

CITY OF SHEFFIELD

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 6TH SEPTEMBER 2023

COPIES OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THERETO

Question of Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

Q.1 Do you agree with the decision of Rotherham Council to object to plans for the new COMPASS facility, which is set to create around 8,000 new jobs?

A.1 Rotherham Council has raised a technical issue in respect to Travel Plan data that the Sheffield City Council Planning Team is now considering as part of the overall assessment of the Planning Application for the COMPASS facility. Rotherham Council inadvertently sent their comment through as an objection but have since clarified that their comment is not an objection but rather a request for the Council to ensure the correct data is continued to be used in the assessment.

It is extremely positive that South Yorkshire has become the first Investment Zone to be announced in the UK. In Sheffield and our region, businesses and researchers are at the cutting edge of new developments in advanced manufacturing, green aerospace, advanced health and wellbeing, clean energy, and the digital sector. The investment zone will provide new opportunities to scale up businesses and create new opportunities for jobs and further investment. All political Leaders of the MCA share this belief and are working hard to ensure our region is best placed to take full advantage of the opportunities the Investment Zone presents. It provides an opportunity to bring in millions in private investment and is expected to help support at least 8,000 jobs by 2030.

Q2 The Crookes/Walkley Active Travel Neighbourhood is due to come to the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Committee in two weeks. The trial for this neighbourhood lasted only a few hours before being removed due to safety concerns and objections from local residents.

Do you believe that this decision should be taken at a more local level (namely the South West LAC), as agreed at the Council's AGM in May?

A.2 The question contains some inaccuracies. The Crookes and Walkley Active Neighbourhood trial scheme has been live for 15 months since the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order was published.

I assume that the question relates to a specific part of this trial concerning specific modal filters on Springvale Road that were trialled under close observation by Local Councillors and transport planning officers. The trial measures were removed following quick agreement by council officers and Councillors that they might not work safely.

Throughout the trial a range of traffic management measures have been trialled and officers have worked with ward councillors (Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green), businesses and residents to review aspects of the experimental schemes and make appropriate changes over this period. We have listened to the communities' views but also have used on-site observations and other data to support this process.

The council's process has been very clear regarding Active Neighbourhood Trials. The constitution requires objections to Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) to be made by the Transport, Regeneration and Climate (TRC) Policy Committee, as well any related decision-making. Councillors have known for a long time that the final decision making would be at the TRC committee. The views of the local community and local Elected Members will be fully reflected in the reports to be considered later this month.

The Crookes/Walkley trial crosses over two Local Area Committee (LAC) areas so it wouldn't be viable to make decisions within the South West LAC forum, even if that was constitutionally permitted.

Question of Councillor Brian Holmshaw to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

Q.1 What are the criteria for the offer to community groups of the container units formerly sited on Fargate?

A.1 The criteria are contained within the guidance and application form published on the council's website [Steel Containers Community Reuse Project | Sheffield City Council](#)

The community offer was launched on 31 July with a press release, mailout to groups that had shown an interest, and distribution through community groups via the LACS.

I am committed to ensuring the containers find new homes in communities across Sheffield. I'm looking forward to hearing about the proposals and to seeing the containers repurposed in new locations across the city.

Interested groups wanting to apply to use a container in their community must submit their application by Sunday 10th September. Once all the submissions are in, a steering group will consider all the applications and

provide recommendations for approval to the Strategy and Resources Committee later this year.

Q.2 When will the criteria be published?

A.2 See above

Q.3 What date did the 10-year contract with Tramlines begin?

A.3 Tramlines does not hold a 10-year contract, despite reports to the contrary.

Since 2018, Tramlines has a premises licence to hold the event in Hillsborough Park. The term "licence" refers to the legal permission to carry out licensable activity on the land, conferred under the Licensing Act of 2003, unless revoked by the Council following a formal legal process in response to concerns in relation to one of the four core objectives of the Licensing Act;

- Public Safety
- Public Nuisance
- Crime and Disorder
- The Protection of Children from Harm

Tramlines has brought, and continues to bring, a huge economic impact to the city since it began in 2008. Last year, Tramlines commissioned a full economic report with Bluegrass Research which showed that the 2022 event generated in excess of £3.8 million for the local economy. It adds to the thriving music scene we are privileged to have in our city.

Following the second wettest weekend in July ever recorded in the city, this had a major impact on Hillsborough Park. I know how frustrating this has been for local residents and thank people for their patience as restoration work is undertaken. Tramlines and the council are working hard to restore the park to its usual high quality that people expect. For the latest updates on repairs to Hillsborough Park, visit tramlines.org.uk/info/residents.

Q. What is the conclusion of the talks between SYMCA and national government over the poor quality of the Bus Partnership Agreement submission to government referred to in the reply to July members questions?

If there is no conclusion to the talks as yet when will they be completed?

How will the results of the talks be communicated to the public?

A. I do not agree with the questions' claim that the submission was of a poor quality. It was an ambitious and developed proposal. We need government

to match our Region's ambitions but once again the government is failing to do what is required, and the region's transport offer is being badly let down.

South Yorkshire was the most populous region in the UK to receive no funding in the first round of Bus Service Improvement Plan monies. We received a small amount of top up money earlier this year; at the same time, other regions were given permission to reallocate their earlier BSIP monies away from long-term transformational goals and towards short-term financial pressures on the network. As a result of this moving of the goal posts, South Yorkshire has been left with around £4 per person from Government to support our bus network; against around £34 per person in West Yorkshire, the West Midlands, or Greater Manchester. This is a fundamental iniquity, as the link between funding and need has torn – regardless of the state of any initial bid.

We understand that there are still discussions with Government about the need to significantly improve the level of funding that South Yorkshire receives to support local bus services. Oliver Coppard has recently expressed the need for Government to respond positively to increase funding to deliver the bus services that people in Sheffield and South Yorkshire, expect, need and deserve.

Mayor Oliver Coppard has written to the Transport Secretary, Mark Harper, to request an urgent meeting to discuss the financial situation facing South Yorkshire's buses, but has yet to receive a response. In the meantime, Mayor Coppard is committed to holding over two dozen meetings in community centres, town halls and village halls across South Yorkshire to update the communities most affected on progress. The MCA maintains a portal providing updates on progress, at: southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/fair-deal.

We will continue to do everything we can to support efforts to get Sheffield's transport network to where it needs to be.

