

Agenda Item 5

CITY OF SHEFFIELD

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 3RD DECEMBER 2014

COPIES OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THERETO

Questions

Answers

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

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| 1. Following the questions at last month's Council meeting, what progress has been made in the industrial dispute at the waste disposal sites? | Negotiations are ongoing to resolve the dispute. |
| 2. Are you aware of any instances of bullying in connection with the industrial dispute at the household waste recycling centres? If so, do any of these instances breach the Council's Code of Conduct for Members? | Allegations of bullying have been made by the workforce, however, this is not related to the conduct of any member |
| 3. How much did the video that was used in conjunction with the 2015/16 Budget Conversation cost to produce? | Question to be answered by Councillor Ben Curran |

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

1. What are the details of the Christmas Parking Incentive, if available?

Parking will be free on the three Saturdays in December up to Christmas – 6th, 13th & 20th – from 2.00 p.m. The offer will be citywide for all Council on-street spaces and off-street spaces in shopping areas. Car parking in parks is not included.
2. If not available, when do you anticipate being in a position to announce the provision?
3. What is the anticipated cost of the Christmas Parking Incentive?

We are unsure at this point

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

1. When will you be in a position to brief the Council on the expressions of interest in the Don Valley stadium site?

The Don Valley site is subject to complex negotiations. Information will be disclosed in due course.
2. As I have still not received a briefing from officers on the value of scrap metal at the Don Valley Stadium as promised in February, when will this be forthcoming?

I'm sorry that you have been unable to arrange a briefing with officers.
3. How many external organisations did the Council pay subscription fees to in the 2013/14 financial year? Please list each organisation with relevant costs.

I have provided you with an answer to this question on many occasions.
4. To which external groups does the Council provide administrative support and at what cost?

 - Academy Schools – costs recharged
 - Rotherham and Barnsley Council - costs recharged
 - Lower Don Valley Flood Defence Business Improvement District – costs recharged
 - Combined Authority –costs recharged
 - South Yorkshire Archives & Archaeology - costs recharged
 - Voluntary Sector – The Council provides some support to voluntary sector organisations when their grant funding is reduced or ceases. It takes the form of providing assistance in helping to find replacement grant funding and support in completing funding applications. Officers inform me that we do not hold a full list of organisations supported in recent years or the cost of providing this support.

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| 5. | How many social media accounts are managed by Council officers on behalf of Council services or departments? | 33 – which is less than when you asked me in April. |
| 6. | How much did the Council spend in the Big Sheffield Switch per utility customer who switched suppliers? | The scheme is run at no net cost to the Council. |
| 7. | How many Business Rates appeals from Sheffield businesses, and to what total value, are there currently awaiting resolution? | 930 appeals are outstanding. These appeals are lodged with the District Valuer. The detailed information is not available from District Valuer to enable us to fully assess the total value of our liability. |
| 8. | Will you recommend further revenue and capital allocations for Sorby House, Forum House or Vestry Hall as part of your 2015-16 budget recommendations? | We are still working on our 2015-16 budget recommendations. We will announce our proposals in due course. |
| 9. | Now that significant work has been completed on re-negotiating the Capita Contract, how much could the Council save on the Capita contract by charging for the collection of trade union membership subscriptions? | The re-negotiation of the Capita contract has not yet been finalised. |
| 10. | How many funded parking permits for staff have been approved by the Council and at what cost? | 54 at a cost of £28.3k |
| 11. | How many agency staff has the Council employed so far in 2014, and in each of the three previous financial years? | 2010/11- 169 FTE
2011/12- 323 FTE
2012/13 -472 FTE
2013/14- 511 FTE
April 2014 to September 2014 – 210 FTE

I'm sure you will be pleased to see the forecast reduction in the use of agency staff within this year. |
| 12. | How many former Council staff have returned to the City Council as agency staff this year and in each of the last three financial years? | Officers inform me that we do not have that information as the data belongs to the recruitment agency, not the Council. |

Question of Councillor Colin Ross to Councillor Julie Dore, Leader of the Council (to be answered by Councillor Ben Curran (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources))

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| 1. How much did the video that was used in conjunction with the 2015/16 Budget Conversation cost to produce? | The video was funded from within existing communications and consultation budgets. |
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Question of Councillor Colin Ross to Councillor Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families)

Thank you for supplying the data on universal infant free school meals. Do you agree that the 18% increase in the uptake of primary school meals per day between October 2013 and October 2014 is very welcome and will have a beneficial effect in many ways for the pupils involved?

