

CITY OF SHEFFIELD

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 20TH JULY, 2022

COPIES OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THERETO

Questions of Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Terry Fox)

Q.1 What plans are in place to improve response times for the Council Tax collection service so that enquires and changes of status are dealt with promptly avoiding unnecessary losses of revenue and cases of hardship?

A.1 The Council continues to seek ways in which it can improve its processes and the performance it gives to our customers. To this end, a full review of the Council Tax Service is currently underway. Alongside this, the Council's Customer Service team is embarking on a programme of recruitment in order to increase the capacity of the Council Tax Call Centre to deal with customer calls.

Q.2 What was the average waiting time on the Council Tax Enquires phone line before answering in the last 3 months?

A.2 Question 2 and 3 answered together below.

Q.3 What was the longest wait on the Council Tax Enquiries phone line before answering in the last three months?

A.3 In April 2022, the average call wait time for the Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre team was 76 minutes and 5 seconds, and the longest wait was two hours, 46 minutes and 42 seconds

In May 2022, the average call wait time for the Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre team was 80 minutes and 12 seconds, and the longest wait was two hours, 46 minutes and 41 seconds

In June 2022, the average call wait time for the Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre team was 54 minutes and 37 seconds, and the longest wait

was two hours, 19 minutes and 21 seconds

In May it was agreed that we could recruit an additional eight Customer Service Advisors to the Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre team, and recruitment is in process. In addition, a Recovery Plan in respect of this strand of the Contact Centre will be finalised by the end of July.

Q.4 How many properties in Sheffield are currently in Council Tax arrears?

A.4 For the current financial year 2022/23, no properties are in arrears as accounts will not fall into arrears unless they remain unpaid after 31/03/2023

Q.5 What is the total value of Council Tax arrears in Sheffield currently?

A.5 As at 31st March, 2022, the total amount owing for all years, including amounts for South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority precepts was £83, 376,000

It should be noted that since its introduction, Sheffield will, over time, collect 99% of Council Tax. Currently 97.3% of Council Tax billed has been collected. The figure of arrears as on 31st March 2022, which is owing across all financial years stands at £83,376,000. However, to put this in context, this equates to 2.77% against a figure of £3b Council Tax that has been billed over time.

The value of arrears outstanding has changed considerably over the last two financial years, where the year-end figure carried over has increased and is outside of the usual pattern in previous years due to the covid pandemic. Naturally, the decision to suspend Council Tax recovery during the pandemic greatly impacted this. We have now recommenced our procedures for the recovery of Council Tax once again, which includes making customer contact on the relevant accounts and putting in place suitable repayment arrangements (which are also being requested more frequently by customers in the current economic climate).

Sheffield's position is comparable with other core cities, most of who have experienced a trend of a steadily increasing in Council Tax arrears since 31st March 2018.

Q.6 Over the last year, how much Council Tax support funding has the Council received and how much of this has been allocated to Sheffield residents struggling to pay their Council Tax?

A.6 The Council does not receive discreet funding for Council Tax Support. Funding for the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme (known as Council Tax Support) is included in the overall funding the Council receives from central Government, and as such, it's not possible to separately identify the funding the Council receives.

However, in 2021-22, £39,882,762 was awarded in Council Tax Support in respect of that financial year.

Questions of Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Terry Fox)

Q.7 How many Council owned properties are in rent arrears?

A.7 Answer to be provided by Councillor Douglas Johnson (Chair of the Housing Policy Committee).

Q.8 What is the total value of rent arrears in Sheffield currently?

A.8 Answer to be provided by Councillor Douglas Johnson (Chair of the Housing Policy Committee).

Questions of Councillor Mike Levery to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Terry Fox)

It is almost two years since Youth Services was insourced for Sheffield Futures, with a commitment at the time to invest a further £2 Million into provision

Q.1 Why was none of the £2m invested in 2021/22 despite repeated assurances being given that this would happen, as recently as December 2021 where it states "The £2M is part of the overall youth spend.....and it is our intention to see investment spent by the end of the financial year."?

A.1 We made a £500,000 saving contribution to the corporate saving expectations in 2021/2022, alongside this we capitalised £500,000 for refurbishments of current youth property to ensure that we have working

kitchens that can help respond to food insecurities for young people.

There is more development needed for youth services in Sheffield than was originally anticipated, this has included 50% vacancy in Youth Workers, an issue that is being reflected in the VCF (voluntary, community and faith) sector also. Not having staff has meant we have been unable to offer the provisions required.

However, with saying this we must highlight that we had a very successful Dark Nights programme, an excellent school holidays programme, Celebration of National Youth Work Week and three residential activity weekends took place before the end of the financial year. We have seen a significant increase in provisions covering all 28 wards, fulfilling a Labour commitment, by the end of the financial year compared to the 11 that were covered August, 2021.

