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Dear Councillor

COUNCIL MEETING – 6th APRIL 2011

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 12 to 31 unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

Q12 (Councillor Rafique to Councillor Blake) - Could the Executive Member for Children's Services please advise Council on the success of last month's Climate Week in Leeds' Schools?

A Climate Week, a new national occasion for everyone wishing to do their bit to combat climate change, ran between 21st-27th March 2011. Thousands of events were hosted by organisations across the UK, highlighting the many positive steps already being taken and inspiring many more people to act. Climate Week provided an ideal opportunity for Leeds schools to showcase their efforts to combat climate change and continue their journey to becoming sustainable schools.

In Leeds, schools Climate Week was launched at St Anthony's Catholic Primary School on the morning of Monday 21st March where a party of guests, led by Cllr Judith Blake Leeds City Council's Executive member for Children's Services, visited the school to support thirty Year 5 pupils taking part in the Climate Week challenge; 'Save the Planet, Save the Pounds! through developing a green idea to save, or make, money.

St Anthony's were one of at least 20 schools across the city (primary and secondary) who registered to participate in Climate Week ensuring more that 6000 of our children and young people not only gained a deeper understanding of climate change but also learned about the positive practical contributions they can make to an issue which, time and time again, they tell us is one of their top priorities.

In order that all Leeds schools had the opportunity to participate a copy of a brand new schools Green Day DVD, capturing the experiences of a number of schools across West

Yorkshire, was distributed freely to every Leeds school during Climate Week with an encouragement to include this 12 minute film as part of a whole school assembly.

The launch also marked the free distribution of 5000 energy saving light bulbs to parents of school children to help them to reduce energy use in their homes. Copies of the Leeds City Council branded board game, *What's Rubbish?* a fun recycling game for primary school children aged 5-10 were also donated to schools.

The week ended with the local MP joining pupils at Pudsey Southroyd school as they celebrated everything they had done during Climate Week including walking to school calculating their own carbon footprints and making class climate pledges.

Climate Week generated considerable activity within Leeds schools and beyond which attracted the attention of the local media who ran a full page article in the local Yorkshire Evening Post newspaper, Tuesday 22nd March, 2011 under the heading 'Pupils grin and bear it... to try to save the planet'. It was a very successful event.

Q13 (Councillor Harper to Councillor Ogilvie) - Would the Executive Member for Leisure care to update Council on the position with funding for school sports partnership schemes?

A The Coalition Government have significantly reduced the level of support for school sport partnerships of which there are currently 5 in Leeds. This funding went direct to Schools. The effect of funding reductions in Leeds is approximately 70% (reduction from £1.4 million to £420,000, effective from September this year). The funding for school sport partnership development managers (PDMs) and coaching budgets have been hit especially hard, despite some new money being made available for schools games organisers up to 2012. This has left school sport in a much weaker position overall. In response officers are therefore seeking to achieve a new way of delivery in Leeds reducing from 5 school sport partnerships to 3 school sport partnerships in line with the Extended Services cluster wedges. Subject to approval the Sport Development team will be realigning a part of their work to ensure school/community links and inter-school competitions can continue to develop and the existing PDMs are seeking to secure funding for 3 new posts in the new model. This approach will go part way to ensuring that there are sustainable school sport development arrangements kept in place as a result of the funding reductions.

Q14 (Councillor Anderson to Councillor Murray) - Given the current significant funding shortfall associated with the free insulation scheme, is the executive board member for environmental services committed to continuing with the scheme beyond 2011/12?

A There is sufficient funding currently allocated in the capital programme to see the free insulation scheme through 2011/12. £1.3m has been inserted in the capital programme by the administration which will be matched by a utility provider - this will enable 6,500 homes to be improved. Following this, the use of income from the solar PV scheme to finance prudential borrowing will provide funding for the scheme in 2012/13. That funding in turn will be match funded and will provide sufficient funding to improve another 13,500 properties.

We are exploring a range of other funding options including the domestic energy efficient project as a means of sourcing finance to ensure we maximise the numbers of houses insulated. If it is successful, the Domestic Energy Efficiency Project (DEEP) Regional Growth Fund bid will also provide additional funds.

