

CITY OF SHEFFIELD

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 7 SEPTEMBER 2011

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. How many local businesses and other potential donors have been contacted so far and how much has been raised for the Women of Steel memorial to date? | At the point of the new Administration coming into power in May 2011, no contacts had been made and no money had been raised. |
| | The Leader of the Council and officers have met with representatives of the Women of Steel and have agreed a two-step approach. Firstly, a plaque in their honour will be unveiled in October/November of this year. Secondly, work will start in the autumn on selecting an artist to progress the memorial/statue and this will run alongside a corporate and public fundraising campaign to raise funds to match the Council's contribution. |
| 2. Have you approved any members of the Administration to attend conferences since becoming Leader? Please list each approval along with the relevant Member, conference and approximate total cost including travel and accommodation, etc. | It has been agreed that Councillor Mary Lea and Councillor Jackie Drayton will attend the National Children and Adult Service Conference, although this has not been booked yet and therefore the full costs associated with this conference are not yet known. |
| 3. Regarding Cabinet/ Executive Management Team (EMT) Away Days held under your Administration, please list the total cost including venue hire and catering, if any was provided, as separate items. | One away day of CMT/EMT – no cost to the Council.

One away afternoon for Cabinet – no cost to the Council. |
| 4. Please list all training and development costs incurred relating to members of your Administration since the election. | Induction programme for new Members was delivered in-house at no cost to the Member Development budget. |

3 days ICT training for 2 new Members and “blackberry” training for 3 Members (cross-party) provided at a total cost of £550.

5. Are you in favour of the Waverley Link Road?
6. Do you agree with Clive Betts MP that the consultation regarding the Waverley Link Road carried out, with the agreement of you, is inadequate?
7. Why didn't your own Cabinet Member know that you had agreed for this Council to consult on the Waverley Link Road, despite being previously against the idea?
8. How many meetings of Scrutiny Committee members have been held outside the scheduled bi-monthly meetings, not including the Waste Review?
9. Do you agree with your Cabinet member that it is 'not reasonable' to ask Urban Splash to contribute towards the £2.5 million costs associated with the Park Hill developments, which instead had to be picked up by local taxpayers?

The current position of the Council is that we do not support Rotherham's plans to build a road through the playing fields.

This Council is not consulting on the Waverley Link Road.

This Council is not consulting on the Waverley Link Road.

No formal meetings have been held.

I agree wholeheartedly with the statement released by the Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration on 22 August, which stated:

“This is nothing but political opportunism from the Liberal Democrats who are again trying to mislead the public. This is not a broken promise by Labour and furthermore the Lib Dems know that not a penny of the £2.5m is to be spent on the refurbishment of the Park Hill flats.

“There are additional costs relating to the Park Hill site which until recently were paid for by a Government grant. These costs include looking after the empty flat blocks, providing security where the blocks are still lived in, funding PCSO patrols and rehousing local residents. The Coalition Government has now completely ended the Housing Market Renewal grant that previously paid for these costs and the Council has been left to pick up the

£2.5m bill.

“There is no question about whether or not these costs should be funded; it is the right thing to do ensure that the local residents are safe and it is the Council’s statutory duty to provide home loss payments to residents who are moving home. The Lib Dems also know that it would not be reasonable to ask Urban Splash to foot the bill for this as ultimately this is the Council’s responsibility.

“It seems that the Lib Dems will do anything in their attempts to score a cheap political point but I don’t think that local people believe a word they say anymore. If anyone has reneged on their promise it is the Government – they are the ones who have withdrawn funding and left local residents in the lurch. Instead of playing politics the Lib Dems should be standing up for Sheffield and asking the Government to think again about Housing Market Renewal funding.”

Questions of Councillor Joan Barton to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Julie Dore)

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| 1. When was it agreed to build a statue for the Women of Steel? | Cabinet agreed to build a statue at its meeting on 28 th April 2010. |
| 2. When the Leader came into office in May 2011 how much money had been raised towards the project? | None.