Question of Councillor Laura Moynahan to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

- Q. Will Councillor Hunt join me in celebrating the achievements on the Lionesses, the most successful England side in more than a generation, and in particular those players from, or who started their careers in, South Yorkshire: Millie Bright, Ellie Roebuck, Beth England and Esme Morgan?**
- A. Yes! It was a fantastic achievement, and the Lionesses are changing the game. It is important we all come together to celebrate their fantastic work and pay particular respect to those who started their careers in South Yorkshire.**

I know from speaking with parents and coaches in the city that there is an increase in girls and women wanting to play football – a sign of how transformative the impact of the lionesses has been.

I would also like to put on record my thanks to all SCC staff and partners who, at very short notice, arranged the screening at Devonshire Green last month. It was a privilege to have been there alongside so many to cheer on England. Though the result was disappointing, it in no way diminishes the positive impact that Sarina Wiegman's side are having on sport in this country.

Questions of Councillor Ruth Milsom to the Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee (Councillor Richard Williams)

Q.1 What discussions, if any, have taken place with SUFC about their disused sports ground at Weston View in Crookes and ways to bring it into community use?

A.1 Initial, early stage conversations have taken place between SUFC and the LAC around the possibility of bringing the Weston View site back into community use.

Q.2 Why did the Parks department take the view not to install an electricity point at Bolehill Recreation Ground, and what consideration has been given to the implications of this for businesses scaling and the long-term sustainability of mobile businesses in the Bole Hills?

A.2 Installation of an electric point was costed at around £12.5k. After consideration by the P&C service, together with the LAC, it was felt too costly for the P&C service or LAC to cover at this current time. The current value of the catering pitch would not justify this level of investment, as it would take a number of years to recoup.

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

Q. When commissioning public art and public realm work in our parks and green spaces, how widely advertised is the tender process and in what ways does the department encourage local artists and/or artists from diverse backgrounds to apply?

A. The process to commission public art or public realm work in parks or green spaces would follow all required procurement processes and any engagement would depend on the specific requirements of the site. Recent pieces of public realm work (such as in Rivelin Valley Park and Sycamore Park) have been commissioned directly by the local Friends group – not by Sheffield City Council.

Questions of Councillor Barbara Masters to the Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee (Councillor Richard Williams)

Q.1 The demand for more of our open spaces to be left to rewild is increasing as people are coming to realise the full implications of the

loss of biodiversity. However, many people remain unaware of the toxicity to humans and animals of some of our native plants, equating 'natural' with harmless. This can have devastating consequences where rewilding results in grasses that can be cut for hay. Ragwort is a plant that is proliferating in our parks and along our verges and grows unchecked. It is known to be toxic to animals and farmers remove it from land used for grazing, hay and silage. When dried, as it would be in haymaking, ragwort retains its toxicity. It is potentially fatal to horses which eat it, but chickens are also highly sensitive and it can also cause illnesses in pets and people.

Landowners or occupiers have an obligation to control the spread if it poses a high risk (within 50 metres) of land used for grazing or forage production where it poses a serious risk to grazing animals.

(a) Does any of the Council's parks land fall into this category?

Generally no, but there has been at least one case in the past 10 years – a management plan was devised and the ragwort was removed.

Mostly we recommend leaving ragwort as it is a native wildflower with many specific 'species associations' (such as the caterpillar of the cinnabar moth, a Section 41 'priority species'). Horses and other grazing animals can co-exist with ragwort with few problems, as happens at Knepp (and other rewilding projects) where ragwort and other so-called 'injurious weeds' are left to grow without intervention. Problems tend to arise when ragwort finds its way into hay or when pasture is poorly managed, i.e. over-stocked or over-grazed and the land becomes 'poached', hence animals may eat ragwort if there is nothing else. We should not lose sight of the fact that herbivorous animals, whether wild or domesticated have co-existed with ragwort in the British Isles for the last 10,000 years.

(b) Does the Council allow its rewilded areas to be used to make hay or are there plans to do so?

The council maintains many fields around the city that we use for hay or grazing. We're able to make enough hay for our animals from these that there are no current plans to take hay from elsewhere. We would be wary of looking at other areas as litter and dog fouling would be a serious problem contaminating the hay. In addition to this, logistically we'd not be able to bale on-site due to the potentially smaller size of the plots so would have to cut, transport, swap machinery and then bale which wouldn't be efficient, economical, or particularly environmentally friendly.

Littering and dog fouling in rewilded areas are likely to prove a more significant management issue than ragwort.

(c) How does/will it ensure it is free from ragwort?

Our farmers monitor our grazing and hay making sites for ragwort and would not graze or make hay from any sites where it is identified. If they do identify a site with ragwort that they'd like to graze, they would treat the ragwort and monitor to make sure it is not present before taking animals back on.

Q.2 Ragwort grows freely in our parks, frequented by dog walkers. While ragwort is beneficial to insect life it is harmful if ingested by pets. It is also bright and colourful when in flower and attractive to people of all ages. However, the toxins are absorbed through the skin and it should only be handled with gloves.

Given it is now widespread and more contact with pets and people is likely is there a case for controlling its growth either through limiting it to spots that are less accessible or by ensuring plants are removed before the flowers set seeds, given that most insects benefit from the flowers?

A.2 Ragwort has always been a common species of unmanaged grassland, scrub, hedgerows and field margins and we wouldn't necessarily agree that there is a case for controlling its growth, except in the specific circumstances discussed, such as land managed for hay making. We don't consider that there is *any* risk to dogs (or other pets) from poisoning due to the plant being so unpalatable. We cannot find any evidence from scientific literature of a *confirmed* case of ragwort poisoning in dogs. We should bear in mind that ragwort is one of numerous toxic and poisonous plants found in the British countryside. See table below.

Q.3 Ragwort is just one native plant that is toxic. With the changes to mowing regimes within the city and the moves to rewild our verges people are increasingly likely to encounter toxic plants when out and about.

Has the Council given any thought on how to educate people about the harm some plants can cause as well as all the benefits they bring?

A.3 These species are already there and some are very common along footpaths, waterways, hedgerows and in our public greenspaces. We don't think that an increase in distribution along our road verge network poses an increased risk to the public.

The brief list below describes some of our more well-known poisonous plant species, but there are many more and we have not considered the world of fungi, of which again, there are a wide range of potentially dangerous common species with varying degrees of lethality. In general, deaths from the toxic effects of ingested plants in England and Wales are very low and we should not regard the rewilding of public greenspace as likely to increase risk for people or their pets.

As a snapshot and context, the Office for National Statistics recorded 6 deaths in 2016 (England and Wales) with toxic plants identified as the underlying cause. Of these, 2 cases were accidental poisoning, 4 were intentional self-poisoning.

