suggest you contact Sheffield Executive Board direct. As I have said this was not something I led

Question of Councillor Joe Otten to Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport)

How is Sheffield currently faring in relation to its air quality targets?

Sheffield is still in breach of EU Air Quality Limit Values relating to Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) gas which should have been met by 1st January 2010. A key contributor is road traffic, in particular diesel vehicles, where engine technology is not performing as expected in urban areas like Sheffield.

In terms of the standards set by the EU for fine Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) dust pollution, all our monitoring stations are indicating that we are in compliance, although there is no safe limit for this pollutant.

Questions of Councillor Jack Clarkson to Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport)

1. The Lower Don Valley area of the city has now been classified by the Council and Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) as being a 'high risk flood zone' which has resulted in many struggling businesses having to pay a new levy for flood defence each year. Is the Administration aware that this has greatly increased Insurance premiums for businesses, and does this decision really assist businesses or further compound their struggle for survival in the Lower Don Valley?

The Environment Agency classify areas into flood risk zones not the Council or Chamber. The Council has responded to the devastating 2007 flooding and the risk of future flooding in the Lower Don Valley (LDV) by developing a flood protection scheme that will reduce that risk. The Business Improvement District levy contributes to the cost of that scheme and its future maintenance. The implementation of the levy was overwhelmingly supported by businesses when balloted in 2015. The increased standard of flood protection that the new defences will give, will lead to reduced insurance premiums for businesses in the LDV as well as supporting economic growth in the area.

2. The Meadowhall Shopping Centre was indeed flooded during the floods, resulting in its closure for some time to allow flood waters to be cleared from the premises. Can you please explain why the Meadowhall Shopping Centre has not been designated as being in a

The Meadowhall Centre has designed and built its own flood defences which have been recognised by the Environment Agency on their flood maps for the area as providing a high standard of protection against flooding.

high flood zone and exempt from the levy, imposed by the Council and SCCI unlike other businesses in the Lower Don Valley?

3. The City Council working alongside SCCI is encouraged to support businesses, encourage inward investment, create employment and ultimately create wealth for the City of Sheffield, however whilst levies are being imposed on struggling businesses such as a yearly flood levy, what assistance, if any, is going to be given to restore confidence in the business sector?
4. Is it correct that Meadowhall Shopping Centre has made a contribution of £5,000 to the City Council flood defence system?

Therefore, the Centre does not benefit from the LDV flood protection scheme. Also, see the answer to question 4 below.

Firstly, a levy was not imposed, it was voluntarily voted for by a significant number of businesses. The alternative was to have no way of protecting businesses from major flood events – an outcome that would have been far worse for inward investment, employment and wealth creation. Secondly, the Council is very active across a range of fronts to support businesses, attract investment and help create the conditions for growth in Sheffield.

Meadowhall make a voluntary contribution of £5,000 per annum, so £25,000 over the full period of the Business Improvement District (BID). This puts them in the top two or three (alongside the c260 BID levy payers) contributors to the scheme. They are not included in the BID and this was explained in the BID Business Plan of 2013 as follows:

"The Meadowhall Centre is excluded from the BID. This is because, having already installed defences and initiated a channel management regime of their own, businesses located within the centre would be unlikely to benefit from the BID, and given the number of businesses based there and their significant collective rateable value, the Centre would have a disproportionate influence over the ballot outcome, regardless of the wishes of all other businesses in the BID area."

However an agreement was reached with Meadowhall regarding the £5,000 per annum voluntary contribution as they do benefit from the channel maintenance regime which is undertaken in their area, this being a service which they previously

paid for themselves before the BID came into effect.

5. Can you tell me the average yearly flood defence levy that businesses will be paying?

The median BID levy payment value is £360.

Questions of Councillor Penny Baker to Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards (Acting Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods)

1. In relation to the recent changes in Activity Sheffield, can you please tell me:-

(i) the list of all activities that have ceased?