It is clear that the re-organised youth services, alongside the additional investment, will provide a more localised delivery model throughout all our Wards. Despite the national challenges in youth worker recruitment, we remain steadfast in our commitment to doing everything we can for the city's young people and ensuring that the support they get is suitable for their needs, and that of their communities. It was a Labour budget amendment that brought additional investment worth millions, something the Liberal Democrats voted against, and were it not for this investment the progress we have made would have been significantly stalled.

Q.2 Is the additional allocation of £1.5M for 2022/23 a full or part year effect?

A. £1.5m is now a full year addition to the youth budget, this is ongoing and reflects a new, agreed budget.

Q.3 Why did it take until March 2022 to create a Youth Strategy some 18 months after insourcing. Who will monitor the annual service (partnership) delivery plan and quarterly action plan apart from the Youth Partnership Board? When will ward councillors receive their quarterly activity reports?

A.3 In the time between insource and the strategy being proposed and approved there was still a lot of change taking place.

Outside of the obvious pressure brought about by the pandemic, which were considerable, there had been two Head of Service which disrupted the plans originally. In this time there was clear indications more was needed to support the development of a sustainable youth service. This included a restructure of the current model which is going ahead at the moment. All Councillors received their Quarterly Action Plans w/c 11th July 2022 and have previously received them first week in April for Q1 action plans.

Summary Local Area Committee (LAC) reports will be received end of July. If Councillors are not receiving their action plans, please contact Chelsea Renehan the Head of Community Youth Services.

There is delay in establishing a youth partnership structure due to ongoing capacity issues, therefore we have decided to recruit a full-time partnership officer 1 year fixed term. This is to expedite this process, and this will then be managed by a new 0.5 role in the new structure.

Q.4 What is the plan for recruitment of youth workers to cover the whole of the city, and what progress has been made?

A.4 We are launching a rolling recruitment for Part time youth workers and Assistant Youth Workers in the city, and we are working with University of Huddersfield to learn more about apprenticeship opportunities which are Government funded.

Alongside this, we are part way through our service restructures MER which is due to be implemented September 2022. This will see additional vacancies of LAC based FT Qualified Youth and Community Workers. Until this MER (managing employee reductions) is complete this cannot be implemented. Our work with unions is positive, and ongoing. This will help strengthen the local delivery model we are committed to and strengthen youth support across all wards.

Q.5 The North LAC is now implementing youth provision in the north of the city. Will the Youth Service take over the operation of this once establishment is complete?

A.5 Youth Services staff are working with the North LAC to advise and support this delivery and there is an ongoing commitment to support with staffing as we recruit to vacancies. This is the beginning of a partnership delivery option between ourselves, the Local Area Committee and the High Green Development Trust and the intention is for this is to build additional youth provision in the west Ecclesfield area that is community based and sustainable going forwards.

Questions of Councillor Kurtis Crossland to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Terry Fox)

Q.1 How many people in Sheffield were eligible for the £150 Council Tax Energy rebate?

A.1 Around 218,000 have been identified as being eligible for a Council Tax Energy Rebate.

Q.2 How many payments have been paid to direct debit customers to date?

A.2 137,106 payments have been made to Council Tax payers who pay by direct debit.

Q.3 How many 'Post Office Pay-out' vouchers had been sent by the end of June?

A.3 78,671

Q.4 How many 'Post Office Pay-out' vouchers have been sent out so far in July?

A.4 As at midday 15th July, 2022 the number issued in July was 2,182. Around 300 vouchers are due to be issued by close of business 15th July, 2022.

Q.5 What communication has the Council had with people eligible for the £150 payment?

A.5 A leaflet was included in all Council Tax bills advising eligible households that they would receive a Council Tax Energy Rebate.

A letter was sent to every household who received a Post Office Payout voucher, advising them that they could take the letter to the Post Office along with proof of their identify, and cash the voucher for £150.

Questions of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Terry Fox)

Q.1 What action has been taken to implement the motion passed at Full Council on 1st June, 2022 where the Council was asked to develop a Customer Service Improvement Plan?

A.1 A draft Contact Centre Recovery/Improvement Plan was completed in early June. The plan has been shared with Performance and Delivery Leadership Board and with Strategy Leadership Board. The next step will involve

discussion with the Strategy and Resources Committee, and there will be further discussion with the Chairs of this Committee about the detail and timings of that discussion. This work sits within a wider strategic review aimed at supporting ongoing improvements in the customer journey for our citizens.

Q.2 What action will you take, through your role on the Combined Authority, to encourage other South Yorkshire authorities to support public transport by reducing subsidies for individual car use through policies such as free town centre car parking?

A.2 Clearly, we are in a very challenging time where commercial operators are responding to the drop in patronage as a result of Covid and the end to the Government funding by cutting a number of bus services across South Yorkshire.

