

## CITY OF SHEFFIELD

### METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

#### MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 5<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 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. Do you believe that information sent out by this City Council should be accurate?                                     | Yes  |
| 2. Do you believe it is improper to spend City Council resources on making Party political points?                       | Yes  |
| 3. Has this City Council any procedures or protocols on the release of Chinese lanterns or the mass release of balloons? | I will write to you with this information. |

##### Questions of Councillor Robert Murphy to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Julie Dore)

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| 1. In answering questions at the last meeting of the Council on 1 <sup>st</sup> October you stated that you 'support moves to increase capacity' in the SMART motorway proposals for the M1. Later during debate you said 'I categorically did not say I wanted greater capacity on the M1' does the Labour Administration support greater traffic capacity on the M1?. Does the Labour Administration support greater traffic capacity on the M1? | You are quoting me out of context.  |
| 2. What further actions has the Administration taken to lobby Central Government to reduce traffic speeds on the M1 to improve air quality since Councillor Bramall's letter of February, 2014?  | We are in regular dialogue with the Department for Transport and Highways Agency to get the best outcome. |

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

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| 1. Do you still believe the budgeted savings on waste management to be achievable?  | See answer of 1 <sup>st</sup> October  |
| 2. Do you still believe the budgeted savings on the Amey contract to be achievable?   | See answer of 1 <sup>st</sup> October  |
| 3. When will the Verge Protection Strategy be agreed?   | Consultation with stakeholders has unearthed an additional specific issue regarding parking on football match days. We are working with stakeholders to secure a positive outcome. |
| 4. What responses do you expect to be sent to people who report issues to Streetsahead via the City Council, beyond the initial acknowledgement or two? | I expect all responses to be in line with the agreed Customer Charter.   |
| 5. What progress has been made by the Green Commission?   | Good progress has been made.   |

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

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| 1. Since the oil spill into the River Don caused by the fire at Frogson's Oil Recycling Depot in July, there have been at least two more serious spills into the river. |  |
| (a) Is there anything the Council can do to assist the Environment Agency in finding and holding the polluters to account?  | Answers are not provided on live enforcement matters. However, I can arrange a briefing for you. |
| (b) Is there anything the Council can do to actually help with the clean up, which is not in the Environment Agency's remit?  | As (a)   |
| (c) Does the Cabinet Member agree with the Environment Agency's assessment of the amount and effects of pollution?  | As (a)   |
| (d) Is the Cabinet Member satisfied with the work done by Amey  | As (a)   |

when it attempted to clear oil and debris behind the boom erected below Ball Bridge during road works?

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

1. How successful was the Parking Payback scheme trialled in Broomhill?

After trialling it, whilst it was popular with some traders, insufficient numbers ultimately took part in the scheme to enable it to have a significant impact and so we have decided to cease the trial. We would consider similar schemes elsewhere if sufficient numbers of traders wished to participate. We do feel it was worth doing the trial in terms of our efforts to be business friendly.
2. Is the Cabinet Member satisfied with the performance of Parking Services?

I am satisfied that this Administration is doing everything possible to improve Parking Services.
3. Were the recently announced changes to bus services in Sheffield made in accordance with the Sheffield Bus Agreement?

A number of minor amendments have been made to services, which services are you referring to specifically?
4. Please state the date(s) during the last four months, of your meetings (or your Advisors' meeting(s) if deputising) with senior management of:  
(a) First South Yorkshire and  
(b) Stagecoach (Yorkshire).

Either myself or my Cabinet Adviser meet with First South Yorkshire, Stagecoach and Sheffield Community Transport on a regular basis.
5. Do you attend City Council officer/PTE officer briefing meetings in connection with your duties as Vice Chair of the SCR Transport Committee, or as political lead for Sheffield?

I have regular briefings with PTE officers and City Council officers, both in my role as political lead for transport in Sheffield and as Vice Chair of the Sheffield City Region Transport Committee.

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

1. Would it be possible to take the Tower Block of Castle Market out of the tender for demolition of the markets?

I will look into this and write to you
2. Would there be any advantages in refurbishing this building rather than demolishing it?

Any decision on refurbishment of a building is a balance between potential future uses for the building and a building's contribution to the overall regeneration of an area, in addition to architectural constraints. I am aware there is a campaign from

some to retain the building. At present the building is due for demolition, however, we will review this decision based on the factors I referred to previously.