Ragwort	Poisonous to grazing animals	Very common	
Foxglove	Poisonous, can cause a range of symptoms in humans	Very common	
Lords and Ladies	Toxic	Very common in woodlands and hedgerows	
Deadly Nightshade	Toxic	Uncommon. Occasionally found in hedgerows	
Hemlock	Toxic	Uncommon. Generally found along our waterways	Elevated risk for foragers, misidentifying for similar species.
Hogweed	Causes skin rash and sensitivity	Common and widespread	A risk for gardeners and allotmenters
Giant hogweed	Can cause unpleasant and life-changing skin rashes	Uncommon. Usually found along our water-courses	The Council receive many reports of giant hogweed and will eradicate if confirmed. Most cases however are large specimens of common hogweed
Monkshood	Toxic (dangerous to handle)	Uncommon / rare	
Daffodils (and other spring bulbs)	Poisonous / some are toxic	Common in all our parks	Can be dangerous for dogs if ingested

The Allotment service provides advice for new tenants (in the Allotment Handbook) on the potential dangers of working around irritant species such as hogweed.

Education regarding plant species is a good idea but we would need to consider how best to do this, whether the Council is the right organisation to do this and whether we have appropriate resources to be able to do it effectively. We do need to be careful not to vilify certain species as invariably the message can then be amplified by social media and we face calls to eradicate them.

Question of Councillor Glynis Chapman to the Chair of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee (Councillor Dawn Dale)

- Q. I am aware that many students finishing secondary school in the North and South East of the city choose to attend sixth form out of Sheffield – i.e children from the South East attending schools in Eckington, Brinsworth and Aston, and children from the north of the city attending schools in Barnsley and Rotherham,**
- (a) Does Sheffield City Council hold information on the number of students in each ward who choose to attend sixth form education outside of Sheffield?**
- (b) Students from the Westfield school have to travel to Silverdale School for 6th form education. Travelling across the city daily makes for a long school day. Why can't Peaks College provide this education as it was intended to do?**
- A.** At present many students are still to finalise their places following the GCSE outcomes. Post-16 placements are confirmed following the receipt of GCSE results as places on higher level courses are dependent on achieved grades so some children will be looking at back up or alternative options.

The 2023 Activity Survey will be produced in January 2024 which will provide more robust destination data based upon the October 2023 Census.

Currently we understand that 253 Sheffield students have offers of placements in out of city provision. Of these 140 also have an offer of a place in Sheffield. We are aware of 217 offers of placements in our sixth form schools to children who are coming from schools outside of Sheffield. We do not have data for college provision for children coming from schools outside of Sheffield.

(A) Sheffield Students Attending Other Authority Provision, Level 3 being A Level

The following has more detailed information:

Count of Offers	AS/A2 Levels	L3 VOC	Grand Total
Askham Bryan College		1	1
BARNSELY COLLEGE	87	3	90
CHESTERFIELD COLLEGE		1	1
Doncaster College	1		1
Nottingham College		1	1
NOVA Arts (Barnsley)		1	1
Penistone Grammar School 6th Form	1		1
Pro:Direct Academy		1	1

RNN Training		31	31
Sunderland College	1		1
THOMAS ROTHERHAM	122		122
Wales Sixth Form	1		1
WATH COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL	1		1
Grand Total	214	39	253

140 of these students also have offers with Sheffield providers.

(B) Students Offered Sheffield Sixth Form from outside Sheffield

Current Base	Allocated School	Total
Aston Academy	King Edward VII School	1
St Bernard's Catholic High School	All Saints' Catholic High School	2
		3
Hope Valley College	High Storrs School	1
Hope Valley College	King Ecgbert School	6
Hope Valley College	Silverdale School	4
Eckington School	All Saints' Catholic High School	1
Eckington School	Meadowhead School Academy Trust	1
Eckington School	Notre Dame High School	1
Lady Manners School	King Ecgbert School	1
		15
Not known	All Saints' Catholic High School	21
Not known	Forge Valley School	2
Not known	High Storrs School	20
Not known	King Ecgbert School	37
Not known	King Edward VII School	27
Not known	Meadowhead School Academy Trust	12
Not known	Notre Dame High School	24
Not known	Sheffield Park Academy	3
Not known	Silverdale School	26
Not known	Tapton School	27
		199
Total		217

In response to the question about children from Westfield school travelling to Silverdale for 6th form education and provision at Peaks College:

Westfield students are free to apply for any schools that they wish to. Eligibility is determined first by achieving the minimum entry criteria (normally 5 GCSE's at Level 4 or above including English and Maths) and then by availability of places.

Westfield is Part of Chorus Trust which is the same Trust as Silverdale. As part of the admission arrangements Silverdale prioritise the admission of students attending other Trust Schools. This is common practice within Trusts.

The former Peaks Campus was part of Sheffield College. Whilst Peaks Campus has been closed, applying to Sheffield College at other sites is an option that remains available to Westfield students should they wish to apply there.

The destination outcomes for the outgoing Y11 cohort at Westfield known to date was as follows:

Destination of Westfield Students

Establishment	Number
Chesterfield College	1
OTHER DISTRICTS	2
SHEFFIELD CITY COLLEGE	6
THOMAS ROTHERHAM	1
All Saints' Catholic High School	17
King Edward VII School	2
OTHER DISTRICTS	1
Silverdale School	3
Tapton School	1
Grand Total	34

Questions of Councillor Barbara Masters to the Chair of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee (Councillor Dawn Dale)

There are concerns that many children nationally who meet the criteria for Free School Meals (FSM) are not registered. Not only do the children miss out on a free lunch but schools also lose the additional funding this would bring.

Under the FSM legislation ‘the only legal requirement for a school or local authority to award entitlement to FSM is that a request is made (by anyone, including a friend of the family; a teacher; a social worker, etc) by or on behalf of the parent or pupil.’

- Q1. Is the Council aware of how many children in Sheffield are still not being registered despite the ability of many involved in a child’s welfare to request this?**

A1. DWP are responsible for registration of families eligible for FSM. It is, therefore, not possible for us to identify exactly how many children are eligible but not registered for free school meals. We do not have access to that information from the DWP, however, in Sheffield we have introduced an auto award process to increase FSM eligibility and maximise Pupil Premium funding for schools as outlined below.

Q2. What measures are being employed to improve registration for FSM?

A. We introduced an Auto Award Process in 2016 as a mechanism to increase Free School Meal eligibility and maximise Pupil Premium funding for schools, and this has had a significant impact in Sheffield. To date an additional 3,285 primary and secondary aged children have been awarded FSM, and 2,118 Early Years children identified as eligible for FSM when they reach school age.