However, I can report that since coming into office in May 2011, I have secured a commitment from a local organisation to contribute £5,000 towards the project. |

Question of Councillor Terry Fox to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Julie Dore)

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| Does the Leader of Sheffield City Council find the Liberal Democrats criticism of getting 100 young people | Yes. |
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into apprenticeships disgraceful and that this Council should applaud those partners who have taken part in the scheme?

**Questions of Councillor Alison Brelsford to Councillor Harry Harpham
(Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration)**

1. Regarding the Park Hill project, can you confirm that the cost to the City will extend beyond paying wages of Council staff working on the Park Hill project?

The redevelopment work at Park Hill is being carried out at no cost to the City, apart from staffing costs.

Where cost does fall to the Council at Park Hill is where it is looking after its own land and buildings and its own tenants and residents.
2. Regarding Park Hill, why did you take the decision not to approach Urban Splash to increase their contribution to the project before committing £2.5m of local taxpayer's money?

There is no reason why a private company should contribute to this cost, as the land and buildings, and the statutory and contractual relationships with tenants and residents are the Council's sole responsibility.
3. Please provide an itemised breakdown of how the £2.5m for Park Hill over two years is estimated to be spent.

The estimated costs of £2.5m cover a period of more than 2 years. These are the total expected costs ahead of handover of the blocks to the developer.

To the end of year 2014, i.e. over the next 2.5 years the Council estimates that the costs will be as follows.

On the currently occupied blocks: £1,636,826. This pays for disconnections of water and electricity, asbestos surveys, cleaning, rehousing of residents, and security.

On the currently empty blocks: £324,170. This covers, screening and security, cleaning and any professional fees.

Beyond 2014 the Council has estimated a total cost of £439,104 for screening and security of the empty blocks, over 3 years if required.
4. Can you rule out further spending of local taxpayer's money on the Park Hill project?

As I have already stated in my answer to question 1, above, there is no Council funding being spent on the Park Hill redevelopment.

5. Regarding income raised from advertising on the side of Park Hill, can you please outline how this has been spent?

So far, £800 has been used over the last few years to support social events for remaining residents and other local people with connections with Park Hill. £500 is being used to contribute to the cost of the opening events at the City Council's South Street Park improvements.

6. Has there been any change to the number of proposed units for sale - affordable and social rented - with regard to the first phase of Park Hill?

No.

Questions of Councillor Gail Smith to Councillor Mary Lea (Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Independent Living)

1. What is the projected under-spend for Care and Support Services in the Communities Directorate as of Month 2 this financial year?

The reported year end forecast at month 2 for Care and Support was 498,000. However, this included a £1.2m underspend on Supporting People which should be part of the strategic commissioning budget.

The overall Communities portfolio budget was forecasting a £228,000 underspend. This position assumes that the additional income from care contributions would be delivered in year.

2. Will any of this under-spend be used to offset the care charge increases you agreed at the last Cabinet meeting? If not, then why?

As members will be aware, the Council's revenue budget set in March required £1.45m to be raised through changes in the Fairer Contributions Policy.

The Fairer Contributions Cabinet report outlined how this would be achieved in 2011/12.

£1.01m would come from the change in the policy related to the 100% of actual cost of support and a maximum of £350 per week. The report also stated that changing the utility policy will achieve approximately an additional £60,000. It also indicated that approximately £270,000 additional income can be achieved through efficiencies for 2011/12 and the remaining income gap of £110,000 against the expected £1.45 million would be covered by the projected under-spend in the Communities Portfolio budget.

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

1. How many posts that include £50,000 plus salaries within the Council have been advertised for since May 2011? Please list each post and job title.

The following posts have been advertised since May 2011. Only one of these is a permanent appointment, externally advertised and this is for a very technical role to manage large Council contracts such as the Capita contract which requires skills not currently available in the Council.