The Mayor is working with Local Authorities and Bus Operators on an Enhanced Bus Partnership and work is being undertaken to consider what needs to be done to improve bus services and attract and encourage more people to use them. This will look at a range of issues from improvements to services and networks, ticketing, information, and communications but demand management measures, such as parking charges, will also be part of this work looking more long-term.

As part of the MCA Board discussions on this, I will be keen to understand the benefits of the range of potential actions the Enhanced Partnership could take and to have full discussions with colleagues across South Yorkshire on the best way to deliver this. However, at a time when people are struggling through the cost-of-living crisis, we have a bus offer that is simply not fit for purpose, and our local economy is building back from the pandemic, I do not believe we should abolish free parking as Green Councillors call for.

Q.3 How appropriate and democratic do you feel it is for the Council to publish substantially different written answers to questions, compared to the responses actually given to elected members at full Council meetings?

A.3 This is obviously not appropriate, and the Democratic Services team work tirelessly to ensure that this does not happen. However, due to an administrative error, on the day of the June Council meeting, there was inaccuracies published for that meeting. This mistake was quickly identified and rectified by staff.

Full Council requires a lot work for Council staff, and mistakes are rarely made, so I hope that Members understand that whilst this mistake should not have happened, it is understandable that problems may sometimes

arise, and that every effort will be made to ensure administrative errors such as this do not occur in the future.

Questions of Councillor Henry Nottage to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Terry Fox)

Q.1 In view of the failure to secure rights of re-entry with tickets to Tramlines in Hillsborough Park this year, will the Council develop a re-entry policy as a condition for future events held on its land?

Q.2 Will it also seek in future to ensure that local groups and businesses have a greater opportunity to be involved as franchisees to facilitate community wealth building in those events?

A.1 & A.2 With regards this year's event, it is important to understand that this is not a decision for Sheffield City Council or the Safety Advisory Group. However, after extensive conversations between Sheffield City Council and the festival organisers, Tramlines has agreed to take a pragmatic approach and confirmed those with unforeseen or emergency circumstances during the weekend should speak to staff at the Customer Service tent located next to Medics and Welfare. The Customer Service Team will also make arrangements for parents who need to take children home and wish to return to site on their own later. This will not address all of the concerns raised but will, we hope, allow some people the re-assurance they need.

With regards the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) relating to Tramlines, this is administered by Sheffield City Council (SCC), its core members are:

- SCC Health & Safety
- SCC Highways
- SCC Licensing
- SCC Major Events Team
- South Yorkshire Police
- Yorkshire Ambulance Service
- South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue

As the name suggests, the group acts on an advisory basis. Following the 2021 Tramlines event, the continuation of the no re-entry policy was put forward by Tramlines **for review** from the SAG who agreed it was the best proposed option operationally, on the grounds of public safety and to mitigate anti-social behaviour. The SAG understands the reasons for continuing to adopt the no re-entry policy, which support a more manageable environment throughout the festival weekend both on and off site. The SAG supports the policy and would not advise against it unless issues relating to public safety are identified as a result of the policy, that cannot/have not been mitigated. The SAG only considers safety issues.

Tickets for the 2022 were subsequently sold, by Tramlines, on this basis.

Our experience has shown that Tramlines are one of the best event organisers in Sheffield for resident consultation and their commitment to both the safety of attendees and protection of the park is paramount in everything they do. The combined attendance at both the Hillsborough Park event and the Sheffield Fringe events is around 110,000 people, bring an economic value of around £1.2M into the local economy and the festival was recently voted the Number One “urban” music festival in the UK.

Tramlines responded to the feedback and a survey by Hillsborough Councillor George Lindars-Hammond to allow re-entry to the festival to those who experience unforeseen or emergency situations across the weekend, including with childcare, can make arrangements to leave and re-enter. It is not possible to change the policy for this year as this will change the SAG agreement and the T&Cs under which tickets were sold.

Once this year’s event is over, a full debrief will begin, including consideration of feedback about future events. I think there needs to be a wider impact assessment and consultation with residents and businesses so that we can all best judge what may need to be done for next year to ensure it supports what the local community and ticket holders want, including around readmittance which I would personally support.

This is something that local Councillor George Lindars-Hammond has been asking me for and I think this would be welcomed by residents and local businesses, and we will be sure to keep people updated as the progression of this.

Questions of Councillor Paul Turpin to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Terry Fox)

Q.1 At the Budget Meeting in March, it was resolved that the Council would “lead by example and decarbonise appropriate buildings utilised by our communities, a proposal of £3.5m capital investment is sought to install renewable energy along with the required energy efficiency measures to support the installation of renewable energy on our estate, especially community hubs, such as schools, libraries, community centres and review Council housing stock that may also be potential.” - what progress has been made so far?