Essentially, we use information already held by the council to identify families that are missing out on a Free School Meal. We write to parents with children aged 2-19 on matching housing/council tax support benefits with similar eligibility criteria to FSM to advise them that, to ensure they are claiming everything they are entitled to, we will use their name, DOB and NI number from their Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support application to make a request for a free school meal check on their behalf. We give them 3 weeks to object to the use of their information, and after 3 weeks the data is processed, and successful applications are added for eligible children.

Sheffield's Auto Award process has gained National Recognition over the last 12 months, and we are now working with the National School Food Review Working Group, and the Food Foundation 'Fix Our Food' project to support other local authorities across the country in introducing their own Auto Award Process.

Questions of Councillor Sophie Thornton to the Chair of the Finance Committee (Councillor Zahira Naz)

- Q. (a) What are the consequences for people with a lifelong disability in Sheffield of the Department for Transport's policy to have all applicants require blue badge renewal every 3 years?
- (b) What are we doing and what can we do further in Sheffield to mitigate this?
- A. The answer is to be provided by the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell).

Question of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Chair of the Finance Committee (Councillor Zahira Naz)

- Q. Achieving Net Zero is a priority for the Council. What steps have been taken to identify secure funding for the Council's Sustainability Team? What funding has been identified? Is this enough?
- A. The answer is to be provided by the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell).

Questions of Councillor Minesh Parekh to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)

Q.1 In view of the accelerating climate crisis, what consideration have the Housing service given to the potential need for air conditioning, or other cooling measures, in Council-owned properties?

A.1 Increasing insulation can be regarded as a measure that will reduce the ability of a building to dissipate heat, and hence exacerbate overheating. However, this will only be the case when the external temperature is lower than the internal. This is further complicated by fabric elements that receive direct sunlight reaching much higher temperatures, and therefore additional insulation as a means of reducing external heat gains.

I understand The Council is adopting the PAS2035 standards in its approach to retrofitting homes. PAS2035 is a framework that encapsulates how a retrofit project should be managed and the installation of specific energy efficiency measures. It takes a holistic, systems approach and crucially incorporates ventilation strategies for the building, preventing damp and mould, and helping to cool.

Q.2 Does the Housing service (a) hold or (b) collect any data on the average temperature in each council-owned block, and how these vary from recommended and ideal indoor house temperatures; and if yes, please can both datasets be shared with a breakdown by block?

A.2 No. There isn't currently any data collected around temperatures within properties.

However, the service is planning to carry out a review of technology/ devices within homes that captures this information, together with other aspects such as humidity and air pressure.

The plan will be to utilise this in conjunction with retrofit schemes to ascertain the outcomes, and support tenants in being able to maximise comfort, energy efficiency and savings. It will also be important how this effectively integrates with other technologies in the home, such as air source heat pumps & solar PV.

Q.3 Has the Housing department undertaken any analysis into the upfront costs of putting solar panels or other renewable energy measures on council-owned housing blocks, and the (a) potential bill savings for tenants, and (b) climate benefits? If yes, please can this be shared with a breakdown by block; and if no, please can this be explained?

A.3 No analysis has been completed. Through the LAD 2 (Local Authority Delivery) funding secured, a small pilot was undertaken on several Council blocks to install solar PV. The service is conducting an evaluation on the

outcomes of this.

However, the capital outlay for all suitable homes would be sizeable and likely to be in the hundreds of millions of pounds. As you will be aware, the Finance Committee recently approved £47 million of funding for re-roofing council homes, largely without provision for solar PV.

Q.4 Will the Housing service share any analysis undertaken into retrofitting needs for council-owned, socially-rented, privately-rented and owner occupied homes in Sheffield, and similarly how these compare across tenure?

A.4 The following table is taken from the latest BRE (Building Research Establishment) survey

EPC Rating	No. of Owner Occupied	% in Owner Occupied	No. of Private Rented	% in Private Rented
A-B	442	0.3%	754	1.2%
C	25,606	19.9%	17,593	28.9%
D	72,630	56.5%	24,489	40.3%
E	25,223	19.6%	14,628	24.0%
F	4,110	3.2%	2,860	4.7%
G	569	0.5%	515	0.8%

The following table provides a summary of EPC ratings across Council homes. The EPC scores are taken from various datasets, not all properties have an actual EPC.

EPC Band	No. of Council Homes
A	69
B	1360
C	30,273
D	6,416
E	127
F	43
G	7
Total	38,295

Q.5 Does the Housing service hold any analysis of the green jobs created by our (a) current and previous retrofitting programmes, and (b) the potential jobs we know would be needed, across all types of housing tenure, to meet our 2030 net-zero ambition; and (c) will the Housing Committee, through its Chair, support a joint Task and Finish Group with Economic Development and Skills Committee Members to ensure those jobs positively impact our local economy (locally trained, good terms and conditions, delivered in-house where possible)?

A.5 (a) and (b) No.

(c) The relevant committees could consider this as a proposal for the respective workplans.

The Council has secured approximately £12m+ govt grant funding across 1,000 homes in Sheffield for housing energy efficiency schemes. Measures included various forms of insulation (loft, cavity, under-floor, external wall), solar PV and air source heat pumps. This has driven a range of green jobs, including local firms such as JJ Crump & Son & All Seasons Energy.

We don't currently hold data around the specific number of jobs created through these schemes, however we aim to collate this in future.

To provide context, for the Council's own housing stock of approx. 38,000 properties, starting in 2024 it would require 17 homes completed per day to retrofitted to net zero in order to achieve the 2030 target. At a city level this would be 114 homes per day requiring a significant number across a range of trades.

Question of Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)

Q. Out of all properties in Sheffield, how many EPC certificates are up to date? Similarly, how many are expired, and how many are simply unavailable?

A. The information below is for the Council Housing Stock only. EPC data for other tenures can be extracted from a national database but we are not currently aware whether there is a means of extracting a dataset for Sheffield that shows which EPCs are more than 10 years old and therefore no longer valid.

Active EPCs:

EPC Band	
A	40
B	125
C	9631
D	2882
E	71
F	37
G	6
Total	12792

Expired EPCs:

EPC Band	
A	16
B	128
C	8888
D	1429
E	13
F	2
Total	10476

Questions of Councillor Gail Smith to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)

Q. In a situation where trees in a Council property garden are severely blocking the light for the tenants of the property, does the Council believe it's appropriate to remove the trees?

