

## CITY OF SHEFFIELD

### METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

#### MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 5 DECEMBER, 2012

#### COPIES OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THERETO

##### Questions

##### Answers

#### Questions of Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Julie Dore)

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| 1. At the last meeting of Full Council you said the Council's review of trade union facility time was complete. When did Council officers first make recommendations to Members having completed their part of the review? | This question has been answered by Councillor Lodge. Council officers have not made any formal recommendations to me. I, personally, have not seen the report.   |
| 2. When will the Council's proposed formula for trade union facility time be published?  | When it has been verified by ACAS.   |
| 3. Will you consider paying a Living Wage to agency staff employed by Sheffield City Council?  | Agencies are 'contractors' to the Council. As I said at the last Council meeting, in answer to public questions and to yourself, we will write to all our contractors and partners to ask them to pay the Living Wage. |
| 4. Will you write to companies to which Sheffield City Council outsource services to ask that they consider paying their staff a Living Wage?  | As above   |
| 5. Do you believe the Council's consultation regarding the future of Sheffield's Council housing was satisfactory and sufficient?  | Yes  |
| 6. Do you believe the Council's consultation complied with Government guidelines for Councils considering the future of the Arms Length Management Organisation's housing management services?                             | Yes  |
| 7. Do you believe the Council was right to refuse a Freedom of Information   | Yes.   |

request from the Labour MP for Sheffield South East for the Project Business Case for bringing Council housing back in-house?

8. Do you agree with the Labour MP for Sheffield South East that “Sheffield Homes should have been allowed to make its case for being retained”?
9. At the last meeting of Full Council you stated that three ‘Members’ Task and Finish Groups’ and ‘Policy Working Groups’ had been set up since May 2011. Why was the Members’ Task and Finish Group regarding the Future of Council Housing, which you discussed at the Full Council meeting in December 2011, not included in this list?
10. What progress has been made since the last Council meeting in delivering more shared services with other authorities within the Sheffield City Region?
11. At the last meeting of Council you stated that the earliest possible start on the Sevenstones site would be Autumn 2014. Do you still believe this to be the case?
12. At the last meeting of Full Council you stated the deadline for Hammersons to submit a planning application under the agreement regarding the Sevenstones development was the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012. Have Hammersons now submitted an application?
- See answer to questions 5 and 6
- Please refer to the minutes of the Full Council meeting in December 2011. I clearly did not discuss any Members’ Task and Finish Group regarding the Future of Council Housing.
- At the last Council meeting, you will be aware, that it was decided to appoint three Independent Persons jointly with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and South Yorkshire Joint Fire and Rescue and Integrated Transport Authorities. The remuneration of the posts will be shared between the three authorities.
- I have no reason not to believe this to be the case.
- No.

Questions of Councillor Alison Brelsford to Councillor Mazher Iqbal (Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion)

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| 1. What progress has been made since the last Council meeting in bringing forward proposals as a result of your Administration's review of libraries?        | We are currently considering the results of the consultation exercise.   |
| 2. Do you yet know if these proposals include recommendations for closure? If so, which libraries do you recommend to close?                                 | As I stated above we are still considering the results of the consultation exercise. We do not yet know if proposals will or will not include recommendations for closure. |
| 3. What progress has been made since the last Council meeting in your Administration's ongoing review into Community Assemblies?                             | We have been continuing work on the review, I have nothing further to add to my answers at the last Council meeting.   |
| 4. How many meetings have you attended since the last meeting of Council to discuss your Administration's ongoing review into Community Assemblies?          | 2  |
| 5. How many officers have been asked to provide evidence as part of the review since the last meeting of Council? Please provide the job titles of officers. | Interim Director, Community Services<br>Head of Locality Management,<br>Director of Policy, Partnership and Research and<br>Head of Governance and Involvement             |
| 6. How many Community Assembly Chairs have been consulted as part of the review since the last meeting of Council?   | Consultation has not yet commenced   |
| 7. How many community groups have been consulted as part of the review since the last meeting of Council?  | Consultation has not yet commenced   |