A.1 Key Council departments, Facilities Management (FM), Housing, and Education have been consulted with regarding the allocation of the £3.5M to start determining which buildings would be in scope. A Project Mandate setting out the scope of the programme based on discussions with service

areas has been drafted and awaiting approval by Committee prior to proceeding to feasibility and business case development.

Q.2 Despite the wholesale price of gas falling 75% in the last 3 months; the price has continued to rise for consumers, including the Council and commercial traders in the Moor Market and other Council properties. Installation of Solar PV would reduce bills for the council and traders alike. Will the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee immediately establish a tendering process for providers who can install solar PV on new build and existing Council buildings at cheapest or no cost to the Council, prioritising offers from local partners who are committed to the City and will reinvest profits locally?

A.2 Moor Market was one of our buildings to benefit from the first phase of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding to replace lighting to more efficient LEDs and to install solar PV. All internal lighting has now been installed. However, the design for the solar PV has to be rescoped due to issues around its location (Sheffield City Council don't own all the roof space) and to allow greater space for roof edge protection.

As raised in your previous question, we're looking to invest in retrofitting renewables on our buildings along with any associated energy efficiency works, but we know that this investment alone will not be sufficient to retrofit all the buildings we need to achieve net zero across our assets and agree with you that we need to look at additional alternative financing solutions. As stated in our 10 Point Plan for Climate Action, we're committed to support and increase the amount of community owned energy across the city and procuring such model you refer to could assist with this. Officers are working to identify buildings that will benefit from the £3.5M investment along with others that would be more suited to alternative financial arrangements. A full procurement exercise will be required for both once buildings are identified and, in the meantime, officers are looking to carry out some soft market testing on the models similar to your suggestion.

Q.3 Will the Committee investigate whether all new Council buildings - such as the new Older People's Independent Living at Hemsworth - be fitted with Solar PV to help protect the Council and people who use Council buildings are protected from energy price rises and help meet our commitments to Net Zero?

A.3 The Hemsworth Older Persons Independent Living Scheme is part of the Stock Increase Programme which is building new energy efficient Council owned homes across the city.

The budget for the Hemsworth scheme cannot currently accommodate the installation of Solar PVs. However, the scheme has been designed in a way that not only future proofs it for the installation of solar panels, but also

allows for the installation of further renewable technologies as they become available. Specific future proofing design features include the orientation of roofs to maximise the efficiency of solar PVs, and sufficient space to accommodate the equipment necessary to operate the panels.

The overarching principal for Hemsworth and other stock increase programme schemes is that the new buildings should be easy and affordable to keep warm whilst reducing the overall energy demand and reducing CO₂ emissions.

This is being delivered by adopting a fabric first approach that ensures the buildings are highly insulated, achieve good air tightness and have efficient heat recovery ventilation systems, reducing building heat loss and consequently reducing the need to use the installed heating system.

Future schemes within the Stock Increase Programme are now being designed to respond to the new statutory requirements that came into place via the Building Regulations update from the 15th June 2022. As our new build programme was already achieving high thermal performance, air tightness and renewable ventilation requirements, our required upgrades in design and specification are relatively small, compared to other developers, as we are already achieving the majority of the new requirements. The additional requirements that we need to include relate to the electrification of heating systems, Electric Vehicle charging and biodiversity net gain in developments.

Nevertheless, the requirement to install Solar PV is still not currently mandatory and therefore is still subject to budgetary constraints, particularly in due consideration of the additional cost required to meet the current Building Regulations upgrades. It is anticipated that the installation of Solar PV and related battery storage will become mandatory in the Future Homes and Building Standards Building Regulations update, expected in 2025, to achieve net-zero ready new build homes (net-zero when the grid decarbonises).

Q.4 Will the Strategy and Resources Committee investigate, following the examples of Oxford, Oldham, Peterborough, Cannock Chase, Greenwich, Bingley, Lincoln, Edinburgh, Trafford, Sunderland, South Tyneside, Seaton Valley, Birmingham City, North Tyneside, Lambeth, Exeter, Cheshire West and Chester, Northumberland, Torfaen and Newcastle Councils, in signing the Fair Tax declaration? Councils for Fair Tax Declaration - Fair Tax Foundation (fairtaxmark.net)

A.4 Labour Councillors are committed to ensuring that Sheffield City Council adheres to a robust ethical procurement policy. This means that companies the Council contracts with, must share our desire to create a city economy that works for all by paying their taxes, respecting workers' rights and equal opportunities, and invest in the talents of their employees through good

training and healthy, safe working conditions.

We want to encourage companies to think about the wider social impact on Sheffield communities of their activity. Of course, tax avoidance is counter to this objective, and the Council encourages fair tax practices amongst suppliers when buying goods and services.

However, we must always seek to go further and last month Councillors from across the Chamber supported our amendment to Full Council committing the Council to revising and going further with its ethical procurement policy as part of a renewed drive to deliver Community Wealth Building polices (such as pushing for fairer employment, and progressive procurement of goods and services).