A. The Trees & Woodlands Strategy adopted by the Council in 2018 states that:

Under normal circumstances the Council will not undertake pruning or removal work in direct response to natural or seasonal growth including:

7. Trees blocking light and causing shading, including tall trees and those with overhanging branches (except those touching houses)
8. Branches obstructing telephone wires
9. Blocking or obstruction of views
10. Trees interfering with TV or satellite reception
11. Falling leaves, flowers, fruit or honeydew drip
12. Blocked gutters
13. Bird droppings
14. Seeds from trees that have germinated in gardens
15. Moss caused by shade

The link to the full strategy can be found here [sheffield-trees-and-woodlands-strategy-2018-2033.pdf](#)

These issues are what we would term as 'nuisance' issues. They are not causing direct damage to buildings or structures, nor are they considered a health and safety risk to people or property. This approach is the same regardless of whether the tree is affecting social or private housing.

We estimate we receive around 100 enquiries each year to attend to nuisance trees, some recurring issues, but mostly new cases. Our current process requires a survey of the trees and subsequent report which is considered in relation to the above criteria i.e. unless the tree is causing direct damage to buildings or structures, or poses a risk to people or

property, no action will be taken.

There is currently a small HRA funded budget to support remedial work to trees affecting SCC housing including pruning of branches and topping (crowning). Work is carried out using SCC approved contractors (there are 8 contractors on SCC's approved supplier list).

Questions of Councillor Sophie Thornton to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)

Q.1 What was the average waiting time for a Council house repair issue to be resolved over the last three months, and what was the longest wait? Please divide this information by planned and responsive repairs.

A.1 The average waiting time for a repair to be resolved during Q1 is 67.98 days. For planned repairs the average wait is 120 days and for responsive repairs 21 days.

The longest wait for a planned repair was 829 days. The longest wait for a responsive repair was 658 days. In both cases performance is impacted by lengthy delays gaining access to properties to complete the repair.

Q.2 What is the current number of outstanding or incomplete Council house repairs?

A.2 There are currently 13,368 live responsive repairs, of these 2,575 are overdue. The amount of overdue orders has reduced from 2,959 at the same time last year against a total of 10,029 live responsive repairs. This comparison illustrates an improving picture, particularly in the context of increasing demand in terms of live orders.

Q.3 How many void properties are currently awaiting repairs to be made fit to relet?

A.3 There are 299 properties with the voids team currently being repaired / awaiting repair. This figure has reduced from 331 at the start of the financial year.

An additional 10 properties require structural work to be completed prior to void repairs.

There has been an increase in voids during this financial year, (Quarter 1 has also seen an increase in the number of void properties requiring repair, from 661 in Q4 to 795 in Q1) which places additional pressures on the repairs service.

Over the last three months the voids team has received an average of 60

new voids per week, and aims to complete work to 260 properties each month. Overall, the length of time taken to complete repairs to void properties is improving to below 40 days. (n.b. This figure includes all repairs to voids, including major works and capital repairs). This is a marked improvement from an average time of 80 days in April 2022.

Q.4 How much rent and council tax would the council have received, had these voids been occupied? Please provide this information for the last four quarters.

A.4 The est. average weekly rent is £94.39 on our properties and est. average Council Tax is £27.70.

The average number of void properties awaiting repair in the last four quarters and the associated rent and council tax loss is detailed below:

Period	Average voids awaiting repair	Rental Income loss	C/Tax loss	Total
Q1 – 2023/24	353	400k	117k	517k
Q4 – 2022/23	344	390k	114k	504k
Q3 – 2022/23	340	385k	113k	498k
Q2 – 2022/23	440	498k	146k	644k
Total		1,673k	490k	2,163k

Q.5 How many residents are on the housing register for Council properties?

A.5 There are 25,071 households on the register.

Q.6 How many of those are in a priority band? Please subdivide this information by bands A-C.

A.6 Band A - 17
 Band B - 627
 Band C - 283

Q.7 What was the average waiting time on the Council house repairs phone line before answering each month in the last two months? What was the longest wait?

A.7 The average waiting time at the repairs contact centre was 10.53 minutes in June and 19.38 minutes in July. The longest wait in June was 1 hour 17 minutes and 42 seconds, and in July was 1 hour 14 minutes and 19 seconds. Performance at the contact centre has been affected by a number of issues including system speed, persistent inclement weather (during July), vacancies and annual leave. The contact centre is recruiting to vacant posts and has three new starters coming on board in mid-August.

Performance in June and July is improved however on the previous two months, with both percentage of calls answered and the average times to answer calls improving despite increased call volumes.

Questions of Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 In response to a question on the Clean Air Zone at the last Council meeting in July, you said that “We have a legal and moral duty to improve air quality in Sheffield”, a position I agree with. Since this meeting, it has been reported that your party’s commitment to Clean Air Zones was dropped at the Labour National Policy Forum, on the order of your party’s Leader.

(a) Do you still agree that “We have a legal and moral duty to improve air quality in Sheffield”?

(b) Can we expect Labour colleagues to continue to support the Clean Air Zone, despite their party’s leadership withdrawing support for the policy?

A.1 Yes, I maintain that we have a legal and moral duty to improve air quality to improve the health and life expectancy of people across Sheffield - the evidence is clear, nitrogen dioxide is harmful to health and can cause premature death. I and my Labour Party colleagues remain committed to improving air quality in the city. The Clean Air Zone is an important part of that, alongside active travel and improving our public transport.

Q.2 I have received several complaints from constituents who have received fines from the Arundel Gate Bus Gate, stating that the signage for the bus gate is inadequate.

How many complaints has the Council received regarding signage for the Bus Gate, and are there plans to make this signage more prominent?

A.2 The Council has received 6 emails which relate to complaints about the signage for the Arundel Gate Bus Gate. Counter Context who have been working with the Council and are managing the ETRO consultation on our behalf, have received 14 emails that have expressed concerns about the signage as part of their consultation remarks. They have also received 2 phone calls on the same subject. The 14 emails account for 18.9% of all consultation responses that we have received to date.

The Bus Gate signs have been designed by Amey and are compliant with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD16). The first advanced Bus Gate signs begin on St Marys Gate and continue on Eyre Street and the finally on Arundel Gate before the junction with Charles Street.

An additional large, black and yellow, bespoke sign has been designed and installed at the entrance to the Novotel that gives drivers one final

opportunity to avoid driving through the Bus Gate. The access in front of the Novotel has been re-shaped to allow all size vehicles to safely make the manoeuvre to turn around.

However, I have been out to the site myself and I am concerned that the view of the sign is somewhat obstructed by a post. I have therefore asked officers to look into how this can be improved, as well as investigating if any additional signage could be added. I will keep you updated on what happens next.

We are exploring various extra temporary measures to alert drivers to the Bus Gate but there is no expectation that any additional regulatory signs will be provided as the existing signage is already in line with legal signing requirements. The Traffic Penalty Tribunal have not raised any concerns on the adequacy of the signing when hearing appeals to Penalty Charge Notices.