Q15 (Councillor Monaghan to Councillor Wakefield) - Does the Leader of Council back proposals for a hackney carriage rank at the airport?

Outline options for traffic management measures and the provision of a hackney carriage facility on Whitehouse Lane abutting the airport site have been developed. I understand that

the proposal has received favourable responses from the Joint Taxi Council, disability forum and local ward members. However, the Airport do not favour the proposal.

Following City Development Scrutiny yesterday I understand that they would like Executive Board to determine the matter. On that basis I will give the issue my full consideration when it comes to Executive Board later this year.

Q16 (Councillor Morgan to Councillor Yeadon) - Would the Executive Member for Adult Social Care please comment on the proposal in the Welfare Reform Bill to remove the mobility component from Disability Living Allowance for people living in care homes?

A The Welfare Reform Bill is currently making its way through Parliament on the way to becoming legislation. Clause 83 of the Bill as it currently stands would stop payments of the mobility component of DLA -or whatever the benefit that replaces it is called - to people who live in care homes.

This would have a detrimental impact on the quality of lives of many people with disabilities who live in care homes who rely on the mobility component to help them get out and about and be independent.

There is a campaign against the proposal that is backed by a number of disabilities charities, including Mencap, Scope and Leonard Cheshire. A survey by these charities found that people in care homes used the mobility payment to help them meet up with friends and family, attend college courses, take part in volunteering, or take part in other community activities.

These are exactly the sort of opportunities we should be giving people with disabilities the chance to take part in. They have the right to take part in day to day activities like the rest of society. Removing the mobility payment would place a big obstacle in the way of this, potentially limiting their independence and leading to a situation where people could be trapped in care homes, out of sight and out of mind. This is a situation, I'm sure all members will agree, we don't want to see.

Another concern with this proposal is that the Government is trying to pass the buck for funding the mobility needs of care home residents on to local authorities. The Mencap campaign has highlighted this and pointed out that care home contracts are mainly limited to "personal care, food and activities in the home." At a time when council budgets have been slashed due to the Government's spending cuts, it is unrealistic to expect local authorities to pick up the bill.

The campaign against the proposal has so far forced the Government to say it will review the proposal. However, the proposal will continue to be a source of great concern to many people with disabilities who live in care homes until it is removed from the Welfare Reform Bill and is completely off the table.

Q17 (Councillor Davey to Councillor Blake) - Could the Executive Member for Children's Service please update Council on the Children's Services Transformation Programme now that Education Leeds has ceased to exist?

A As agreed by Executive Board in March 2010, on 31st March this year the Education Leeds contract came to an end and education services have become part of a new integrated children's services directorate. Staff have been TUPEd across either into children's services or an appropriate corporate function. I'm sure members will want to join us in welcoming these staff into the employment of the local authority, they bring a lot of valuable talent and experience that will enhance our overall approach to improving outcomes for children and young people.

It is particularly timely that we have taken this important step now as an important part of the transformation programme involves building a new relationship with schools that responds to the changing national and local policy context. Schools will continue to be at the frontline of our safeguarding work and so much more of our joint efforts, so whatever organisational changes may take place it is critical that we continue to have the partnerships in place and the strong support available to make this happen. Since January an experienced head teacher from a Leeds school has been seconded to us to help lead this work, with valuable support from a number of other heads. We have also been reviewing what works well currently in our support to schools and where we can improve further so we maximise the opportunity of these new arrangements.

The work with schools is just one element of a much broader transformation programme that will change the way we deliver support to everyone growing up in our city. The model we are working towards - which has been outlined to Executive and Scrutiny Board through a number of reports - will move attention away from traditional distinct service areas and put much more focus on bringing the right teams and services together that deliver complementary support to meet individual children's needs. This is an exciting opportunity to change the way we do things locally and citywide and there is real momentum growing. The necessary leadership recruitment and wider restructuring will be completed over the coming months, with support provided for staff as we make the changes, we are aiming for completion by September. At the same time we are finalising a new shorter, sharper Children and Young People's Plan that will give direction to the new model. Building on our positive recent progress, this transformation work is all part of our determination to make Leeds a great place to grow up and a truly child friendly city.