Labour councillors have already committed publicly to ensuring that the 'Councils for Fair Tax declaration' is adopted as part of this work, and the plans for Community Wealth Building and ethical procurement will be going to the Strategy and Resources Committee within the next few months.

At Committee training, I asked Andy Fry OBE - Chief Executive of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny - the question; "do we need a leader in the Committee system?" and his answer was a clear "no". He did say that the public may like to have somebody to identify with as the Head of the Council but there is no actual requirement for a leader

Q.5 What is in the Sheffield City Council Constitution to say we need to appoint a leader now we no longer use the strong leader model?

A..5 Part 2 of the Council's Constitution sets out the Articles of the Constitution. Article 6 deals with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Group Leaders and Article 6.01 says that 'At its Annual Meeting the Council *will* appoint a Leader of the Council, who shall act be the political head of the Council.

Article 6.02 sets out the Role and Function of the Leader and Article 6.03 the Key Responsibilities. These reflect the recommendations made by the cross-party Governance Committee at its meeting on the 22 February 2022.

The Constitution including these Articles was approved by Full Council at an Extraordinary Meeting on the 23 March 2022 with all members in favour and was reaffirmed at the Annual general meeting on 18 May 2022.

Q.6 What is the role of leader in a modern committee system now they have no decision-making powers and can neither appoint people to positions of power or delegate decision making to another?

A.6 See response to Q5 above.

Q.7 Do you think Sheffield City Council could be a leader for progressive change and do things differently by scrapping the role of leader altogether in favour of something more co-operative?

A.7 I believe this question shows a fundamental lack of understanding in what it takes to provide stable and secure organisational leadership needed for an organisation the size of Sheffield City Council.

I am not aware of, in the entire history of UK local government, such a proposal as outlined being adopted

Q.8 Do you think we could have a shared figurehead role between the parties, or a rotating role on a quarterly or six-monthly basis?

A.8 See answer above.

Q.9 What is the possibility of “rebranding” the role to something other than leader? e.g. spokesperson, Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee etc.

A.9 See response to Q5-7 above.

Questions of Councillor Sophie Wilson to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Terry Fox)

Q.1 How many staff are employed directly by Sheffield City Council?

A.1 8,697 Including Casual and Bank Pool.

Q.2 How many agency staff are working for Sheffield City Council?

A.2 None. We do have staff working on internal agency and bank pool arrangements, but these are not zero-hour contracts.

Q.3 How many staff are on zero hours contracts?

A.3 No. They receive the Real Living Wage as determined by the Living Wage Foundation, this exceeds the Living Wage.

Q.4 Are agency staff receiving the Living Wage?

A.4 No. They receive the Real Living Wage as determined by the Living Wage Foundation, this exceeds the Living Wage.

Q.5 Are they receiving the Real Living Wage?

A.5 Yes. They receive the Real Living Wage as determined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Q.6 If so, how does Sheffield City Council know this?

A.6 Through monthly Management Information Reports which are discussed at monthly contract meetings

Question of Councillor Ruth Milsom to the Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q. Can you please detail what has been done this year to promote the student waste collection scheme?

A. The student moves out campaign, or to use its wider title 'Donate Don't Waste' is a joint programme of activities between both Universities, the Students Unions and Sheffield City Council.

As part of that campaign, the communication aspects for the services are promoted by the Universities as they have the best reach to students. The Universities use a range of mechanisms to promote the services available to students during this period (there are a range of other university based activities like collections points for non-perishable food to donate to food banks etc). This includes emails to students, electronic messaging on their portal systems, and on campus advertising of the campaign.

The information is also sent to the landlords the Universities deal with who also help promote the services through emails to their tenants as well as discussing it directly with tenants during house calls that many landlords and letting agents undertake prior to the tenancies coming to an end.

The Universities also try and promote the services into local community groups to ensure that permanent residents are aware of the services and can help promote the services in their areas should they feel it appropriate.

We are, through the litter and waste subgroup of the 'Good Neighbours Forum', reviewing the communications processes to ensure we reach the maximum numbers of people and do so at the right times with the relevant information to make the scheme as effective as possible.

Questions of Councillor Angela Argenzio to the Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Something has gone badly wrong with regards to students moving out of their accommodation and the rubbish and fly tipping left behind. Could you tell us:

Q.1 Whose decision was it to stop providing the "red sack" scheme to student properties?

A.1 The red sacks (more recently clear sacks) were provided up until the 2020 campaign, when covid meant that most of the outlets were closed and amended working practices meant circulating the sacks was simply not possible. This was continued in 2021 again due to covid restrictions still in place disrupting the network of outlets (universities, students unions, letting agents and landlords).