This Bus Gate has been installed initially via an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order which can be introduced for a period of up to 18months. We will be reviewing the operation of the bus gate and following this a report will be presented to the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee for a decision on whether the scheme will be made permanent, amended or withdrawn.

Questions of Councillor Sophie Thornton to the Chair of the Finance Committee (Zahira Naz) – To be answered by the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

- Q. (a) **What are the consequences for people with a lifelong disability in Sheffield of the Department for Transport's policy to have all applicants require blue badge renewal every 3 years?**
- (b) **What are we doing and what can we do further in Sheffield to mitigate this?**
- A. I've met with Disability Sheffield to discuss improvements to how the council process blue badges, and will write directly to you shortly with a fuller response as the officer required to speak with is currently not available.

Questions of Councillor Ian Horner to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 When will work commence to deliver the Rother Valley Parking Scheme?

A.1 The Rother Valley Scheme is progressing with a report due to be presented to TRC committee on 20th September regarding 3 objections to the proposed Traffic Regulation Orders that were advertised earlier this year. Detail design of the scheme will be undertaken through this Autumn and Winter and it is currently anticipated that works to facilitate the changes would be undertaken in Spring 2024 subject to confirmation pending the normal design and programming processes and resources.

Q.2 Are there any plans to create a viable Park and Ride Scheme to reduce the heavy traffic levels on the A57 in the Southeast of Sheffield?

A.2 Sheffield's 2019 Transport Strategy includes that new mass transit routes (which could be rail, tram or tram-train, as well as bus) would incorporate new park and ride on key gateways to the city. The A57 is included as one of these routes. That plan runs through to 2035 and implementation of all measures is dependent on the requisite funding being available, as well as working with SYMCA as the Transport Authority. I think it would be right to consider new park and ride schemes in the context of the new city wider transport strategy being developed and due next year.

Question of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Chair of the Finance Committee (Councillor Zahira Naz) – To be answered by the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q. Achieving Net Zero is a priority for the Council. What steps have been taken to identify secure funding for the Council's Sustainability Team? What funding has been identified? Is this enough?

A. The funding for the sustainability team was identified as a pressure in 2023/24 business planning and the team now has a permanent staffing budget of £345k. There is also some income from project work which helps to support staff resource working on air quality programmes.

Looking beyond this, the goal of achieving net zero by 2030 is not the overall responsibility of one small team and it is recognised that a far greater level of resource is required across the organisation to progress this effectively.

Work is on-going to explore opportunities for the organisation to bring a greater level of resource to bear on this goal.

Questions of Councillor Alexi Dimond to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 In response to my question in July's members' question, you said that "Any child death or injury on our roads is an avoidable tragedy. And I fully agree that the council must continue to look at innovative and evidence-based interventions to meet our aims of lowering collisions in Sheffield, working collaboratively with partners where we can on education, engineering, and enforcement." - Can you confirm that Sheffield Labour supports the retention and completion of the Sheaf Valley Cycle Route and all modal filters in Crookes, Walkley and Nether Edge?

A.1 Yes, we fully support the completion of the Sheaf Valley Cycle Route.

The decisions about modal filters in Crookes, Walkey and Nether Edge is entirely dependent on the feedback received from residents and local members. It's important that TRC consider all of the feedback before making any decision.

Q.2 Why has the Road Safety Action Plan been allowed to slip given that Sheffield has the most dangerous roads for children below the age of 15 of any core city?

A.2 Response delayed due to officer leave. Written answer to follow.

Q.3 When will the Road Safety Action Plan be completed, and what is Sheffield's target for achieving Vision Zero?

A.3 Response delayed due to officer leave. Written answer to follow.

Q.4 The Workplace Parking Levy in Nottingham contributed £90 million in direct funding and attracted £1 billion in investment for public transport and active travel over 10 years. Given that Sheffield is facing drastic bus cuts this September which will hurt and further isolate our most deprived and marginalised communities, will you reconsider a feasibility study for a WPL, which would be consistent with Sheffield ambitions to meet Net Zero and the Decarbonisation Routemap voted for unanimously at the last TRC meeting?

A.4 As noted at our last Full Council meeting, this matter was discussed at the I of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Committee, as you will know as you attended the meeting as a substitute member. The feasibility study was rejected by TRC, but the work to develop a new transport strategy provides an opportunity to look at all options.

Q.5 How will you support those whose vital bus services are cut September?

A.5 SYMCA officers are currently working on the details of the bus service changes for October, to bring the cost of tendered services within the budget that they have, while retaining as much of the network as possible. That work will identify where services may be reduced.

Q.6 In 2017, emissions from the transport sector contributed 26% of Sheffield's emissions. 2/3 of these were from private cars. The aim of the Decarbonisation Routemap voted for unanimously at the last TRC meeting is that, by 2030, all our people and organisations will have access to ultra-low emission options for travel. How will these aims be achieved against a backdrop of catastrophic cuts to public transport and active travel?

A.6 In 2017, emissions from the transport sector contributed 26% of Sheffield's emissions. 2/3 of these were from private cars. The aim of the Decarbonisation Routemap voted for unanimously at the last TRC meeting is that, by 2030, all our people and organisations will have access to ultra-low emission options for travel.

This is the correct ambition to have but it will be difficult to deliver unless we again have a government who are prepared to work with local authorities and do what is required for our environment.

Much more investment is needed nationally in public transport and both SYMCA and SCC continue to press for this. Work is underway with the newly appointed Active Travel Programme Director at SYMCA and with Commissioner Ed Clancy to promote South Yorkshire and Sheffield and increase opportunities for government funding to be secured. SCC has a programme of active travel schemes that form part of the Connecting Sheffield programme, and it is important that we deliver these schemes as soon as possible.

Questions of Councillor Brian Holmshaw to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 What is the current strength of the Planning Enforcement Team in Sheffield (full-time and part-time officers)?

A.1 1 x full time Manager
1 x full time Enforcement Officer
0.6 full time equivalent Enforcement Officer
2 x full time Enforcement Assistant

Q.2 When and by who was the policy in the Planning Department changed from one of alerting residents to significant changes to planning applications, to one of 'self-monitoring'?

A.2 There has been no policy change – neighbours are not reconsulted on minor amendments or where amendments clearly address planning concerns in a positive manner. For example, by reducing the scale of a proposals impact. Where a more significant amendment has the potential for negative implications not previously advertised, we have always reconsulted affected residents and continue to do so, as per our Statement of Community Involvement. [How the Council consults on planning applications & policies | Sheffield City Council.](#)

Q.3 Is the Council fulfilling its statutory duty to revise each of the Council's conservation areas appraisals within the timescale that national government legislation requires? What is that timescale? What is to be done about making sure that sufficient resources will be put into this and that that timescale will be adhered to in future?