Questions of Councillor Simon Clement-Jones to Councillor Bryan Lodge (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources)

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| <p>1. How many Council employees have been appointed on a salary greater than £50,000 since May 2011, including new starters and internal appointments? Please list each post with corresponding salary.</p>                   | <p>There are none since you last asked this question in November 2012</p>  |
| <p>2. At the last meeting of Council you stated that the amount spent by the Council using Focus Groups was not held centrally. Why have Council officers been unable to collate this information?</p>                         | <p>Costs are not recorded in our accounting system to separately identify any spend on Focus Groups. It is therefore likely that spend is low, otherwise we would be accounting for it separately. However, to prove this would require a manual exercise of asking every manager in the Council and the cost of this would have to be considered as part of answering the question.</p> |
| <p>3. At the last meeting of Full Council you said the Council's review of trade union facility time was complete. When did Council officers first make recommendations to you, having completed their part of the review?</p> | <p>Recommendations have not been made formally and will not be until ACAS respond. However, I was first informed of the report in September 2012.</p>  |
| <p>4. When will the Council's proposed formula for trade union facility time be published and the corresponding budget confirmed?</p>  | <p>When ACAS have confirmed/verified numbers.</p>  |

Questions of Councillor Penny Baker to Councillor Bryan Lodge (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources)

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|---|--|
| <p>1. Do you believe the Council was right to refuse a Freedom of Information request from the Labour MP for Sheffield South East for the Project Business Case for bringing Council housing back in-house?</p> | <p>Question referred to Councillor Harry Harpham</p> |
| <p>2. Do you agree with the Labour MP for Sheffield South East that "Sheffield Homes should have been allowed to make its case for being retained"?</p>   | <p>Question referred to Councillor Harry Harpham</p> |

Question of Councillor Robert Murphy to Councillor Bryan Lodge (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources)

What changes were made to the specification of the Highways Maintenance PFI due to the £40m cut in the Comprehensive Spending Review?

The changes made to the technical specification and the technical requirements of the Project Agreement under the previous Administration and resulting from the Government's £40 million cut were:

- Remove retaining walls from the British Construction Industry approach
- Reduce requirement to replace problematic gulleys to no less than 6,000
- Increase the age of traffic signals installations before they are replaced from 25 to 30 years
- Reduce % of carriageway and footway survey coverage required per year
- Reduce proportion of surveys, inspections and certifications to be undertaken by independent organisations
- Remove requirement to replace missing highway trees
- Remove allowance for additional grit bins
- Remove allowance for the provision of additional street lighting columns. This would have provided the ability for the Council to light any unlit areas which were subsequently found to have been omitted from the original requirements.
- Reclassify some non-compliant lighting columns as partially compliant in order to allow the Service Provider to incorporate them into schemes.
- Increase level of street lighting power variation and time period for which it is applied (energy saving).

Question of Councillor Alison Brelsford to Councillor Bryan Lodge (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources)

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| 1 | When will a report be brought forward regarding broadband provision in Sheffield, as discussed at October's Council meeting? | A report has been commissioned which is expected to be brought to Cabinet in February 2013. |
|---|--|---|

Questions of Councillor David Baker to Councillor Jack Scott (Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Streetscene)

1. How many local residents have so far opted-in to the charged-for service for the collection of green bins?

You have asked this question many times over the last six months. The answer is the same.
2. How many local residents, outside of the area that is currently offered the green bin, have so far expressed an interest to Veolia in the charged-for green bin service? Please breakdown your response by postcode.

You have asked this question many times over the last six months. The answer is the same.
3. At the October meeting of Council, you informed the Council that roughly 27,000 green bins had been collected. How many green bins have been collected in since then?

33
4. At the October meeting of Council, you informed the Council roughly 14,000 had been chipped and the pellets sold. How many green bins have been chipped since then?