The working group for the 'Donate Don't Waste Campaign' which includes both Universities, both student unions and the Council's Waste Management Team discussed whether to maintain this practice this year and felt that students providing their own sacks was a reasonable system to continue in this first year of a normal return after covid.

The planned proposal for the services was provided to the Cabinet Member for Waste in February/March time through a briefing paper.

Q.2 How much money did it save the Council?

A.2 The sacks cost varies slightly each year depending on production costs at the time and numbers circulated but the cost of the sacks each year would likely be around £2,000.

Q.3 How much money is projected to be spent on clearing fly tipping from student moves? (last year figures will do for comparison for now).

A.3 To answer this there is first a matter of clarity needed. Bagged waste properly presented is not fairly considered fly tipping as we have invited this waste to be put out and have a service for collecting it. This year, the cost for that additional collection service from Veolia is likely to be around £16,000 for three weeks of a collection service, which operates daily including through the weekends to collect this bagged waste.

Other waste where it is incorrectly placed out is part of the StreetsAhead contract with Amey and does not incur any additional costs to the Council, and falls within the normal working practices for clearing fly tipping where it occurs on the highway.

Q.4 What are the plans to engage better with landlords and to make them accountable for the mess that their tenants leave behind?

A.4 The Donate Don't Waste Programme engages heavily with landlords through both universities undertaking to brief landlords and letting agents of the services in place to promote to their students.

Through the good neighbours project, the litter and waste sub-group is seeking to bring landlord representation into that group to help develop that dialogue and develop greater engagement from that sector.

It is important though to clarify that legislation does not support making landlords responsible for tenants disposing of waste badly. Legislation makes it clear that those putting the waste out are the ones that can be held accountable and could face enforcement action. These matters have previously been investigated in detail, but legislation simply does not

support pursuing the landlords for the actions of the tenants in these such matters.

Only where the waste remains on the private property, can the landlord be made accountable for the waste in question and such matters are followed up as they are anywhere in the city by the Environmental Protection Service.

The further complication for enforcement action where waste is dumped onto the pavement or left in gardens, is that action needs to be taken against a specific individual and can't simply be applied against all tenants and identifying those responsible, especially if they have all now vacated a property, can become a very complicated process.

Q.5 Will the Council fine landlords whose properties move result in fly tipping on pavements and potential public health risk?

A.5 As per the previous answer, legislation does not allow for the landlords being held accountable for the actions of their tenants in these sorts of situations. We are though exploring how we can use aspects of the Approved Student Housing (SNUG) scheme operated by the Council for both Universities, to see if elements of that could be tightened up to make landlords more accountable for these sorts of issues.

Questions of Councillor Maroof Raouf to the Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q.1 When will all Councillors receive a full and documented list of all contraventions that are enforced by Sheffield City Council?

A.1 Councillor Otten to provide a verbal response.

Q.2 Does the City Council take the approach to educate first on all offences and penalise afterwards? If not, then which offences does it penalise immediately?

A.2 When new parking restrictions are introduced (for example a new permit zone, or the recently implemented footway parking restrictions in the city centre), the Civil Enforcement Officers would issue warning notices to vehicles for the first two weeks to give motorists an opportunity to understand restrictions are in place which will be enforced in future.

When CCTV enforcement commences on a bus lane, warning notices are issued – current policy allows for a two-month warning notice period (longer is allowed than parking as the CCTV footage needs to be reviewed, then DVLA contacted, so notices can be issued by post to the keeper.

Q.3 Do Civil Enforcement Officers give those parked on double yellow lines a set amount of time before issuing an Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), if so why does this happen?

A.3 There is no statutory time that must be allowed before a Penalty Charge Notice is issued to vehicles on yellow lines, but it is good practice to allow an observation period on yellow lines (where there is not also a loading ban in place – indicated by yellow kerb markings). This enables the officer to gauge if loading activity is taking place (as there is an exemption for this activity)

Q.4 Does the City Council have any remit to issue FPNs for those parked on yellow zig zag lines during restricted hours?

A.4 Yes, if there is also a sign adjacent indicating the “no stopping” restrictions and a Traffic Regulation Order in place.

Q.5 Does Sheffield have a “wait and ticket” policy before issuing an FPN? If so, what is the exact amount of time they are expected to wait? If not, then can it be confirmed that as soon as a contravention has been witnessed that an FPN is started?

A.5 This depends on the contravention type. If there are loading exemptions that apply to the restriction, an observation period would normally be given. In this circumstance a five-minute observation period will normally be applied; however for large commercial vehicles (i.e. Ford Transit size or larger) this may be increased to ten minutes.

However, if the CEO believes the vehicle has been parked for a reason other than one permitted (e.g. the driver has stopped to use a cashpoint machine, pop into a newsagent, go into a fast food outlet) an instant Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) can still be issued with recorded notes to explain why a shorter observation period was given.