Currently 56 sessions are expected to stop although the team continues to work with groups and customers to find alternative ways of continuing the sessions

The initial list of sessions was around 300 – so much work has been done to help continue most of these sessions (and reduce to ‘only’ 56 at risk)

By Session Type:	No of sessions cancelled
Aerobics	1
Boxing	2
Chair Based Exercise	5
Adult Dance	1
Dodgeball	1
Football	4
Gentle Exercise	19
Gymnastics	1
Multi Sports	12
Hockey	1
Street Dance	6
Zumba	3

By Customer Group:	No. of sessions cancelled
Older People	32
Young People	24

(ii) how many members of staff, at what pay grade have been (a) redeployed, (b) made redundant, since the changes?

Management and support (includes G11, G10 and G5)

- 1 post unaffected
- 2 left under VS/VER scheme
- 1 secured new PT Operations Manager role in the service

- 1 found a new job outside the service

Frontline delivery (includes G7, G6, G4 and G3)

- 7 posts unaffected
- 6 seeking redeployment within the council
- 3 secured vacant roles in the service
- 2 found new jobs outside the service
- 4 left under VS/VER scheme
- 5 vacant posts deleted
- 2 staff on maternity leave so not currently affected by the changes

Temporary staff (includes G6 and G4)

- 8 fixed term contracts not renewed

(iii) how many managers, at what pay grade were there prior to the changes and how many post the changes?

Management and support

Old structure 4.81 FTE

- 1 x G11
- 3x G10
- 1x G5

New structure 1.81 FTE

- 1x G11
- 1x G9 Part time

(iv) the total saving in management positions from the changes.

£135,418

2. Now that a new location for Tinsley Library has been announced, is there a date for the library to move?

Library Staff are currently working with Tinsley Forum and volunteers re the layout for the new Associate Library in Tinsley. There are some minor alteration works required to the building and once those discussions have been finalised we will put the plans in place to open the library as soon as possible.

3. In relation to the article about Graves Park in The Sheffield Telegraph on 24th March, 2015, in which a Council spokesperson said that the Council had not ruled out selling off further 'liabilities' like Cobnar Cottage, can you please publish a list of these 'liabilities' with exactly what they are and where?

There is no list. The report reflected the longstanding Council position that sound management of its parks or indeed any other assets requires it to regularly review what is in the best interests of the park and its users. The sale of Cobnar Cottage is just such an example whereby a dilapidated cottage has been restored to residential use and the proceeds now form the significant part of a £200,000 improvement programme at Graves Park.

Questions of Councillor Jack Clarkson to Councillor Leigh Bramall (Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Development)

1. Can the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Sheffield Markets on the Moor Sheffield, please inform the Council, if the market indeed made a profit for the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16 and what were the respective financial figures in respect any profit for the financial years given?

No profit was made on either year.
2. Were the Sheffield Markets on the Moor Sheffield subsidised to assist stall holders in respect of rates and rents?

Business rates have not been reduced except for the statutory reliefs that are available to all businesses. Business rates are a liability to be settled directly by the market trader.

Rents have been subsidised.
3. If the Sheffield Market was subsidised, how much has this cost the Sheffield rate payers in respect of the subsidies for the financial years as given above in respect of both rates and rents?

No specific business rates discount has been given.

The 50% rent reduction has actually contributed to the reduction on the burden on public funds by stopping the loss of traders from the market and losing income. The vast majority of costs are fixed and if traders are not in the market the Council cannot recover the cost. Thus any fall in rental income falls straight through to the bottom line.

More importantly this initiative has allowed more businesses to come into the market and those existing ones to survive (occupancy from 72% at its worst to 84% now who provide more secondary benefits such as business rates, employment etc.). Footfall has stabilised at an average of 56,000 people per week.
4. Can the Cabinet Member tell us how many stalls there are at the Sheffield Moor market, and how many were occupied for the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16?

There are now 179 stalls and 6 barrows

The occupancy rate fluctuates

throughout the year but the average for 2014-15 was 74% (but did fall to as low as 72%) and in 2015-16 is an average of 82% but finishing the year at 84%.