You will be aware, that this recession and ongoing Government cuts to public services, welfare and benefit reforms, utility costs going up whilst wages stay the same, are raising serious concerns around poverty and inequalities in our City. It is estimated that 23% of children in Sheffield live in relative poverty compared to 18% across the UK, as well as more than one fifth of households in the City, living in relative poverty.

Research also shows that there is a link between good nutrition and attainment. So helping those families in most need where ever we can in times of austerity is crucial and no doubt having a free dinner for their children is vital to those most vulnerable families.

In introducing the free school meals scheme this Government left Sheffield City Council with a £401k shortfall in the capital costs alone, in addition to the extra revenue costs the Council has to face. This has led to ongoing issues with the new duty. Many schools are making great efforts on a daily basis to ensure that all children receive their meal on time, without afternoon lessons being affected but some lunchtime services are very stretched, with premises and staff who work in them under great pressure. We are monitoring this situation and are seeking ways to manage this change.

Hopefully this Government will recognise this fact and will provide ongoing support to schools as the need arises.

Questions of Councillor Andrew Sangar to Councillor Jayne Dunn (Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Streetscene)

1. Will you review the decision to remove Fulwood Lane, Fulwood Head Road, Andwell Lane, Brown Hills Lane, Douse Croft, Roper Hill, and Lodge Moor Road from precautionary gritting routes?

Roads that meet one or more of the published gritting criteria are included in the Priority 2 precautionary gritting network automatically. This network is available on the Council's website.
2. How much would it cost the Council each year to re-instate precautionary gritting on these roads in the Fulwood Head area, as was carried out every year for the past twenty plus years?

Any reinstatement of roads not meeting the agreed criteria would require a complete review of the criteria and that would affect the whole City rather than just Fulwood.
3. Given that there are a number of farms in the Fulwood Head area that require daily deliveries throughout the winter for the health of their livestock what is the Council doing to ensure that these roads remain ice and snow free?

We had no representations from delivery companies during the consultation period for the winter service changes. In rural Counties such as Cumbria and Northumberland they receive a significantly lower level of service than in Sheffield and those rural communities still thrive.

Questions of Councillor Joe Otten to Councillor Jayne Dunn (Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Streetscene)

1. How many grit bins have been removed, and how many additional bins installed, as a result of the new grit bin policy?

272 grit bins have been removed from their current positions due to them not meeting the agreed criteria and of those, 151 have been moved to new locations that meet the criteria. This equates to a net reduction of 121 grit bins which represents a reduction of only 6%.

The number of grit bins on Sheffield's network still represents six times the average number of grit bins per km of road of any other Council we have found figures for, including those with similar topography and rural/urban profiles to Sheffield.
2. Will you be publishing a list of sites where grit bins have been removed or newly installed?

The list of grit bin locations is available on the Council's web site and a mobile app called "gritmaps" has also been developed for android and apple devices which details the location of each grit bin on the network and utilises GPS data to

- identify the nearest grit bin to the user's current location.
3. What arrangements are in place for monitoring the effects over the coming winter of the cuts to the secondary precautionary gritting network?

Each year we carry out our annual winter maintenance review
 4. What is the current number of snow wardens?

The number of snow wardens provided with snow shovels last year was over 550.
 5. What progress has been made in settling the industrial dispute at the household waste recycling centres?

Negotiations are ongoing to resolve the dispute.
 6. How do you believe allegations of bullying in relation to this dispute should be dealt with?

In accordance with the company's policies.
 7. Do you believe the budgeted savings on waste management to be achievable?

Yes
 8. Do you believe the budgeted savings on the Amey contract to be achievable?

Yes
 9. When will the verge protection strategy be agreed?

We expect to publish an updated policy later this year
 10. Do you propose to continue the work of the "Green Commission" and if so, what steps have you taken or do you intend to take to get it moving?