None of these are new posts but are vacant due to the departure of incumbents;

- Secondment- Locality Improvement Strategic Lead (EXTERNAL) (Local Authority Secondments) - Soulbury 18-21 (+ 3 SPA) (£51,837 - £54,679)
- Secondment- Secondary Strategic Lead (EXTERNAL) (Local Authority Secondments) - Soulbury 24-30 (+3 SPA) (£57,705-£63,924)
N.B: post withdrawn before appointed
- Assistant Commercial Director (EXTERNAL) - DG7 (£54,250 - £58,225)
- Head of Libraries, Archives and Information (INTERNAL ADVERT ONLY) - DG7(£54,250 - £58,225)

2. Now that Abbeydale Grange School has closed, will you reaffirm this Council's commitment that the playing fields will be retained for community use?

Members and residents of Sheffield can rest assured that officers are actively engaged in considering the best future for the site and how best to engage with the community in this regard. The plans for the site will be developed in conjunction with the community. However, Members will appreciate that this plan needs to be informed by the fullest possible technical, planning and other information which officers are currently in the process of gathering.

The Council is quite clear that it must have an holistic vision for the whole area, including Bannerdale. That vision will include retained land for community use in the form of playing fields and parkland.

3. What percentage of savings agreed as part of setting the 2011/12 budget are on track to deliver? How does this compare with previous budgets at this point in the financial year?

There are currently just over £5m of savings agreed as part of the 2011/12 budget that are not on track to deliver (6% of the total £80m savings): alternative action has been proposed to mitigate those savings. This position is included within the Month 3 budget monitoring which shows a forecast overspend of £5.2million for 2011/12 - this compares to a £11.1million forecast overspend at month 3 for 2010/11.

**Questions of Councillor Roger Davison to Councillor Helen Mirfin-Boukouris
(Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Growth)**

1. Do you agree with David Blunkett MP that the enterprise zone “doesn’t deliver anything for immediate improvement in advanced manufacturing”?

The Enterprise Zone will deliver benefits from April 2012 in the form of Business Rate and Capital Allowance relief to companies within the zone. The Sheffield City Region Enterprise Zone is specifically focussed around advanced manufacturing and technology businesses.
2. Do you agree with Clive Betts MP that the new enterprise zone for the Sheffield City Region could pose a threat to the regeneration of Attercliffe?

The Sheffield City Region Enterprise Zone proposal has been developed in conjunction with business, including representatives of business from Attercliffe and elsewhere in order to ensure it fits as closely as possible with other regeneration plans. It is hoped that the Enterprise Zone will stimulate investment and jobs in the area that will benefit the whole of the City, including Attercliffe.
3. When do you estimate the first apprentice will be in post via the Sheffield Apprenticeship Programme?

By the end of October 2011.
4. What new policies on the pro-business agenda have you asked Council officers to pursue since becoming a Cabinet Member?

We are committed to working closely and positively with the City’s business community to promote economic prosperity. It is vital that we really listen to the views of businesses before making important decisions that will affect the economy of Sheffield. That’s why I’ve personally met with numerous local businesses since I became Cabinet Member; we’ve held our first major Business Summit with around 70 businesses attending; we’re working with the Sheffield Business Panel on how best to improve the Council’s approach to business engagement; and we are committed to further business summits in the future to address the specific issues businesses are telling us are important to them.

5. What capital investment does the Administration have planned for the upkeep of the Graves Art Gallery?

There has recently been significant investment in the Central Library roof which has brought immediate benefits to the Gallery. The wider development of the Central Library building is a current project within Place and this includes examining the long term investment strategy for the Gallery. Obviously, the on-going upkeep of the Gallery is a matter that is dealt with via the partnership between Museum Sheffield and the City Council.

Question of Councillor Diana Stimely to Councillor Helen Mirfin-Boukouris (Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Growth)

Can you explain how planning officers are responding to the Thriving District and Local Centres Strategy, brought about by the previous Administration, when making recommendations relating to large multi-national supermarkets?

