

Agenda Item 5

CITY OF SHEFFIELD

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 2 OCTOBER 2013

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. What progress has been made in seeking an alternative partner to develop the Sevenstone project? | We have commenced all actions to enable the development of the Sevenstone project that we are legally able to do. |
| 2. What progress has been made in the last twelve months in improving Sheffield's relationship with Chengdu? | Relationships with Chengdu continue as part of our formal sister city agreement. Staff at Creative Sheffield are in regular communication with their counterparts from Chengdu; we continue to liaise over inward delegations; for example we are actively seeking to host colleagues from Chengdu as part of Global Manufacturing Festival, and we continue to support Sheffield businesses looking to use Chengdu as a convenient way of entering the Chinese market. |
| 3. How many times has the Business Advisory Panel met in each year since you became Leader of the Council and who has attended? | Business advisor panel has met 13 times since I became Leader |
| 4. As Leader of the Council, do you believe it is imperative to protect the perks of the highest paid Council staff or protect jobs? | No. I do not believe perks should be protected and this Council does not give people perks. Over the last year, we have instead protected frontline staff and the lowest paid by introducing a living wage policy. |
| 5. Do you share my belief that the HS2 is vital to the long term future of Sheffield's economy? | As I have made clear on numerous occasions I support High Speed Rail. |
| 6. Do you welcome the Shadow Chancellor's threat to derail the HS2 project? | The Shadow Chancellor has not threatened to derail the HS2 project. |

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

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| 1. How many expressions of interest were submitted in the future of the Don Valley Stadium site? | 11 expressions of interest were submitted |
| 2. When will you be in a position to brief the Council on these expressions of interest? | The future use of the stadium site falls under the portfolio of responsibility of Councillor Bryan Lodge who will announce the results of the exercise following a full review |
| 3. What work have you undertaken to ensure the Sheffield Eagles find a new home within Sheffield? | We have been working with the Eagles on transition from Don Valley Stadium since January. The Director of Culture and Environment is working with the Eagles as a priority action. They have held several meetings and Sheffield City Council has offered to assist with both securing support from the governing body (RFL) and contributing towards the feasibility work at Owlerton Stadium. The Eagles have publicly acknowledged the support they're receiving from the Council and the two organisations will continue to work together to secure a new home for the club in Sheffield |
| 4. What progress has been made since September in awarding £5 million of unallocated Olympic Legacy Funding? | The work of the NCESEM Board on the remaining potential sites is now near completion and will be announced in due course |
| 5. How many penalty charge notices have been issued to visitors using the car parks at Millhouses Park? | There were 449 penalty charges issued during the period July 2012 - July 2013 at Millhouses Park. |
| 6. How much revenue has been raised from the purchase of parking tickets and the issuing of penalty charge notices? | Revenue raised during July 2012 – 2013 was £32,400. This money is used to support the upkeep of this Green Flag park. The Penalty Charge income does not go to the Park but to Parking Services to offset their costs in maintaining the pay and display car park. |

7. How much of the revenue raised has been spent in the Park and specifically what has it been spent on?

All income is used to directly support daily maintenance of the park. In addition the income will be used over the coming months for specific improvement works including

- Footpath repairs
- Car park surface repairs
- Electrical connection to grid for Mill building for green energy

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

1. How many children are awaiting the outcome of admission appeals? Please provide comparative data from previous years.

All appeals that were heard prior to the end of last term have been notified of the outcome.

For the period September 2013 to October half term, there are 234 appeals waiting to be heard.

For the same period in 2012 there were 147 appeals heard.

For the same period in 2011 there were 153 appeals heard

For the same period in 2010 there were 155 appeals heard

The increase in the number of appeals is partially down to the large number of "In year applications" that have been received where it is not possible to offer parents an alternative school that they are happy with or find acceptable. This could be down to location or distance. In September 2012 a total of 422 "in-year" applications were received. This compares to 607 in September 2013, an increase of 44%.

Since the beginning of September a further 114 appeals have been received and scheduled up to 22 November. Appeal applications are being received on an ongoing basis and a comparison of the period from half term up to Christmas will be available by the beginning of November. From this we will be able to see whether the trend continues to be higher than last year.

2. Do you believe it is fair – and legal – for the Council to make a profit from some families through the Instrument Purchase Scheme?

The Council's current policy is intended to recover costs for administering the whole scheme, as other local authorities do for similar schemes. It is not intended to generate a profit, nor does it. However I have asked officers to

look at whether this is the best way of running such a scheme given the low take up by parents and will write to Councillor Ross in due course with an update.

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

How have you responded to reported difficulties for tenants re-registering their rehousing request?

Since mid-July we have written to all 77,000 customers on the housing register to remind them to update their details on the new improved property shop website. The letters have been phased over two months to manage the expected increase in demand.

There has been extensive communications to remind customers of the need to respond to the letters including articles in the tenant and Tenants' and Residents' Association (TARA) newsletters; adverts in the Star and on Decaux advertising sites; updates to the housing website and on social media.; posters in all customer access points and TARA community centres; and press releases.