The Green Commission will continue and the first full hearing of the Commission was held on Tuesday 2nd December, as originally scheduled.

We intend to continue with a programme of hearings in the New Year.
 11. Are you satisfied with the progress that has been made on air quality, and how do you intend to make progress in the future?

Poor air quality affects Sheffield and every other large urban area in England, and is without doubt something that Central Government needs to take a very strong lead on. It is shocking that the Government still has no credible strategy to deal with air quality. We have outlined our action and approach to tackling air quality in the Council debate on the issue in October.

Question of Councillor Simon Clement-Jones to Councillor Jayne Dunn (Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Streetscene)

Do Amey know where all their Speed Indication Devices are?

It is the Council who manage the Speed Indication Devices locations rather than Amey

Question of Councillor Penny Baker to Councillor Mazher Iqbal (Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health)

What progress has been made to ensure that the library leases allow Library Groups to draw down monies from other sources?

The lease terms offered to the Library Groups have always allowed provision for them to draw down money from other sources and this has been explained to the Groups on a number of occasions. However, the Council has now offered an alternative approach to granting leases that will give the Groups the necessary security to apply for external funding. The revised proposal will give the Groups significant flexibility and enable them to enter into longer leases at the time required to secure funding.

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

1. Are assessments in adult social care personal budgets and personal assessments carried out by Sheffield City Council alone or are there other organisations carrying them out?

All new assessments are completed by Sheffield City Council. During the past year we had a high volume of reviews to complete and engaged an organisation called Skylakes to undertake reviews for just under 400 people. Skylakes conducted the reviews in the same way as our internal teams using Sheffield City Council documentation, processes and guidance. All the reviews completed by the Skylakes team are checked and agreed by our senior managers. Skylakes have nearly completed the work allocated to them. We are not planning to allocate further reviews to them.
2. How will the Council ensure that the needs of those on Independent Living Fund (ILF) will have their needs met?

Sheffield City Council is committed to meeting the critical and substantial support needs of people who receive the Independent Living Fund (ILF). The arrangements for each individual will be different depending on the individual's circumstances. However in principle the City Council will assess the person's needs and work with the person to put a support plan in place which will meet the needs identified.
3. Have administration costs come down in the same proportion as ILF?

With regards to administration costs regarding ILF, these are currently incurred by the ILF Government body. We only incur costs in a few cases where we are the award manager for the individual. We are not aware that the grant to us will include anything for administration. Therefore administration is an extra pressure to us. For the initial set up and transfer of the approximately 184 service users there will be a one-off pressure and the service is currently scoping the resource impact. However, once the initial transfer has taken place, the

majority of the service users will already be our customers and have the usual assessments and transactions.

Any future decrease in administration costs would be dependent on whole system activity and processes as ILF would be part of the same system.

4. Is there any evidence of an improvement in the speed of payments after assessment?

We have simplified the processes for agreeing support plans across adult social care; in learning disabilities we have allocated more resources to agreeing reviewing and agreeing support plans, streamlined further the panel process and have addressed the staff issues which had impacted on getting assessments reviews and support plans completed and agreed.

Once a support plan has been agreed and the necessary paper work has been submitted it is currently taking an average of 8.4 days for care at home to begin. This is a significant improvement from a month earlier. The speed at which new direct payments are being set up has also improved significantly and it is now taking an average of 25 days less to set up a new payment compared to a month ago.

5. Will the audit report on the overspend in learning disabilities be made available for the public to see?

The audit report on the overspend in learning disabilities is not a public document as it contains confidential staffing information.

6. Is it likely that any person will be subject to safeguarding reviews when funding is reduced?

Safeguarding will continue to operate, as now, in accordance with the agreed procedures. At any point of contact with people receiving care and support services, whether these are new assessments or reviews, safeguarding issues may be considered. The criteria for determining whether a person requires protection through safeguarding remains unchanged.

This is based on their individual vulnerability and the risk of harm. Protecting those who are vulnerable and most at risk will continue to be given the highest priority.

Adult Safeguarding is funded through a partnership of agencies, including Health and the Police as well as the Council. There is no proposal to reduce the funding for Adult Safeguarding in 2015/16. Safeguarding continues to be a critical priority for the Council and the Sheffield Safeguarding partnership.

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