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

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| 1. How many orders have been made under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act in Sheffield, in each of the last three years?  | 2 in 2011, 2 in 2012 and 6 in 2014.   |
| 2. How many of these orders have been made with respect to land sited within the Broomhill Conservation Area?  | None  |
| 3. What percentage of Section 215 orders in this period have resulted in:<br><br>- compliance?<br>- appeal?<br>- works in default by the Council?  | All notices have been complied with and 1 notice has been appealed.   |
| 4. In each of the last three years, how many warning letters were sent out to landowners without Section 215 orders being subsequently issued?   | 178 warning letters have been sent out.   |
| 5. Does the Council have a strategy for the proactive use of Section 215 orders to achieve wider regeneration objectives?  | Yes we have a proactive strategy to use Section 215 orders when buildings are in a severe state of disrepair to redevelop premises and charge back to the owners. |
| 6. Can you assure residents that all available enforcement powers, including the use of Section 215, are being actively pursued to improve the state of the derelict Hallam Tower Hotel site and the adjacent semi-detached properties at 107-109 Manchester Road? | All available planning enforcement action is being pursued to improve the state of Hallam Towers and 107-109 Manchester Road.                                     |

Question of Councillor Jillian Creasy to Councillor Ben Curran (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources)

1. The Council Tax Benefit Scheme introduced in 2013 means that the poorest households had to start paying 23% of their Council Tax, which has led to hardship for them and difficulties collecting it for the Council. Is the Council planning to consult on changing the Scheme?

The Government abolished Council Tax Benefit and required Councils to implement a Council Tax Support Scheme but cut the amount of funding available by 10%. The Government then announced that pensioners would need to be protected. This resulted in a 23% reduction in funding available from the Government for the Council Tax Support Scheme for working age recipients.

At the same time as the Government made this change we are also facing unprecedented levels of cuts, the worst in the history of the city meaning we will have lost over 50% of our Government funding. The Government have now rolled the grant for Council Tax Support into Revenue Support Grant and as a result are making further cuts to our funding for Council Tax Support.

The Council is not planning to consult on changing the Scheme as no changes are being proposed.

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

At the last Full Council meeting, I asked for a comparison between the number of free school meals in Key Stage 1 being eaten in 2014 and previous years. You undertook to write to me with those figures. As yet they have not been provided.

You should have now been supplied with this information, please get in touch if you require any further information.

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

I have recently received concerns from serving teachers, about the lack of places for special needs children. This has led to severely disabled children being placed in mainstream schools where the appropriate care is not available. One Sheffield school in particular, which is suffering from serious problems with unruly pupils has had to put the majority of them back into mainstream classes, from the separated groups they were in. This has caused problems for the pupils who want to learn as the classes have become once again continuously disrupted. All this has led to a very unsatisfactory working arrangement for the staff and the pupils. A good education of children in our society is paramount. Is there any way that we can all work together in reversing this terrible state of affairs?

I am not aware of severely disabled children being placed in mainstream unless that is where their parents explicitly wish them to be educated; schools do receive additional resources where that does happen, as they do for children with lower levels of special educational needs. I am not aware of which school you refer to when you say it is suffering from "unruly pupils". I hope this question is not suggesting that children with learning disabilities are "unruly pupils" as this would be ill-judged and completely wrong. Please get in touch with me if you would like to speak further about this.

Questions of Councillor Steve Ayris to Councillor Harry Harpham (Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods)

1. When does the City Council's new Sheltered Housing Charge come into effect?  
Likely to be February 2015 to allow time for formal processes to be followed and 28 days' notice to be given to tenants.
2. Who is the relevant City Council decision-making body or individual?  
Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Service and myself.
3. What was the percentage return rate of the Consultation Feedback Form?  
In total 368 forms have been returned from 1200 properties.
4. How many tenants supported by sheltered housing were in receipt of Transitional Allowance up to October 2014?  
39. (NB corrected to 36 at the Council meeting by Councillor Harpham).
5. How many of these tenants may be eligible for Housing Benefit due to a change in circumstances since Supporting People began in 2002?  
I will write to you with this information.
6. What will be the net increase these tenants will be expected to pay per year?  
£14.89 per week x 50 weeks = £744.50 per year – if they don't receive benefit support.
7. What is being done to mitigate the impact of the increase?  
Individuals can be referred to the income management unit for advice and support through the hardship fund and general debt and benefit advice to maximise income.  
  