There has been a specialist team in place to handle the enquiries and support customers who need help updating their details or accessing the system. There is normally a core of 11 staff available but this has been increased to up to 18 at busy times.

Advice and support has also been available at area offices and the Property Shop, including self-service computers to enable customers to access the system for themselves with help from staff where necessary.

The launch date for the new system has been deferred for four weeks, to 31st October, to allow additional time for housing applicants to update and verify their details. Customers do not have to verify their application by this date, but will not be able to bid on properties until they have done so.

Questions of Councillor Robert Murphy to Councillor Mazher Iqbal (Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion)

1. What is the total Libraries budget? For 2013/14 this is £6,014,000

2. How much of this is paid to Kier for buildings maintenance, to Capita for IT and to other companies for outsourced contracts? Our contracts with Kier and Capita are incorporated into City Council contracts. The libraries budget does not pay for Capita and ICT apart from additional requests to Capita from the Libraries ICT managers budget.

The budget does pay for the maintenance of libraries by Kier. The current budget is £380k

3. How much of the outsourced budget will be saved in the current proposals? I will write to you with this information.

4. Can you break down the proposed £1.6 million saving into savings on staff, buildings and other expenditure? Buildings: running costs for Community Libraries £148k

Staff £1,172,000

Other expenditure £348,500

5. What are the proposed savings for each library branch? The savings for those 10 libraries at potential risk of closure are as follows:

library	variable costs	fixed costs	Total costs	2013/14 salaries
Broomhill	6,799	17,453	24,252	100,900
Ecclesfield	3,817	10,246	14,063	23,300
Frecheville	2,984	5,748	8,732	33,000
Gleadless	3,448	11,453	14,901	40,700
Greenhill	6,466	15,898	22,364	34,900
Jordanthorpe	4,077	9,022	13,099	32,800
Stannington	3,884	6,663	10,547	32,800
Totley	4,713	13,585	18,298	73,600
Upperthorpe	0	0	0	22,400
Walkley	7,331	14,406	21,737	21,900
total	43,519	104,474	147,993	416,300

6. How will the Council assess community groups wishing to support their local libraries? A guidance pack will be issued in a few weeks time

7. Will the receipts from the disposal of empty library buildings be kept in the library service or made available to community groups?

We want to keep all Sheffield's libraries open and are working with local communities to try to achieve this.

Questions of Councillor David Baker to Councillor Mazher Iqbal (Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion)

1. How many groups who placed an expression of interest in running libraries have you personally met since the deadline to submit expressions passed but before the start of the new consultation?

I have met most of the groups

2. Will you be meeting again with all groups who submitted an expression of interest to support community bids?

Yes. We have already met at a meeting on 24th September, 2013 with the groups that registered an interest back in April. Those that could not come along to that meeting we shall follow up individually.

3. Under your proposals there will be four libraries in the west of the City and seven libraries in the east of the City. Do you think this favoured areas policy is fair?

The proposals for which libraries remain as hubs, spokes and Independent libraries was determined by the Needs assessment details of which can be found in Appendix C of 'The Future of Sheffield's Library Services-Needs assessment'.

www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraryreview

The criteria and description of these assessment indicators are included here.

4. Do you believe it is fair to close the second most popular library in the City (on issues per hour) when keeping open less popular libraries in your own favoured areas?

Issues per hour was but 1 indicator used in the Needs assessment and contributed to the overall ranking.

5. Why was no consideration given in your needs assessment to rural or isolated communities? Did these criteria not fit with your favoured areas agenda?

The Needs assessment will take into account the results from the forthcoming consultation.

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

What actions are you taking to ensure that overspends within your portfolio are addressed?

We are progressing the actions outlined in my answer to this same question last month.

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

Regarding the £1.5 million goodwill payment from Kier mentioned in the medium term financial strategy.

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| 1. When was the 'goodwill payment' from the existing repairs and maintenance contract first paid? | The first payment was made in 2003 which was the first year on the outsourced contract to Kier. |
| 2. What has the Council given in return for the 'goodwill'? | The Council gave the goodwill and Kier made a payment in return for it. |
| 3. What has been the total amount of 'goodwill payments' over the contract? | The goodwill payment of £1.5m has been paid for the 11 years of 2002-2013 and therefore totals £16.5m. |
| 4. What have the 'goodwill payments' been spent on? | The goodwill payment goes into the general fund of the Council as a source of income to be used to fund the delivery of Council services. |

Questions of Councillor Andrew Sangar to Councillor Bryan Lodge (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources)

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| 1. What estimate has been made of the annual revenue cost to the Council within the 2013/14 financial year of
(a) Sorby House,
(b) Vestry Hall and
(c) Forum House? | Sorby House: £206,504
Burngreave Vestry Hall: £100,794
Forum House: £26,366 |
| 2. Do you believe the £162,530 taxpayer bill for gagging clauses on departing staff is good value for money? | The decision to use a compromise agreement is always taken to protect the Council from additional cost and a risk assessment is undertaken on a case by case basis. Not agreeing a compromise agreement could lead to costly tribunal cost for legal advice even where the case is won by the Council. The majority of these cases are in Schools and the decisions relating to them are made by the Governing body and authorised by governors. |
| 3. How many of these compromise agreements have been agreed so far in 2013/14 and at what cost? | In 2013/14 there has been one Sheffield City Council employee. |