Q18 (Councillor Lobley to Councillor Wakefield) - Will the Executive Board Member for Resources & Corporate Functions explain how procurement processes will be monitored when the Contracts Information System (CIS) is decommissioned when there is no immediate replacement available to take its place?

A The CIS system was an interim solution designed to assist staff in identifying the correct contract to be used when placing orders. It was never intended to be a long term solution and it is not a system for placing orders.

Developments are now underway to provide a more permanent solution. Firstly, we have reduced the number of orderers in each directorate, provided them with training and created "ordering hubs" that focus on this activity. This way we get trained dedicated staff who are familiar with the Council's procedures and the contracts available.

Secondly, amendments are being made to FMS (Leeds), to force orderers to use existing contracts where available, hence there is no need for a system to separately identify a contract. These revisions were planned to be in place by April 2011 but have been delayed until May/June 2011.

The termination of the CIS contract will have no detriment to the ordering system.

Q19 (Councillor Golton to Councillor Wakefield) - Could the Leader of Council remind us why it was deemed necessary to take a verbatim record of the Executive Board meeting on the 11th February 2011?

A The Executive Board considered two issues of very significant public interest on the 11th February 2011, namely the;

- The Leeds Crisis Centre; and
- The Future Of Mental Health Day and Accommodation Services

Those two items attracted such interest that it was agreed that the Executive Board would meet in the Chamber so that as many people as possible could attend and listen to the debate.

Also due to that very significant public interest it was felt that, as we do for the full Council, a verbatim record of those two items should be arranged. That record is available on the Council's website and illustrates the considered and detailed assessment of both those issues by the Executive Board"

Q20 (Councillor P Grahame to Councillor Wakefield) - Would the Executive Member for Resources and Corporate Functions confirm the total cut in Area Based Grant received by Leeds City Council?

A The Area Based Grant was made up of a number of individual grants and at the beginning of 2010/11 the Council's total Area Based Grant was just under £74m. However, in June 2010 following the Chancellor's emergency budget our Area Based Grant was cut by £7.4m. For 2011/12, the Area Based Grant has been totally done away with. Whilst it is fair to say that some elements of the Area Based Grant have been transferred into other grants in 2011/12, what we do know is that overall we have lost grants totalling over £51m.

One particular area of concern has been the Supporting People element of the Supporting People grant, For 2010/11 our allocation was £32m, but the amount which has transferred in 2011/12 is just £21.4m, a 33% reduction in just one year.

Q21 (Councillor Wilkinson to Councillor Murray) - Will the Executive Board Member for Environmental Services please update Members on the black, green and brown bin collection service, including the ongoing problems in certain parts of the city such as Wetherby and Roundhay?

A Since January the reliability of the refuse and recycling collection service has improved significantly, both in terms of the level of missed collections each day and the level of customer contacts.

The average hours of failed collections each day fell from 25 hours per day in January to 3 hours per day in mid March. This level of missed collections equates to around 0.5% of collections being missed each day, a 99.5% completion rate. A service the size of Leeds, would typically expect around 8 hours downtime each day because of breakdowns, so this is within expected levels - all known missed collections are allocated for a back-up collection.

Customer contact has also fallen significantly and has stabilised. In March we received, on average, 441 requests for action to be taken per week, around 0.01% of the number of scheduled collections in the week. This is broadly comparable to the same period last year when we received an average of 460 per week in the same period.

We are, however, aware that there are still some localised problems with collections in particular areas on certain days of the week. We are aware, for example, of higher than expected levels of missed collections and customer contact in some parts of Roundhay and Wetherby, particularly focused on Fridays. The service continues to prioritise managerial resources at the most senior level to deal with the problems in these areas and over the last few weeks this situation has improved. However, the service is still working hard to resolve these issues permanently and will continue to focus on these areas until we are satisfied that they are.

Unfortunately, performance during the last week of March was not as good as previous weeks, mainly due to issues with the availability of agency staff to cover absence. We have learnt from the problems and are taking steps to ensure that we are not put in a similar position in weeks to come.

Performance has improved since, with on average less than 5 hours failure on each day. The problems should not take away from the consistent week on week improvement over the last two months.

Q22 (Councillor Pryke to Councillor Wakefield) - Would the Leader of Council please tell us which organisations you, other Labour Group members and Labour MPs in Leeds, have assured that their Council funding is ring-fenced or will not be reduced this year?