You have asked this question many times over the last six months. The answer is the same.
5. Have you ensured that Amey write to all existing snow wardens to ask if they wish to continue their service this year? If so, how many letters were written and how many responses have there been?

Yes.

94 letters have been sent. 68 responses have been received so far. Only three people have indicated they do not wish to continue as a Snow Warden.
6. Are you aware whether Amey have any further plans to contact existing snow wardens from whom they have not yet heard this year?

Yes. Amey will continue to manage this scheme to the Council's expectations, in line with their contractual obligations.
7. Will you ensure that Amey open the snow warden scheme to new applicants? If so, how has the scheme been promoted so far to potential snow wardens?

Yes. We have briefed the Customer Service staff on what to say to anyone who rings in to volunteer.

Historically, volunteers haven't come forward until the snow has already fallen.

The massive cuts we are facing in Sheffield – which you wholeheartedly support - will mean we are unable to undertake as much proactive recruitment

as we have previously.

The Council is now better prepared for winter than it has ever been.



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

1. Regarding the £400,000 that has been allocated to the Council's Keep Sheffield Working Fund, how much has so far been spent?

A programme of projects is being developed with the Keep Sheffield Working Steering Group that accounts for the full £400,000.

Spend on the approved projects (see below) will start in January.

2. Please list the specific budget allocations for each project funded through the Council's Keep Sheffield Working Fund.

A programme of projects is being developed with the Keep Sheffield Working Steering Group. Two projects from this programme have been approved to date:

£90,000 has been allocated to an export market development pilot working with up to 30 companies to provide intensive export support over a fixed period of time.

Up to £70,000 has been allocated to support the Sheffield Enterprise Agency to take over a contract for delivering the self employment option of the Work Programme. This would deliver an improved and more integrated service for unemployed and workless people looking to become self employed, supporting up to 200 people by March 2014.

3. At the Council meeting in November, you informed the Council that you were minded that Sheffield City Council would become a signatory to South Yorkshire's Memorandum of Understanding for Heritage Crime. Can you confirm that this will now happen?

Yes

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

With respect to the Experimental Transport Regulation Orders (ETRO) to introduce taxi ranks on Rockingham Street, Carver Street and Burgess Street

- (a) Is he aware that Rockingham Street and Burgess Street are covered by planning guidance which restricts night time uses to a closing time of 00.30 hours?
- (b) Did any discussion take place with colleagues in Planning before the decision was made?
- (c) If yes, what was the opinion given by Planning?
- (d) Why was there no consultation with local Councillors or nearby residents?

Rockingham Street is not covered by the 12.30 a.m. restriction. For example, SOYO on this street has a licence until 2.30 a.m. Thursday – Saturday.

No. The hours of all restrictions were checked before the Experimental Transport Regulation Orders (ETRO) were considered.

See above.

Currently, taxis are ranking illegally at these locations haphazardly. This is causing issues between taxis that only use legal ranks and those that park anywhere. It is acknowledged that the number of ranks is insufficient in some places, and the issue of a lack of ranks at these locations has been raised by the Taxi Association. Illegal ranking can also cause issues for residents. The ETRO allows us to test what actual difference an official rank would make, without making a permanent change and it is hoped the system will reduce any anti-social behaviour experienced by residents. This allows objections based on evidence to be made.

Consultation with residents and Members has been planned, and I understand this has now happened with Community Assembly members ahead of the ETRO taking force in the New Year.

Should you wish to object, I would urge you to make representations to the Council, and also the Taxi Association, who requested the changes.

Questions of Councillor Joe Otten to Councillor Isobel Bowler (Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure)

1. Has agreement been reached with local bowling clubs to provide continued maintenance of local bowling greens?

Agreement has been reached with the Sheffield Park Bowls Association. This is based on the proposal presented to Sheffield City Council by the Association and supported by all its member clubs. The Association has confirmed that all greens will remain open (except for one which is closing for unrelated reasons). This gives all our clubs a sustainable foundation for the future.
2. What progress has been made in awarding and spending £10 million of Olympic Legacy funding?