A.3 The government's Planning Policy Guidance on the Historic Environment states that 'local planning authorities must review their conservation areas from time to time'.

Resources permitting, every five years is considered ideal, but the PPG acknowledges that review frequency will vary according to the development pressures in the local area. We acknowledge that owing to various pressures, including resource we need to improve in this area.

We are actively considering a number of options to boost resources to allow us to undertake some review work, including recently announced funding opportunities from Government and an anticipated uplift in statutory planning application fees.

Questions of Councillor Martin Phipps to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 How much of the carbon budget have we used in comparison to the recommended carbon budget set out in the Tyndall Centre report: Setting Climate Commitments for the City of Sheffield?

A.1 Written answer to follow.

**Q.2 What is our current reduction in Annual Emissions compared to 2015?
(As measured in the Tyndall report)**

A.2 Written answer to follow.

Question of Councillor Mohammed Mahroof to the Chair of the Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee (Councillor Angela Argenzio)

Q. Dental poverty is reaching crisis levels in Sheffield. I have been informed that there are currently no dentists in Sheffield taking NHS patients, and some are not accepting new private patients. Shockingly – although perhaps unsurprisingly - 36.5% of five year olds in Sheffield were recently found to have some form of tooth decay.

As ever the most affected children are the most vulnerable - tooth decay is consistently the number one reason for hospital admissions among young children, and children from the most deprived areas are already three times more likely to have hospital extractions than their peers.

What action is being taken by the Council to improve access to dental care, particularly for children in Sheffield?

A. This response is in my role as Co-Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Sheffield City Council are responsible for commissioning oral health improvement programmes and NHS dental services in Sheffield are commissioned by South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) due to the delegated authority from 1st April 2023 from NHS England. Both oral health improvement programmes and access to dental services contribute to oral health improvement.

Improving oral health and reducing oral health inequalities through community oral health programmes

Sheffield City Council have updated the the Oral Health Promotion Strategy 2023-27. Sheffield City Council commissions oral health improvement services from the community and special care dentistry services at Sheffield Teaching Hospital Trust. Some of the main activities they currently provide or facilitate are:

- Supervised toothbrushing clubs – Toothbrushing clubs have been established in 103 nurseries and schools in the more socially-deprived areas of Sheffield with 8868 children aged 3-7 years participating.
- Provision of oral health packs (toothbrush, fluoride toothpaste, free flow cup and leaflet with key oral health messages) by health visitors at 9-12 month assessments; and targeted provision of packs to 2 year olds in most deprived areas via health visitors and family hubs. Dental packs are also provided 3 times a year to children living in 5 local authority children's homes.
- Oral health is included in the Sheffield Healthy Child Programme.

- Oral health care training is also provided to early years practitioners, staff working in health, social care and education. It is also offered as part of the Early Help Partnership Training Sessions
- Training is provided to staff working in residential care homes for older adults and adults with learning disabilities as part of the Residential Oral Care Sheffield (ROCS) programme.
- Oral health care training delivered on a monthly basis on the ECHO programme of awareness training which is available for staff working with adults with learning disabilities/autism
- Focus on links with other health initiatives including healthy early years award in place for all early years settings, stop smoking services and Sheffield sweet enough campaign [Sheffield's Sweet Enough | Help Our City Eat Less Sugar! \(sheffieldissweetenough.org\)](http://sheffieldissweetenough.org)
- Mini Mouthcare Matters programme in Sheffield Children's Hospital to improve mouthcare on the wards.
- 10 oral health resource boxes are available for schools /Early Years settings to loan out for work with families.
- The oral health improvement provider with the School of Clinical Dentistry co-ordinate the activities of a team of dental student volunteers, the Smile Squad, who provide ongoing support for schools in deprived areas who have chosen to prioritise oral health within their schools.
- Oral health component is being built into Complications from Excess Weight (CEW) clinics.

Healthy Early Years Award. Healthy early years award in place for all early years settings which includes a section on oral health. Early years settings are supported to include health promoting practices throughout the setting.

Flexible Commissioning Programme – A referral pathway set up for health visitors, school nurses and Looked After and Adopted Children's Health Team to refer children at high risk of poor oral health into 26 flexible commissioning practices. It includes a referral pathway from dental practices into Sheffield Live Lighter weight management and stop smoking services. Alcohol screening tool is available to all practices with direct referral for those needing further support.

Oral Health Survey - Sheffield City Council commissions the dental epidemiology programme field work team which gathers data on the oral health of the population, to guide targeting of resources and monitor improvements.

Fluoridation - Although previously LAs were responsible for investigating the feasibility of new water fluoridation schemes and proposing new schemes, this responsibility has recently moved to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in line with the Health and Care Act 2022. Sheffield Council have been working with the other local authorities in South Yorkshire to investigate the feasibility of water fluoridation in South Yorkshire, and this report has now been passed to officers in OHID for further progress.

Any proposals for water fluoridation would involve a public consultation. This would potentially have the biggest impact on improving oral health and has been shown to be the most cost-effective means of improving oral health, with the lowest carbon footprint.

ICB-Commissioned Dental Services (previously NHS England) include:

- Primary care (general high street dentistry)
- Community Dental Services (CDS)
- Orthodontics
- Intermediate minor oral surgery
- Urgent care
- Secondary care

Pre-pandemic, around 59% of adults and 68% of children who live in Sheffield saw an NHS dentist in the preceding 24 and 12 months respectively up to 31st December 2019. This was similar to neighbouring local authorities, yet higher than England. In addition to these figures, some will have chosen to access private dental care, but there are no data available for this. With several months of practice closures due to COVID-19, followed by months of limited patient through-put due to heightened infection prevention and control requirements, there was a significant impact on access to dental services. **Table 1** shows how this affected access for those in local authorities in South Yorkshire and England.

Due to the back-log of care, demand for NHS care is now significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels at all practices. While the number of available appointments for regular and routine treatment is increasing, and access figures are gradually improving, dental practices continue to balance the challenge of clearing any backlog with managing new patient demand. In addition, dental teams are facing significant workforce challenges as staff are continuing to leave the NHS, which hinders opportunities to increase appointment levels. Whilst restoration of NHS dental activity continues, it will be some time before dental services return to providing care at previous activity levels, with many dental practices still catching up.

Table 1: Adult patients seen by an NHS dentist in the last 24 months and child patients seen in the last 12 months as a percentage of the population for local authorities in South Yorkshire and England overall.

