



**SOUTH WEST
LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING – 30 NOVEMBER 2023
WRITTEN ANSWERS PROVIDED TO
PUBLIC QUESTIONS**



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| 1. | <p>Public questions from Mr Hodson</p> <p><i>At the 6 July LAC Meeting I asked some questions about whether the LAC had concerns about the process by which Parks & Countryside Service negotiated a Lease of part of Millhouses Park to True North Brew Co. that owns the Waggon & Horses pub adjacent to the park; and about how Parks & Countryside Service had dealt with the Friends of Millhouses Park as part of that process. The written answers I received did not answer the questions: and were written by an Officer of the Parks & Countryside Service, not by anyone from the LAC. I complained about this to the Chair and the LAC Manager; and Paul May our Chair and I met Cllr Sangar and Ms Bustamante in October to discuss my complaint. Cllr Sangar agreed that I was correct; that the answers I got did not answer the questions I put; and that the Minutes of that July meeting should be amended to show that was the case. That has not happened because the Head of Democratic Services has advised that Minutes of Council Committees can only be amended by the Committee itself.</i></p> <p><i>I am also asking the LAC if they agree that it is part of the duties of Officers and Members of Local Area Committees to ensure that questions from the public are answered correctly and appropriately and in due time - as with all Council Committees - as part of the general democratic process? Does the SW LAC agree that the right to ask questions at public meetings of this, and other Council Committees, is an inherent part of the democratic process; and that where answers to those questions are able to be answered in the meeting that should be the norm? And would they also agree that every effort should be made by Officers and Councillors on those Committees to ensure that the answers given are relevant, correct and complete; and that questioners should have the right to follow-up questions in the event that they feel that has not been the case?</i></p> |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>It is not an inherent right to ask questions at LACs but it is a right that Members want people to have. Sheffield Council have been a leader in this. Following the referendum, the Council is in the second year of its committee structure. Work is still being done by the Governance Committee to finalise the process for democratic engagement, including how public questions should be addressed. The South West LAC do not have policy making powers in terms of the Parks or Council assets and therefore the appropriate place for Parks related discussion is the Communities Committee. The appropriate place for Assets discussion is the Finance committee.</p> <p>The South West LAC welcomes questions on matters that can be addressed by the Committee and matters that are within the decision-</p> |

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| | making scope of the Local Area Committee. Where an issue is being addressed at a Policy Committee the scope of input that a LAC could have might be minimal, particularly in the case of legal and contractual matters. |
| 2 | Public questions from Mr May |
| | <p>Question 1:</p> <p><i>How were the responses and round-table discussions at the July Meeting about Community Safety recorded and evaluated, and will they be reported, whether to a future meeting or by email?</i></p> |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>The LAC Team collate together all the notes from the engagement sessions and produce a table of summary feedback received, this is collated together onto one summary. We see the feedback from the engagement sessions as highly valuable as it underpins the work we deliver in terms of projects on the community plan. It is the basis of what we focus projects and support on. As we mentioned in our previous correspondence, we are developing the LAC website pages and in those there will be a 'You Said, We Did' section. This will include the feedback and priority actions that come from the engagement sessions, and we will keep this updated.</p> |
| | <p>Question 2:</p> <p><i>Reading both the original Community Plan, and the updated version of the Plan produced more recently, it is clear there are many targets throughout the Plan which have both review dates and outcome dates. They also have timelines for achievement, many of which have now been exceeded. We have not seen any of these outcomes from the Plan reported at the SW LAC meetings. Can you tell us when these will be published and how they will be evaluated to give an overall assessment of how well the SW LAC has performed against its original targets?</i></p> |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>We have been providing summary updates at the LAC Public Meetings, at the last meeting we did this in the style of an information board. This was in response to the feedback we received at the previous public meeting in March, where we were asked to limit the time of the presentation on the LAC plan updates by the attendees present. They expressed that they wanted to focus time on engagement instead. A summary highlight report on progress made with the 22/23 Community Plan has been produced and copies of the report were printed off and available at the Public Meeting in September. We want to improve the reporting to residents on progress and we are developing the webpages to include a section specifically for this. Here you will be able to read updates on each of the projects we have underway, and this will open up an opportunity for residents to get involved, if they are interested. The pace of delivery on some of the items have meant we have had to roll forward some of the actions into this year. Over the last</p> |

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| | <p>year, we have learnt the challenges of operating in a new organisational set up and understood more realistically the kind of agile approach required to ensure that we do deliver. The approach to achieving deliverables was very much developmental; test and learn. A large part of what we delivered was dependent on how far we could influence through collaborative working with other services and partners and their available capacity as well as ours. There was a wide breadth of activity in the plan that involved a number of partners and services collaborating together.</p> |
| | <p>Question 3:</p> <p><i>Referring to the targets in the updated Plan, are these aspirational targets or just a list of those that came out of the Review? Will they also be assessed and contribute to that overall assessment?</i></p> |
| | <p>Response:</p> <p>The items in the updated plan form the LAC Team's work programme that they are currently delivering, aiming to have achieved all actions by end of March '23. Under each of the themes and priorities set out we have listed actions that we assessed and deemed as being achievable in the time period and within the budget available, and that will be impactful on reaching results to address the issue. The measure of success is whether we achieve the project/initiative. An assessment of outcomes will be delivered in the post March period and will need to involve testimonies from those that have taken part in an activity that they have helped facilitate, to help measure the social value impact.</p> |

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