A In light of the Government cuts to funding that have been imposed on the Council this year following the Comprehensive Spending Review, the authority has had to review the financial assistance it provides to all to external bodies.

These organisations have been continually consulted during the budget setting process and all potential implications for service delivery considered. Stakeholders have been involved throughout the process in order to ensure transparency and equality.

Q23 (Councillor Schofield to Councillor Ogilvie) - Will the Executive Board Member for Leisure give a commitment that the land and buildings of the East Leeds Leisure Centre in Halton Moor will remain in the ownership of Leeds City Council?

A The City Development Directorate have vacated the building and Corporate Property Management have taken over responsibility for the whole site, including the former one stop centre. Any future issues relating to the ownership of the site will be subject to further discussion and decision. In the short term arrangements have been made to ensure that there is youth work provided from the facility in the short term.

Q24 (Councillor Monaghan to Councillor Murray) - Can the Executive Board member for Environment Services inform Council as to what activities took place using the £50,000 the previous administration earmarked for removing graffiti on hard to access locations such as high buildings?

A The previous administration at Leeds(Conservative/Lib Dem) determined that they would like to use the £250k saving, resulting from combined elections in 2010-11, to provide additional street cleansing teams (£200k), and use £50k for removing graffiti on hard to access locations such as high buildings.

In June 2010 the Government announced a series of in year grant reductions. These reductions impacted upon a number of services including Street Cleansing where the LPSA grant which was to be used to fund (£452k) the Intensive Neighbourhood Management (INM) teams would no longer be available.

Therefore the decision was taken that £220k of the £250k previously earmarked for additionality by the previous administration, should be used to fund the INM teams for the period April to September 2010 – after September 2010 INM ceased. The balance of the resource, £30k, was used to offset the reduction in grant receivable which had been used to fund keeping bin yards clean.

Q25 (Councillor Marjoram to Councillor Wakefield) - Given the forthcoming Royal Wedding, what measures will the Leader of Council put in place to make organising public events easier for voluntary organisations given the requirements around the need to produce a Child Protection Plan for each event and the lack of advice and guidance offered by the Council to our much valued volunteer groups?

A The Council is happy to encourage public events to celebrate the royal wedding and has been assisting volunteer organisations and residents groups in preparations for, amongst other things, street parties. We have provided a page on our website that has more information and

a guidance note about this and there are other national websites, such as www.streetparty.org.uk that also offer help and advice.

Where we are contacted with a view to a Council-owned park or other area of land being used for a party we would ask the organising body to provide assurances that they have thought through the necessary issues to keep those who might be attending safe. This includes public liability insurance and would also involve drawing up a basic child protection policy, which needs only to be short, but should show that the organisers have thought through how to handle safety issues, for example what to do if a child at the event got separated from their parent or carer.

We want to minimise 'red tape' to ensure that people who wish to do so can celebrate the Royal wedding as part of their local community, but when a group are organising any activity on Council land we also have to make sure that the right issues are being thought through to keep everybody safe, manage liability and ensure people can enjoy themselves with confidence.

Q26 (Councillor Ewens to Councillor Wakefield) - Could the Executive Member for Development tell Council whether or not the Hyde Park one-way scheme has been cancelled and provide details of all ward member consultation that has taken place on this scheme?

A Work on this scheme has stopped and no further work will be carried out, following comments received from local residents and the Inner North West Area Committee.

The one-way scheme arose from complaints received from residents about increased and unsafe parking in the area. In July 2009 the police requested that the council introduce traffic engineering measures to tackle the problems.

The one way proposal was developed in conjunction with local residents and businesses. Local members were formally consulted by letter on 19 November 2009 (Cllrs Ewans, Hussain and Rhodes Clayton).

Q27 (Councillor Pryke to Councillor Murray) - Could the Executive Member for Environment Services explain why his Party's promise to abandon the incinerator project has been broken?

A On assuming control of the Council in May 2010, the Labour Group inherited the following in regards to the Council's procurement of a Residual Waste Treatment facility in the city.