The majority of the charge is eligible for Housing Benefit which affects 75 – 80% of tenants.  
  
The new proposed charge of £14.89 is less than the current charge of £16.11 which will benefit all those tenants who are not in receipt of transitional allowance and are not eligible for housing benefit and have to pay the full charge .
8. How many of these individuals returned the Feedback Form?  
13.
9. Is this a "one off" increase, or can sheltered housing tenants expect another next year?  
There are no plans to extend the service charge further.

Questions of Councillor Jillian Creasy to Councillor Harry Harpham (Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods)

With respect to the 101 service:-

1. Has the amount of funding changed in the last year and if so, why?

No changes in funding have been made to the service. The budget for 2014/15 has remained the same as the previous year.
2. Who sets the specification for the service?

The scope of the service was originally agreed in a report to Cabinet in 2005/6. Subsequent reviews of the service have taken place and been subject to Cabinet member reports in 2009 and 2012 respectively. The service specification is overseen by the 101 Partnership Board consisting of senior officers from both the Council and South Yorkshire Police.
3. Has the specification changed in the last year?

No, the service provided to Sheffield City Council is unchanged.

However, in November 2013, 101 became the non-emergency number for all 43 Police Forces across England and Wales.

As part of this transition, with effect from July 2014, 101 became the **only** non-emergency number for South Yorkshire replacing their existing number of 0114 2202020.
4. Who oversees and monitors the service?

The service is overseen by a 101 Performance and Quality Group comprising of representatives from all the services provided by 101. This includes representatives from Communities, Place and Resources portfolios. The client role is performed by Customer Services within Resources.
5. What outcomes do they look at?

A Service Level Agreement is in place for each service delivered by 101 which includes performance standards such as call answering and customer feedback. This is

monitored on a daily, weekly and monthly basis by South Yorkshire Police and is reported to the 101 Performance and Quality Group every quarter.

6. Has there been any evidence of deficiencies in the service?

No formal complaints have been received by Sheffield City Council about the performance of the service.

We are aware that due to challenges with the Comprehensive Spending Review, there has been a recruitment freeze within South Yorkshire Police and the service has had significant challenges in terms of meeting demand. We have been assured that additional resources have now been recruited and will be trained and fully operational by January 2015.

The Council's Director of Customer Services would be happy to follow up on any specific feedback if received about the service.

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

1. How many times have the Local Area Partnership Partner Panels met since May 2014? Please list by area.

Local Area Partnerships are not the same as the Partner Panels that met as part of the Community Assembly structure. Local Area Partnerships are developed around the strategic priorities identified in each of the 7 areas (list of priorities attached). The following LAP meetings have taken place between May & October 2014:

**North – 30 meetings**

8 x Supporting Post 16's LAP (5 x full meetings; 2 x Improving Access Sub-Group meetings; 1 x Skills Made Easy Sub-Group meetings)

22 x Health and Wellbeing LAP (3 x full meetings; 2 x Lunch Club Sub-Group meetings; 9 x Vulnerable people in Stocksbridge Sub-Group meetings; 3 x High Green Miners Welfare Sub-Group meeting; 2 x Volunteer Fair Sub-Group meetings; 3 x Healthy High Green Sub-Group meetings)

**South – 14 meetings**

4 x Financial Inclusion LAP  
5 x Health & Wellbeing of Children and Young People LAP  
5 x Developing Local Enterprise LAP

**North East – 4 meetings**

3 x Pride in the North East (Environment) LAP  
1 x Isolated Older People LAP

**East – 4 meetings**

4 x VCF Consortium meetings (discussing all Area 3 priorities)

**Central – 2 meetings**

1 x Health & Wellbeing LAP – access to A&E  
1 x Supporting Local Businesses LAP – planning & licensing

**South West – 1 meeting**

1 x Social Isolation LAP

South East – 1 meeting

1 x Support for Community Initiatives LAP  
- Westfield

2. How are the current Partner Panels made up?

The Local Area Partnerships (i.e. not Partner Panels) are made up of Councillors and representatives of organisations from the public, voluntary and private sector that can contribute to the identified priority.