Officers take into account the Thriving District and Local Centres (TDLC) strategy when they assess planning applications. But the TDLC strategy is very similar to both the National guidance and Sheffield's Core Strategy, which are the legal basis for assessing planning applications. They all support town centres.

However

- 1 Legally, Planning can only control the ***use of land***. It cannot control the ***identity of the user***. We cannot distinguish between independents and multiples, and, although a good mix of independents and multiples is important, we cannot refuse in-centre development just because it is proposed by a multiple retailer.
- 2 ***In-centre*** superstores and supermarkets have a positive role in regeneration:
 - Small Tesco Expresses and Sainsbury Locals can co-exist with specialist food retailers and can make a valuable contribution to vitality and viability and
 - Larger stores such as Tesco at Spital and Asda at Chaucer will

bring in large numbers of shoppers who can go on and visit other shops and services in the centres.

Sheffield, like other Authorities, has had many applications by multi-national retailers – 19 over the past three years. In UK, since May this year, the big four retailers have opened 407 new stores, and added more than 5million sq ft of selling space (Guardian 6 August). The pressure is because superstore operators are battling for market share and are taking advantage of the reduction in land prices since the recession began. They do not rely on speculative funding sources to buy land, as other developers do.

Thriving District and Local Centres Strategy

The Vision for centres in the Thriving District and Local Centres Strategy, and 'A City of Opportunity', is:

Our **district centres** are thriving and attractive places in which to live, work, shop and relax – focal points where businesses and public services serve the needs of the surrounding communities effectively. District centres have good public transport and accessibility for all members of the community

At the neighbourhood level there are viable **local centres** where people can access basic facilities such as local shops, medical centres, libraries, post offices and community centres within a reasonable distance of home

Dealing with Applications in practice

In-centre applications: Research (University Southampton) shows these can make a valuable contribution to vitality and viability.

Out-of-centre proposals are assessed against two tests prescribed by national guidance. (NB Lack of 'Need' can no

longer be a reason for refusal.)

- (a) the sequential approach – whether there is another more central site
- (b) Impact on Centres' vitality and viability.

In assessing impact, it is recognised that 'like affects like'. Where there are already large foodstores, a new one is more likely to impact on these rather than on local independent retailers. E.g. at Woodseats, which has more nearby superstores than any other centre in Sheffield (3 within 2km), only 6% of units are vacant and 80% of operators are independent.

Promoting in-centre development and independent retailers

Officers encourage development in centres by producing Planning Briefs.

Planning can encourage independents by ensuring large in-centre retail developments provide smaller shops (e.g. at Stocksbridge and Spital Hill) to increase variety. This will ensure that rents are more affordable and encourage independent retailers.

Question of Councillor Joe Otten to Councillor Helen Mirfin-Boukouris (Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Growth)

What steps is this Administration taking to ensure Sheffield's Traditional Heritage Museum continues to provide its important service to local people and visitors, that its collection is protected and that the goodwill of its volunteers is maintained?

The Council has never had a financial or property interest in the Museum. The building and collection is owned by Sheffield University and has been closed for some time to assess repair works and costs.

I have asked Council officers to contact Sheffield University to see how we could assist. However due to the current restraints on the Council's budget Sheffield City Council will not be in any position to offer any financial help.

**Question of Councillor Ben Curran to Councillor Helen Mirfin-Boukouris
(Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Growth)**

What level of cut did the previous Administration to the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service?

The South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS) is one of a limited number of joint services delivered on behalf of all four local authorities in the former Metropolitan County. The remit of the service, the forms of governance, and funding arrangements are established by legal agreement, a revised version of which was endorsed on 24th January 2011

Strategic oversight is provided by a Joint Steering Committee comprising two elected members from each Authority, meeting quarterly. The service budget is proposed by the Joint Steering Committee and agreed by the Joint Leaders Meeting at the start of each calendar year. Individual local authority contributions are apportioned on a per capita basis. Last year (2010/11) this equated to:

Barnsley	17.30%	(£25,464)
Doncaster	22.33%	(£32,870)
Rotherham	19.44%	(£28,620)
Sheffield	40.93%	(£60,246)

Sheffield City Council employs the staff and provides accommodation for SYAS on behalf of the other Authorities; for which an annual charge is made.