In July 2008, the Council, under the previous Tory-LibDem administration of which Cllr Pryke was a member, commenced its procurement of a Residual Waste Treatment facility. As part of the terms of this procurement, no technology, including energy from waste was ruled out of this process.

As part of this procurement, the final two bidders short-listed were Aire Valley Environmental and Veolia Environmental Services.

The technology proposed by both bidders short-listed, was mechanical-pre treatment to recover additional recyclate from residual waste, and energy from waste (or incineration with energy recovery).

Aire Valley Environmental has proposed to develop their facility on an area of the Knostrop Sewage Treatment Works, and Veolia Environmental Services on the former wholesale market site on the Cross Green Industrial Estate. Again, both these locations were short-listed under the previous Tory-LibDem Administration of which Cllr Pryke was a member.

Q28 (Councillor Chastney to Councillor R Lewis) - Can the Executive Member for City Development confirm the status of the Business Plan for the West Park Centre and inform us of when ward members will be briefed concerning the future of the West Park Centre?

A The situation with the property has not changed since the response to Cllr Chastney's question at January's Council meeting. The centre is still an operational property and has not been declared surplus to requirements. On that basis I do not intend to progress matters any further at this time. Should this position change I will of course ensure that ward members are consulted. The business plan referred to is one which Artforms is producing as the major occupier at the West Park Centre and is not directly the responsibility of the Council.

Q29 (Councillor Ewens to Councillor Wakefield) - Could the Leader of Council confirm to us his commitment to partnership working?

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- 1) Partnership remains as important to the Council as it has always been. We have had a cross party consensus about the need for partnership working in the city, and I hope that we can keep that.
 - 2) Responsibility for public services being spread across more and more bodies locally. Only the Council will be able (with its local democratic mandate) to join up these activity through our partnerships
 - 3) We have reformed and streamlined the Leeds Initiative (Through the paper approved by Executive Board in December 2010) We will have a single board and 5 partnerships as part of an integrated whole system approach to partnership and planning. Those boards will be smaller and more focussed than those we inherited - and will have more focus on delivering the priorities which matter to local people
 - 4) The Leeds Initiative has developed the new Vision for Leeds with involvement across the city and it sets out a shared aim for Leeds to be the Best city in the UK and the Council to be the Best Council in the UK

Q30 (Councillor Monaghan to Councillor Lewis) - Will the Executive Board Member for Development be taking advantage of the new powers from the government to tackle parking on pavements?

A Pavement parking occurs most regularly when the road is too narrow for vehicles to park wholly on the road without causing an obstruction to vehicular traffic or placing the parked vehicle in a vulnerable position. At some locations this is a pragmatic solution to meet the parking needs of local residents and businesses and I would not normally propose to use any parking restrictions in such situations PROVIDED THAT the pavement is wide enough to still allow pedestrian access, including for wheelchair users and double buggies. Where pavement parking is causing an obstruction and the road is too narrow to fully accommodate parked vehicles within its width, then the more appropriate solution is the use of double yellow lines which automatically ban all road, pavement and verge parking. This requires no signage and is widely understood.

Where the road is of sufficient width but it has still become common practice to park partly on the pavement then the new powers may be used and will certainly be added to the tool box of options when solutions to parking issues are being considered.

Parking restrictions are only effective where some level of enforcement can be maintained and the potential use and enforcement of the new signs is on the agenda of the next Civil Parking Enforcement Project Board. This is a joint City Development and Environment and Neighbourhoods officer board which aims to ensure that the council are coordinated in its approach to parking restrictions, especially where there is an opportunity to introduce new types of restriction.

I welcome the possibility of using this sign without reference to central government and will consider its use in appropriate circumstances.

Q31 (Councillor Pryke to Councillor Murray) - Could the Executive Member for Environment Services explain why his Party's promise to hold a referendum on the incinerator project has been broken?

A In February 2008, the Labour Group proposed a referendum with the people of Leeds on a possible energy from waste plant.

This was rejected by the previous Tory-LibDem administration of which Cllr Pryke was a member. In July 2008, the Council, under the previous Tory-LibDem administration, commenced its procurement of a Residual Waste Treatment facility. As part of the terms of this procurement, no technology, including energy from waste was ruled out of this process.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Tomkinson
Senior Governance Officer