4. Do you believe the 153% increase in the taxpayer bill for agency staff over two years is acceptable?
- The figures which show an increase in the cost of Reed agency staff are showing 22% not 153%. If we exclude the impact of Sheffield Homes agency spend the actual Council spend has decreased.
5. How much has been spent so far on agency staff within the 2013/14 financial year?
- £3,486,593, included in this is Sheffield Homes spend of £2,438.68.
6. How much has been spent by the Council since May 2011 providing Council staff with i-pads or i-phones?
- All of the above devices were supplied as part of a Technology Fund negotiated via a new framework contract with Orange (now EE) that enabled us to get these devices at **no cost** to the Council and this pilot.
- The Council commenced a small pilot in June 2013 to consider the enhanced functionality and operability of the latest smartphone and tablet devices. This pilot is part of the Council's acceleration to achieve more from its technology and to consider how it can achieve the "Digital by Default" challenge set out by the current Coalition Government (Conservative and Liberal Democrats) and the recently published Government Digital Strategy.
7. How much has the Council paid in business rates on empty properties in the following financial years:
 (a) 2011/12
 (b) 2012/13 and
 (c) 2013/14?
- (a) £98k
 (b) £158k
 (c) £304k.
8. How much has the Council spent on hospitality in the following financial years: (a) 2011/12
 (b) 2012/13 and
 (c) 2013/14?
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| 2011/12 | £58,780 |
| 2012/13 | £39,902 |
| 2013/14 | £25,153 |
9. How much has the Council spent hiring external venues for staff away-days or
- Without a detailed analysis of a very large number of individual orders it

training in the following financial years:

- (a) 2011/12
- (b) 2012/13 and
- (c) 2013/14?

Please list each venue with individual dates and costs.

is not possible to provide this split across only these two categories. However the total figures for external venue hire are as follows but will include many other reasons for the hire other than the two specifically questioned:

2011/12	£185,845
2012/13	£132,235
2013/14	£47,045

10. How much has the Council spent hiring external venues for Councillor away-days or training in the following financial years:

- (a) 2011/12
- (b) 2012/13 and
- (c) 2013/14?

Please list each venue with individual dates and costs.

See above

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

1. Have you assessed how changes to the opening hours of High Green and Deepcar recycling centres have affected use?

Yes.

I am pleased to report that there has been no impact, despite your scaremongering.

Tonnes of material accepted	Aug-12	Aug-13
Deepcar HWRC	328.53	322.75
High Green HWRC	363.05	368.93

2. How many households in Sheffield have currently signed up to the Veolia's new charged-for green bin service?

There are 5,847 customers

3. Are you still attempting to force through your proposal for a student tax on waste collections?

There is not a student tax on waste.

I find it unbelievable that you continue to categorise a fair and reasonable charge on FTSE companies as a tax on students, particularly as the policy is supported by other Liberal Democrats.

Given your party's policy to raise fees to £9,000 per year, this should not come as a surprise.

4. What progress has been made in implementing the Air Quality Action Plan for Sheffield 2015?

Progress has been good across the 7 actions, with the exception of Action 5 - Mitigating the impact of the M1 Motorway.

Further progress here is currently stalled because your Government's Ministers refuse to listen to the united voices of Sheffield campaigners and public bodies.

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

1. What was the total cost to the Council of its Independent Assessment of the Retail Strategy for Homeware Retailing in Sheffield and Critique of British Land Planning Application? Please list individual invoice dates with relevant payments.

The cost has been given previously and a copy of the invoices has been sent to you.
2. How much additional revenue has been raised in the 2013-14 financial year from the increase in city-centre parking charges?

A number of parking charges were changed at the start of this financial year: many charges were reduced, some increased and some new charges were introduced. Work is being undertaken to assess the impact of the changes and we expect to have a clearer picture towards the end of the financial year.
3. What was the cost of the recent consultation by the Sheffield Bus Partnership and how was the cost shared between the signatories to the Partnership?

The cost of the consultation was £10,462 plus VAT, shared between 4 partners, Sheffield City Council, Passenger Transport Executive, First and Stagecoach. As you will be aware additional consultation is proposed around the 17/20/20a routes for the south of the city. This additional consultation will be paid for solely by First.
4. How much of the £25 million allocated to Sheffield City Region through the third round of the Regional Growth Fund has been successfully awarded so far?

To date, we have approved and contracted £12m of RGF which involves total investment by 27 businesses of £82m. The remaining projects (worth £9m RGF) are in the final stages of due diligence. The balance of £4m is subject to a new call for proposals (announced in early September), alongside the £7m 'top up' we received under round 4."
5. What steps have the Council taken to promote the new Groceries Code Adjudicator to rural businesses?

An Act to set up the Groceries Code Adjudicator was passed in June this year. Government is consulting with the farming industry and other stakeholders this autumn. There currently are no final guidelines

defining the powers of the adjudicator. These are apparently to be produced by the end of the year.

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