LA	% seen to 31 Dec 2019		% seen to 31 Dec 2020		% seen to 30 June 2021		% seen to 31 Dec 2021		% seen to 30 June 22		% seen to 30 June 23	
	Adult	Child	Adult	Child	Adult	Child	Adult	Child	Adult	Child	Adult	Child
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	61.4	68.0	55.5	29.8	51.4	31.9	43.7	47.1	45.4	52.8	51.4	59.6
Doncaster Council	66.2	66.0	58.7	31.6	53.3	32.7	45.6	45.6	47.6	50.4	66.4	63.6
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	59.6	61.7	55.7	28.7	51.4	32.3	44.8	42.9	46.8	46.8	54.5	58.2
Sheffield City Council	59.4	68.0	55.2	32.8	52.5	36.4	46.3	49.6	48.6	54.1	51.6	62.7
England	49.6	58.4	44.3	29.6	40.8	32.5	35.5	42.5	36.9	46.2	43.0	55.8

Source: NHS Digital

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-dental-statistics/2019-20-biannual-report>

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-dental-statistics/2021-22-biannual-report>

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-dental-statistics/2021-22-annual-report>

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-dental-statistics/2022-23-annual-report>

Key Challenges to Dental Access

There are a number of Challenges to dental access, that pose real difficulties when looking to improve access for all.

Historical and ongoing contractual factors – The existing contracts were rolled out in 2006 and have limited flexibility meaning inconsistent and often inequitable access to dental services.

Patient Perceptions – Patients aren't registered with dental practices and practices are only obliged to deliver a course of treatment not regular care.

Cost of treatment – NHS dental treatment is free of charge for children, pregnant women and mothers of a baby under 12 months of age and those on certain benefits. All adults need to contribute determined by the treatment provided.

Capacity – Practices have set capacity to deliver treatment packages or Units of Dental Activity (UDAs). Many practices offer a mix of private and NHS dental care. Demand for NHS care is high which may mean that the only available appointments are for private care which also potentially increases the cost of treatment.

New patient availability – Practices are asked to keep their profile on NHS Find a dentist page up to date although this isn't mandated in their contracts although is now in new contracts. Those practices accepting new patients is a constantly changing picture.

COVID-19 pandemic – This led to several months of practice closures, followed by months of limited patient through-put due to heightened IPC requirements, significantly impacted on access to dental services. This back-log created increased demand for dental services,

Initiatives to Strengthen and Improve Access

National £50m investment in NHS Dental Services

As part of a national initiative, funding was allocated specifically for dental services to improve access and increase dental appointment availability outside of core hours, between January and March 2022. The care was delivered outside core hours, and in Sheffield 6 practices participated in the scheme delivering extra sessions, and between 632 and 948 additional urgent care and subsequent stabilisation appointments were provided for patients.

Additional sessions for patients experiencing poorest oral health

As part of a regional NHS England initiative, funding was allocated specifically for dental services to deliver additional sessions/services to improve access and increase dental appointment availability between November 2022 and 31st March 2023 for primary care, community dental services, secondary care and urgent dental care services. Funding has since been extended by the ICB to enable urgent access sessions to continue in primary care dental practices until end September 2023, a review is underway to determine commissioning intentions beyond this date.

Waiting List Initiative

All GDS practices in Y&H have been asked to provide NHS England with information regarding the number of patients waiting and waiting times for NHS dental treatment through a survey. This has provided a more accurate view on the numbers of patients waiting for NHS dental treatment at the point in time that data is collected. A waiting list management process has also been piloted. This Y&H NHS Dental Practice Waiting List Project has proposed a number of recommendations to inform the approach around management of waiting lists, implementation of NICE recall guidance and potential solutions to address inequalities in access and appropriate public information.

Flexible Commissioning Programme

Flexible commissioning is an approach to commissioning dental services differently and for greater patient benefit to meet their needs more appropriately. It aims to work around some of the rigidities of the national contract by using a proportion of the contracted activity (UDAs) on locally agreed schemes. The approach aims to improve access to dental services and the delivery of evidence-based prevention in primary dental care, whilst

supporting practices to deliver their contract commitments by utilising skill mix. It has also enabled partnership working with LAs whose health and social care teams are able to refer into flexible commissioning practices. Dental practices can also refer patients back out to health and wellbeing programmes in the community as part of Making Every Contact Count.

There are currently 26 flexible commissioning practices in Sheffield taking part in the flexible commissioning programme. One of the conditions is that the practice must have a dedicated Oral Health Champion who leads the practice in delivering both in-house preventive programmes and Making Every Count through signposting to other health and wellbeing support. They also accept referrals for children at high risk of poor oral health from health visitors and social care, and former community dental services patients who are now in a position to accept care in a general practice.

Dental services for homeless

Following a successful pilot in Leeds, a new service for those experiencing homelessness in Sheffield is being set up. This will involve partnership working between the dental practice providing the sessional service and homeless charities in Sheffield.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THIS AREA?

Dental System Reforms

The outcome of the national 2022/23 dental contract system reform negotiations were confirmed by NHS England; this represents the first significant change to the contract since its introduction in 2006.

These initial reforms seek to address the challenges associated with delivering care to higher needs patients and making it easier for patients to access NHS care. Some changes are dependent on the timescale for legislative changes.

Commitment to further engagement

There is a commitment from ICB dental commissioners to engage with patients, the public and wider stakeholders to ensure continued oversight of the local position for dental services.

Continued development of community oral health improvement programmes

Whilst a substantial amount of money is used to commission dental services in Sheffield, only £120,000 p.a. is provided by the council for oral health improvement programmes. Currently, most programmes (e.g. the supervised toothbrushing scheme) is targeted to schools and nurseries in the most deprived areas of Sheffield, which experience the poorest oral health. Additional funding would enable both an increase in workforce capacity and resources to deliver a wider programme of activities to more of the population. This funding needs to be protected year on year to ensure continuity of programmes.

**Questions of Councillor Bernard Little to the Chair of the Charity
Trustee Sub-Committee (Councillor Ian Auckland)**

Q.1 Will the Council publish the governing document of the charity relating to Weston Park?

A.1 Yes.

Q.2 Do the terms of the charity permit disposal of the land held under the charitable trust?

A.2 Legal are reviewing this to ascertain what is permitted.

Q.3 Is it true that the Council has applied to the Charity Commission for a scheme to change this?

A.3 No.

Q.4 If so, who was the decision-maker on behalf of the Council and will you supply a copy of the decision record?

A.4 N/A

Q.5 Has the Council had any response from the Charity Commission?

A.5 N/A

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