A PCN must not be issued to a vehicle which had been legitimately parked in a bay (on or off street) until at least 10 minutes has elapsed after it was allowed to be parked.

If a vehicle was parked in a pay and display bay at 10.06am with a previously valid ticket in the vehicle which expired at 10.00am, a PCN could not be issued until after 10.11am. If the CEO first saw the same vehicle at 10:11am a PCN could be issued instantly. However, if there was no pay and display ticket clearly displayed (or evidence of paid for time), a normal observation period would apply.

The grace period applies whether the period of parking is paid for, or free limited waiting.

Grace periods only apply to designated parking places where a person is permitted to park. A road with a restriction (e.g. single yellow line) or prohibition (e.g. double yellow line) is not a 'designated' parking place either during - or outside of - the period of the restriction or prohibition.

There are national regulations grace period rules that apply. This is different to an observation period; it is time that must be allowed before a PCN can be issued.

Questions of Councillor Ruth Mersereau to the Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q.1 I understand that the Council owns an Automatic Number Plate Recognition vehicle, that could be used for enforcement of traffic offences, but that it has been out of operation for some time. When was the last time that this vehicle was in service?

A.1 The camera car has been out of action approximately for over a year. This has been due to the upgrade undertaken by the supplier which is not compatible with our servers. The Council Service Desk has been looking into this and have identified that it is a bigger piece of work than anticipated and cannot be absorbed within the current resource. A temporary project manager needs to be appointed externally to look at this work. This issue does not only impact on the camera car but in future any new ANPR cameras required for bus lanes/gates will need this upgrade in place. To speed up the recruitment process BCIS (Business Continuous Improvement Service) will be using the recruitment agency; this process started last week.

Q.2 When will it be operational again?

A.2 We are hoping this upgrade work will be completed within the next four months.

Question of Councillor Ben Curran to the Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee (Councillor Richard Williams)

- Q. The Rivelin Valley Water Play park was closed this weekend (9-10 July). A Council spokesperson explained that this was due to staffing issues as follows:-

Rivelin Water Play operates using a sand filtration system requiring chlorine treatments and regular testing and monitoring throughout its opening. This requires all staff operating the facility to have appropriate training and competency. Rivelin opens for a limited summer period only. This creates additional staffing pressures employing seasonal staff for a limited period with appropriate skills or the confidence to undertake this role. Recruitment opened in January with a general skills shortage for lower graded roles throughout the industry.

- (a) what measures are being put in place to deal with the staffing issue?
(b) when will this be resolved?
(c) can you give the public an assurance that this won't disrupt opening hours over the summer period?
- A. (a) Work started prior to the pandemic looking at options to work with City Centre management who maintain similar systems throughout the year not just seasonal opening to increase resilience as a long-term solution. This was delayed due to the pandemic alongside that team also running with reduced staffing capacity reducing flexibility to support Parks. Short term additional training for all our weekend staff, additional Gardeners and a number of senior managers has been arranged for this week with further discussions with City centre management going forward.
(b) We expect the facility to be operational throughout the remained of the planned summer opening period
(c) As above. Every effort is being made to train additional staff for additional resilience and keep the facility open while work continues on long term plans with the City Centre water features team.

Question of Councillor Talib Hussain to the Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee (Councillor Richard Williams)

- Q. Norwood Hall and Bishopsholme Community Centre was scheduled to be opened many months ago, and Wensley Community Centre was

due to be handed over to the Tenants' and Residents' Association (TARA) last month, but they are still waiting. This is understandably causing frustration in the local community. Could you please give an update on both these centres?

- A. Both community buildings are now available for use. There have been some delays in agreeing the lettings agreements with the TARAs in question as these have been revised post-COVID. We have worked with Wensley TARA to resolve this, and they are now using the community centre for their agreed sessions with effect from 14th July 2022. We are still working through this process with Norwood and Bishopholme TARA, but the centre is available for use as soon as this is completed.

Question of Councillor Minesh Parekh to the Co-Chairs of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee (Councillor Dawn Dale and Councillor Mick Rooney)

Q. A recent Freedom of Information (FOI) request, reported by Now Then Magazine, revealed a 96% increase in homophobic and transphobic hate crimes in South Yorkshire over the past four years. What steps is the Council taking to ensure LGBTQ+ young people feel safe and secure, both in and outside of school environments; and to counter this rise?

A. The Council has been active in projects and partnerships over many years to ensure that LGBTQ+ young people feel safe and secure in Sheffield, both in and outside of school environments. Our School Improvement Partner, Learn Sheffield, SAYiT, the LGBT+ Youth Service and officers from People's Portfolio in particular have worked on projects to support schools to effectively respond to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crimes/incidents, for example via the Student Wellbeing Resource for Schools. SAYiT provides training to schools, and other services working with LGBT+ young people as well providing support to individual young people through their various youth groups. Other related actions include developing new guidance on supporting young people who are transgender. In addition, the Sheffield Race Equality Commission report was launched on 14th July 2022, the Council will be taking forward its recommendations across through actions that include intersectionality between different protected characteristics and actions and therefore, the hate crime/incident actions arising from the Commission will also support LGBT+ young people in Sheffield.