Questions of Councillor Andrew Sangar to Councillor Ben Curran (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources)

1. Can you please list the number of jobs with zero hours contracts (a) within Sheffield City Council; and (b) from Sheffield City Council contractors, in each year 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015? 0
2. Can you please tell me how many (a) staff and (b) elected members, went to Marché International des Professionnels d'Immobilier (MIPIM) 2016? Two members of staff (John Mothersole and Nik Hamilton), no Elected Members
3. What was the cost to (a) Sheffield City Council and (b) Sheffield City Region on MIPIM of the following:-
 (1) accommodation
 (2) hospitality and events,
 (3) any exhibitions,
 (4) travel (please provide a breakdown of international/within UK and France)
 (5) Any other associated costs
 The MIPIM project was co-ordinated by Sheffield City Region, costs mitigated by large elements of private sector sponsorship, I would advise you to contact Sheffield City Region for this information
4. How much has the Council paid out in compensation through (a) insured and (b) non-insured funds in each year 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 for:-
 (i) issues to do with potholes for damaged cars?;

Payment Year	Total
2012	£3,197
2013	£0
2014	£0
2015	£0

Zero paid by SCC after start of Streets Ahead contract because Amey assumed responsibility for claims as part of the contract.

(ii) falls and associated injuries?; and :

(NOTE – Figures are for all Council Departments, not just Highways, and are based on payment date not incident date – so payments made on incidents predating 2012 are included)

Payment Year	Total
2012	£380,890
2013	£288,214
2014	£237,165
2015	£163,319

(iii) social care neglect?

There are no specific figures for neglect as this is not a category that we or the ombudsman would use.

5. Following my question in February, which I have not received an answer to, could you please now make public :-

(i) how much did Sheffield City Council receive from the Government for local welfare provision in 2013/14 and again in 2014/15?

2013/14- £235.251 million (this includes Discretionary Housing Payments, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Local Assistance Scheme).

2014/15- £201.213 million (this includes the same as above minutes Council Tax Support, as there was no specific grant for Council Tax Support from 2014/15, this was incorporated into RSG and therefore cut by the same amount as RSG as a whole).

(ii) how much of this did Sheffield City Council spend on welfare provision in 2013/14 and again in 14/15?

2013/14- £238.124 million (this includes Discretionary Housing Payments, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, Council Tax Hardship

Fund and Local Assistance Scheme).

2014/15- £238.153 million (this includes Discretionary Housing Payments, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, Council Tax Hardship Fund and Local Assistance Scheme)

(iii) can you also please make a statement on why I did not get this information?

Please accept my apologies, I was not given the requested information by the last meeting

Questions of Councillor Richard Shaw to Councillor Ben Curran (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources)

1. Can you confirm whether the Land Registry entry for Gulley's Wood Meadow has been updated to confirm the Council's ownership?

We are expecting it to be by the end of this month.

2. If the Land Registry has not been updated, when is this expected to be done?

See above response.

Question of Councillor Colin Ross to Councillor Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families)

Following the announcement from Government ministers that all schools will be forced to turn into academies, has the Cabinet Member been in discussions with other Councils on how she could mitigate the effects of these proposals?

Yes, we have spoken to other local authorities about our experience of setting up Learn Sheffield as a sector led body for school improvement involving academies and maintained schools and I attend the LGA Lead Members Group which is meeting this Friday and academisation is on the agenda. There are also ongoing discussions about the role of local authorities in supporting the education system on a city region basis, which we envisage will continue as we respond to the policy changes in *Educational Excellence Everywhere*.

Councillor Ross is aware that the academisation and privatisation of schools began under the Liberal Democrat/Tory Coalition Government when Michael Gove, MP, brought in the converter academies for good or outstanding schools and imposed academies for those schools that he thought needed to improve. I wonder if Councillor Ross ever had any conversations with his colleague, the Right Honourable Member for Hallam Constituency when he was Deputy Prime Minister about how he and the Liberal Democrat Party could have influenced the academisation agenda when they were in power.

Question of Councillor Steve Ayriss to Councillor Jayne Dunn (Cabinet Member for Housing)

Are you satisfied with the rate at which new social houses have been built in Sheffield in the last four years?

No, because the Coalition Government's decision to implement deep cuts to grant funding for social housing, which made it much more difficult for Councils and Housing Associations to build affordable homes

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