Background

The need to reduce contributions to the SYAS budget was agreed by all the South Yorkshire authorities at the Joint Steering Committee meeting of 9th December 2010. The recommendation put forward to the Leaders' Meeting was that the total budget should be reduced by 15%

At the Joint Leaders' meeting on 24th January 2011 the SYAS budget for

2011/12 was set at the same level as 2010/11 (£147,200) minus £22,083, thus making a 15% reduction. The effect on the Service was that a recently vacated post could no longer be filled, reducing staffing levels from 3.8 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE) to 2.8 FTE across the four Authorities.

The budget report put to, and approved by, a meeting of Sheffield's full Council on 4th March 2011 which included a reduction in the City Council's contribution to SYAS of 50%.

Implementing the Council's decision proved problematic as the legal basis upon which the Service is constituted required the endorsement of the three other South Yorkshire Authorities through the Leaders' Forum. The cut remained notional as the process to enable it to be implemented at service level was never completed.

Summary

Under the previous Administration Sheffield City Council approved a 50% reduction in its contribution to the SYAS budget for 2011/12. This equates to £30,123.

Questions of Councillor David Baker to Councillor Mick Rooney (Cabinet Member for Communities)

1. How do you intend to devolve more services and budgets to Community Assemblies?

We intend to take a good, sensible look at how effective Community Assemblies really are in bringing local control to local people. This review will be carried out over the next few months and we will consider options open to us as a result of the review.

2. Regarding savings within the Libraries budget, do you propose any changes to the proposals that have been consulted upon?

Information regarding changes to the Library Service will be coming forward shortly.

Questions of Councillor Ian Auckland to Councillor Leigh Bramall (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport)

1. I note this statement from Clive Betts as reported on the Woodhouse Mill and Orgreave Community Forum website on 7th August 2011:

"I have now spoken to the new Cabinet Member, Leigh Bramall, about the Waverley Link Road. She has advised me that Council officers have been instructed not to co-operate with Rotherham on the provision of any road through the playing fields. She may well have approached Rotherham about trying to get a dialogue going over agreement on an alternative route which does not affect the playing fields. "

Can you confirm that the claims in this statement are accurate?
 2. Regarding the £300,000 set aside to contribute towards the cost of providing choice on the recycling service, is this funding still available for the Waste Service? If not, where has this sum been re-allocated to?
 3. Have you dropped your previous plan of carrying out a feasibility study on installing a wind turbine on Westwood Country Park?
 4. Can you confirm what each Community Assembly will receive from the Climate Change fund?
 5. As of today, can every household in Sheffield use the green sack?
- The current position of the Council is that we do not support Rotherham's plans to build a road through the playing fields.
- The cost of providing choice on the recycling service was originally expected to be £300,000. However, providing this service has not been as expensive as was originally anticipated, and therefore this money has instead been absorbed into mainstream budgets to fund overall expenditure within the 2011/12 budget.
- The Council has no current plans to install a wind turbine in Westwood Country Park.
- Each Community Assembly will receive the same budget as in the previous year.
- Council Policy is that every household in Sheffield which wishes to make use of the green sack service should be able to. If Councillor Auckland, or any member of the Council, is aware of any problems with residents accessing this service I would be very grateful if they could let me know as soon as possible so that I can ensure that any problems are addressed.

Questions of Councillor Philip Wood to Councillor Leigh Bramall (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport)

1. When was the decision to exclude rural areas from the Green Waste Service made?

On the 29th September 2010, a 'Band A' report was agreed and signed by the previous Liberal Democrat Cabinet Member for Climate Change confirming that rural areas would not receive the service. A copy of this report can be made available to any interested persons.

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

What are the initial findings from the Early Years Review?

The call for views timescale was extended to ensure that all views were captured. At present officers are still collating the responses to the consultation.