The Council currently commissions additional youth work support for LGBTQ young people aged 10-25. This provides young LGBTQ+ people with specialist youth work that can help learning, personal social and emotional growth and support and can also provide stable support and ongoing peer groups and friendships.

Questions of Councillor Gail Smith to the Co-Chairs of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee (Councillor Dawn Dale and Councillor Mick Rooney)

I have casework, and I work with young people with learning disabilities. There has been no respite in Sheffield for well over a year. This is a vital service, which helps parents, I spoke to a social worker who told me, in most cases its at least two years, and there is little chance it will change. There is a massive shortage of social workers. This is a real crisis for some families.

Q.1 Is it true that, some parents of young people who have challenging behaviour such as sever Autism, have not had respite for over two years?

A.1 During the first lockdown, respite services were closed. However, the Children with Disabilities Team responded by:

1. setting up and offering Thornbridge Outdoor Activity Centre during holiday periods.
2. flexibility around the use of direct payments.
3. employment of support workers.

Some respite services did resume, and children and young people started back. However, due to a situation with accommodation in Hesley (Doncaster) this was limited. 12 months ago, a number of homes as part of Hesley group were closed down in Doncaster, we had four children in that Home and we therefore had to move them into our short break provision. Since then, we have moved two of the four on and two still remain at Mulberry Lodge. This does however mean, given the significant needs of the children placed at Mulberry, we have had to close the facility and not able to offer respite to anyone else. One of the young people placed is turning 18 soon and work continues to find them suitable provision.

Another home in Doncaster was rated inadequate and had to move two into Rushey and therefore had to close access for respite to other families. The only full functioning overnight short breaks we have at present is at Chancet Wood. We are moving those children on and in the meantime we have another range of provision including the use of Thornbridge and increased direct payment community short breaks clubs.

The situation means that we are unable to offer overnight stays until appropriate placements are identified for the young people. We are actively working with our Placements Team and have also involved our new Commissioning Head of Service to give support in our placement searches and options to secure permanent placements for the children we are caring for on a full time basis. We are also actively exploring how we can increase our own in-house permanent provision for children and young people with profound learning disabilities and autism.

Families were, and continue to be contacted and offered alternative support if needed such as direct payments for increased or establishing PA time, and additional Special Needs Inclusion Playcare Service (SNIPS) clubs support, however not many have taken our offer up. We do have a few families that are in real crisis now and have intimated that they will need their young people accommodated if the situation continues. We continue to review all options regarding respite to attempt to provide the right support for families.

We have set up Thornbridge again to cover during the summer, but we are aware that families are desperate for an overnight provision. We have contacted other Local Authorities and they are in a similar situation, and not in a position to offer us any of their respite overnight provision to support our families.

I appreciate that you may have follow-up questions and may want to know far more detail than can easily be provided in this format. If it is helpful, we will both meet with you and Council officers to discuss further. This invitation extends to any interested members.

Q.2 When can we expect the call centre to be back to answering calls, within a reasonable time?

A.2 From a Children and Families perspective, the Call Centre, within normal working hours, is the Safeguarding Hub front door. This is staffed by two whole time equivalent (WTE) staff 37 hours Business Support Officers managed by a Business Support Manager who are responsible for handling all calls between 08:45 and 17:15 Monday to Thursday and 08:45 to 16:45 on Fridays.

The access to the “Front Door” via telephone has been maintained as per pre COVID and we are continuing to respond effectively to calls received. On average, the Safeguarding Hub received 550 calls per five day working week, which equates to roughly 110 per day. We are answering approximately 93% of all calls received and monitoring any calls that are abandoned. Abandoned calls are those that have rung for more than 60 seconds but end before being answered, we have approximately between six to eight abandoned calls per working day. Call volume does vary according to time of day. We have peaks between 12:00-13:00 and then 14:00-15:00 which can go up to about 20 calls per hour, however the remaining hours tend to range from between 9 -12. Our quietest periods tend to 10:00-11:00 and 16:00-17:00.

We now have a “call cue function” so that any caller to the Safeguarding Hub is aware of their position within the system and they also receive a “comfort message” every 60 seconds reassuring them that we are working hard to answer their call.

The call handlers are now also asking each caller what their position was in the queue when they first rang so that we can monitor the length of queue. This has never been above five. Once the call handlers answer the call and have taken basic information regarding the concern and checked the electronic record, they will forward the call to a qualified screening social worker to respond and provide appropriate and relevant advice. On the occasions where no social workers are available due to being engaged in

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