Department of Health has made a formal offer to the City's National Centre partnership. The accountable body for reasons of financial convenience and pragmatism will be Sheffield City Trust. The Board which governs this project is made up of Sheffield City Council, Sheffield Chamber of Commerce, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield University, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Sheffield City Trust representatives. It has agreed a strategy of a City headquarters and related satellite 'hubs'. A Project Board is working up a delivery plan. Work is also underway to secure additional sponsorship support for both the capital projects and revenue programmes. This is targeted at the main sponsors of the 2012 Games.

An announcement by the Board of its plans for the Headquarters and the hubs is expected in the next few weeks.
3. Has a location been agreed for a National Centre for Sports Science and Clinical Excellence to be funded through Government Olympic Legacy funding?

Please see the answer to Question 2. An announcement by the Board is expected in the next few weeks.
4. Do you believe it is appropriate to levy charges on Parkrun, despite its provision of popular and valuable fitness activities, in line with the Council's objectives, open to all and at no cost to the Council?

The Council has levied charges on all organised events in parks for 20 years. This has been applied to all charitable, sporting and social events (e.g. community festivals) at £60 per event. This has remained unchanged since 2008. Commercial events pay more. This

year the income raised from these charges is expected to be in excess of £10,000 and all the income supports the daily upkeep of our parks.

Sheffield City Council fully supports the work of Parkrun - especially given the runs are free to the participant. Indeed, Activity Sheffield has supported the set up of Parkrun in the city.

However, officers have looked closely into the event and cannot see how it is distinctively different from the many charitable and social events that already pay the charge - in some cases over many years. Indeed, a number of other running events - led by purely voluntary organisations - operate in our parks and pay the charge. The charge to Parkrun is £60 per year, per event, so £240 across a year for a weekly run in four parks.

Officers are meeting with Parkrun organisers to discuss the position and explore ways of the charge being paid whilst not impacting on the principle of 'free to the participant'.

5. Do you believe it is appropriate to demand that members of a sports club personally underwrite the insurance of a sports pavilion?

All sports clubs should obtain their own insurance to cover their activities and liabilities. However, the level depends upon the individual circumstances and this is influenced by a club's own formal constitution, its activity programmes and any property ownership issues.

If a club is working in direct partnership with the City Council then fully underwriting the insurance of a building may not be appropriate. This is considered on a case by case basis by officers.

For example, where a club has raised significant investment for a new sports pavilion, in partnership with the Council for wider community benefit, it would not be appropriate for them to be asked to underwrite fully any insurance shortfalls personally.

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

1. When did you take the decision to consult parents and schools on cutting discretionary travel for denominational schools?

The decision to consult parents and schools about a change in policy on discretionary travel to denominational schools was taken in mid-October. Preparations for the consultation were made during the week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> October.
2. When were letters sent out to parents, teachers, and governors to inform them of the consultation on discretionary travel?

A consultation document and letter was sent out to all parents of children and young people at the Catholic primary and secondary schools on 29<sup>th</sup> October. Headteachers and Chairs of Governors were informed of the consultation by telephone on 25<sup>th</sup> October followed up by e-mail correspondence.
3. Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out on your Administration's proposal to cut discretionary travel for denominational schools?

As is the case for all proposed changes of policy, an Equality Impact Assessment was carried out at the start of the process. It has been developed further by listening to feedback during the consultation.
4. Has the Council made an assessment of the potential impact on Local Authority schools if current pupils at Notre Dame and All Saints seek to transfer as a result of this policy?

