

Council Meeting – 6 September 2023

Remaining Written Answers Provided To Members' Questions

Questions of Councillor Ruth Milsom to the Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q. What range of grass-cutting equipment is owned and used by the Council? How many of the mowers are able to pick up grass cuttings?

A. Written response.

Questions of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q.1 What role does the BID play to clean up the city centre of graffiti?

A.1 Written response.

Q.2 What targets or service standards does the BID set in respect of this?

A.2 Written response.

Q.3 Has it met its own standards?

A.3 Written response.

Question of Councillor Barbara Masters to the Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q. Landowners or occupiers have an obligation to control the spread of Ragwort if it poses a high risk (within 50 metres) of land used for grazing or forage production where it poses a serious risk to grazing animals.

(a) Does any of the Council's highways land fall into this category?

(b) Does the Council allow its rewilded highways land to be used to make hay or are there plans to do so?

(c) How does/will it ensure it is free from ragwort?

A. Written response.

Questions of Councillor Sophie Thornton to the Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q1. What are the consequences for people with a lifelong disability in Sheffield of the DfT's policy to have all applicants require blue badge renewal every 3 years?

A1. The period of the issue of a Blue Badge and the fee for its issue are enshrined in the Disabled Persons (Blue Badges for Motor Vehicles) Regulations 2000. These regulations set out that the maximum period for which a blue badge may be issued is 3 years. The only exceptions to this rule are:

- For circumstances when a blue badge must be issued for a shorter period: to a person under the age of 3 (period ends on 3rd birthday);
- To a person receiving mobility components of DLA or PIP, or mobility supplement to armed forces pension (period ends on date person will cease to receive this entitlement if that period is shorter than 3 years);
- Replacement for lost badge (replacement badge expires on day original badge would have expired).

Department for Transport (DfT) guidance sets out that the three year period is to enable certain checks to be made, including that where a badge holder has a permanent disability, which will not change (for example, where there has been a loss of limbs), the opportunity to reapply for the badge allows the local authority to ensure that the applicant's personal details, such as their address, remain correct, that the information on the badge remains legible and that an up-to-date photograph is obtained.

Unfortunately, regardless of their circumstances, the badge holder has to apply every three years as per the regulations. Because this is a reapplication and not a renewal process, some customers may find this frustrating as their circumstances have not changed. They may find the process complex and worry about their ongoing entitlement.

The applicant is also required to pay the £10 fee every three years, rather than once, at the point of initial application. The cost to the applicant for a badge is set by the regulations at £10. This equates to 6p per week over 3 years, so it is a valuable benefit potentially saving the applicant hundreds of pounds per year, as well as the freedom and independence their Blue Badge affords them.

Q2. What are we doing and what can we do further in Sheffield to mitigate this?

A2. Although we seldom receive complaints from customers about having to reapply, we recognise that some customers struggle with the process and worry about eligibility. Most customers with lifelong disabilities have an automatic entitlement, so on-going eligibility is not an issue and we can reassure them of that when they contact us. Because they have a

“qualifying benefit” (e.g. Personal Independence Payments) these cases are straightforward and most applications are dealt with speedily and within our target response times.

We have skilled customer advisors on hand to help applicants with the process if they find it difficult. For example, customers can telephone and speak to an advisor who will go through the on-line form with them, the advisor will submit the application and take their payment. We can also offer a face to face appointment and do the same. There is an on-line application process for customers who prefer that channel and we also issue and process paper applications forms for customers who prefer to apply that way.

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