At this stage it is difficult to quantify the number of pupils at All Saints and Notre Dame that might wish to transfer as a result of this proposal. Other local authorities have experienced relatively little change in preference or application for Church schools as a result of withdrawing discretionary transport support, but it is not clear that the trend would be the same in Sheffield. Pupils currently attending the Catholic schools do come from quite a wide area, and it is clear that any impact would be distributed across a range of schools. The timing of this decision will allow for parents applying for places in Y7 to resubmit an application if they wish to do so if it is decided to withdraw the discretionary transport support. Pupils wishing to transfer to other schools from other year groups will be subject to the availability of places, but would have a statutory right of appeal.

Questions of Councillor Penny Baker to Councillor Harry Harpham (Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods)

1. Were you made aware of Freedom of Information requests relating to the Project Business Case for bringing Council housing back in-house? If so, when?
2. What justification was made for refusing the Freedom of Information (FOI) requests relating to the business case for bringing Council housing back in-house?

Yes. It was in Autumn 2011.

Both the Council and Sheffield Homes received FOI requests. The Council referred the request to the Monitoring Officer who refused to release the document relying on the exemption that:

The release would prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs the reasons being:

The document was produced by staff from both the Council and Sheffield Homes as a working paper to form part of the deliberations of the Task and Finish group. The paper relates to a point in time and does not reflect Council policy. The information in the document was based on views and judgements of staff from both organisations and includes a number of scenarios and hypothetical models offering Members the opportunity to test different perspectives. Therefore it does not contain a single set of proposals.

It was in the public interest for the information not to be disclosed because:

The information contained in the documents is in an unedited format presenting a number of scenarios that potentially conflict with each other. If made available to the public prior to the impending ballot it could be taken out of context, be misleading and cause confusion as to the options available at the ballot stage thus affecting the conduct of public affairs.

Sheffield Homes refused release on the basis that the information had been given to them on a confidential basis and to release that information would breach that confidentiality. The requester appealed Sheffield Homes's decision to the Information Commissioner who disagreed with the reason for refusal and ordered the release. Sheffield Homes have appealed the decision with regard to certain information within the document as they believe the Commissioner is wrong and they consider themselves to be under a duty of confidentiality with regard to this specific information. Sheffield Homes have therefore now released a redacted version of the document and a date is awaited for a hearing before the First Tier Tribunal. Sheffield Homes management, taking appropriate Council and legal advice, have made all decisions relating to their FOI requests.

3. Do you believe the justification for refusing these Freedom of Information requests still stands up to scrutiny?
4. Do you believe the Council's consultation complied with Government guidelines for Councils considering the future of the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) housing management services?
5. In December 2011 the Government issued a note seeking to strengthen previous guidelines for Councils considering the future of the ALMO housing management services. Do you believe this note succeeded in strengthening previous guidance?
6. Why do you believe the Department of Communities and Local Government chose to issue a note in December 2011 seeking to strengthen previous

Yes.

Yes

I think that the overall effect was neutral.

This is a question for the Government

guidance?

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| 7.  | How did the Council alter its consultation on the Future of Council Housing in line with the Government note issued in December 2011?  | The Council had already committed to a full consultation culminating in a ballot of all tenants. Having assessed our consultation process against the Government guidance in December 2011 at the time of the Government guidance being released, we were fully satisfied with our compliance. When this guidance was released in December 2011, the Future of Council Housing project was already well advanced. A consultation timetable had been set out, and the process had been published and had already begun. |
| 8.  | The note states that information provided to tenants must be accurate and impartial. Do you believe Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Homes complied with this guideline?   | Yes  |
| 9.  | The note states that Councils should ensure that tenants have the opportunity to shape the options. Do you believe Sheffield City Council complied with this guideline?  | Yes  |
| 10. | The note states that tenants should be given the opportunity to be included in any project group leading the work. Do you believe Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Homes complied with this guideline?   | Yes.   |
| 11. | The note states that the Council must clearly set out the pros and cons of the various options reviewed, demonstrate the potential impact on residents, and explain the reasons for recommending its final option. Do you believe Sheffield City Council complied with this guideline? | Yes  |
| 12. | Did you meet with the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Communities and Local Government to   | No   |



discuss Sheffield's consultation on the future of Council housing? If so, how many times?

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| 13. Did you at any point discuss the note issued in December 2011 on Government guidelines to Councils considering the future of the ALMO housing management services with the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Communities and Local Government?  | No   |
| 14. Did you meet with the Chairman of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee to discuss Sheffield's consultation on the Future of Council Housing? If so, how many times?   | In my role as Cabinet Member I meet MPs on a regular basis to discuss all aspects of housing   |
| 15. Did you at any point discuss the note issued in December 2011 on Government guidelines for Councils considering the future of the ALMO housing management services with the Chairman of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee?   | See above  |
| 16. Do you agree with the Chairman of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee that "Sheffield Homes should have been allowed to make its case for being retained"?   | Myself and the Chairman of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee have a healthy relationship that means we agree on some issues and disagree on some issues. |
| 17. In the interests of transparency will you now publish all minutes of the Members' Task and Finish Group for the Future of Council Housing?   | The Task and Finish Group was internal Labour Group business   |
| 18. At the last meeting of Full Council you stated that allocations through the Council's Local Growth Fund would be published on the Council's website. Currently, the online document only contains the project title and no further detail. Will you ensure this document is amended in future to contain more details of the projects that are being funded? | On checking the site myself this morning all the info was there. If you left click on the down arrow at the side bar with your mouse.  |
| 19. At the last meeting of Full Council you stated that over £10 million had been  | Both figures are correct, the total projects approved so far have an   |

allocated so far through the Local Growth Fund. Currently, the online document outlines £7 million of projects. Which is the correct figure?

approved budget of £7.163m. On top of that £2.853m is ring fenced for future commitments for these projects based on the project reviews that will take place on an annual basis which gives a total allocation of £10.016m of Local Growth Fund, subject to reviews.

20. At the last meeting of Full Council you stated that 25 households who were tenants within phase 5 of Park Hill had expressed an interest in re-locating to Flank A of Park Hill. Have any more tenants within phase 5 of Park Hill expressed an interest in re-locating to Flank A of Park Hill since then?

No further interest has been received from anyone living on phase 5

21. At the last meeting of Full Council you stated that you believed the 25 households nominated for the RSL units in Flank A of Park Hill, were the same 25 households that had expressed an interest from phase 5. Can you now confirm that this is the case?

Yes

22. What process will be undertaken for nominating any remaining Registered Social Landlord (RSL) units within Flank A of Park Hill?

The process is set out in our lettings policy under appendix 3.

23. How many cases have passed through the Community Justice Panels since they were set up by the previous Administration? Please break down your answer by calendar month.

Please see attached document.

## Appendix to Question 23 to Councillor Harry Harpham

June	2009	1	<b>Total</b>
July	2009	1	
Aug	2009	4	
Sep	2009	3	
Oct	2009	6	
Nov	2009	6	
Dec	2009	2	<b>23</b>
Jan	2010	6	
Feb	2010	16	
March	2010	21	
April	2010	19	
May	2010	8	
June	2010	10	
July	2010	10	
Aug	2010	8	
Sep	2010	7	
Oct	2010	12	
Nov	2010	6	
Dec	2010	8	<b>131</b>
Jan	2011	4	
Feb	2011	4	
Mar	2011	9	
Apr	2011	20	
May	2011	17	
June	2011	44	
July	2011	29	
Aug	2011	26	
Sep	2011	19	
Oct	2011	14	
Nov	2011	9	
Dec	2011	16	<b>211</b>
Jan	2012	9	
Feb	2012	8	
Mar	2012	11	
Apr	2012	12	
May	2012	15	
June	2012	15	
July	2012	12	
Aug	2012	12	
Sep	2012	15	
Oct	2012	16	
Nov	2012	26	
Dec	2012	4 ongoing	<b>155</b>

**Total 520**

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