



Democratic & Central Services

Governance Services

4th Floor (West)

Civic Hall

Leeds LS1 1UR

To: All Members of Council

Contact Name: Kevin Tomkinson

e-mail: Kevin.tomkinson@leeds.gov.uk

Direct Line: (0113) 2474357

Fax: (0113) 3951599

Your ref:

Our Ref: A61/kjt/quest

Date 23 September 2014

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL MEETING – 10TH SEPTEMBER 2014

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 8 to 23 unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

Q8 Councillor R Charlwood - Can the Executive Member for Children and Families please update Council on the recent exam results?

A I'm sure that Council will want to congratulate all our young people who have achieved success in this summer's exams and for which they and their schools have worked so hard.

Nationally, as a result of examination reform, the results published by schools are more volatile than ever before. We do not yet have national figures and our Leeds figures are still provisional as schools and students await the outcome of unprecedented numbers of appeals. The percentage of students gaining 5 A*-C grades including English and maths in Leeds is likely to be just over 54%, this is a drop of between 3 and 4% since last years results, but which compares with a drop of as much as 8% in some other local authorities. For the first time in 2014 only the first attempt at an exam counted towards this measure. What's more, this years exams featured more emphasis on final exams and on traditional academic subjects rather than vocational ones.

For many and especially more practical and less academic students these changes have been very challenging and over the last few months we have been helping schools respond to the changes in order to realise their children's potential in the future.

Feedback from employers, universities, parents and young people underlines the importance of ensuring we don't focus simply on traditional academic outcomes. Our young people must feel valued and supported to learn in a way that enables all to make good

progress, regardless of their starting point. The Department for Education's new accountability framework, which will come fully into effect in 2017, will recognise the centrality of student progress. It will move away from the disproportionate focus on the 5 GCSE's measure.

I'm pleased that we're preparing positively and proactively for this in Leeds. Progress at Key Stage 2 in Leeds is very good. We are above the national average in terms of the progress that pupils make by the end of primary school. At key stage 4 as well this year, we have seen significant improvements: for example the percentages of students achieving "expected progress" in English and maths has seen encouraging improvement, in English it has gone up by 7 percentage points, to 67.7%.

Our teachers in Leeds do an incredible job. They are committed to raising achievement and seeing their students thrive as fully rounded members of our community that are healthy and make positive contributions. They recognise that children learn from different starting points, with a range of needs, different life experiences and individual interests and ambitions and they seek to support them all to achieve their full potential.

Q9 Councillor G Latty - Would the Executive Member for Adult Social Care tell me what value he places on reducing social isolation, as part of achieving the goal of Leeds becoming the country's most age-friendly city?

A We are happy to celebrate with the city of Leeds, the Leeds Older People's Forum and Adult Social Care, the £6 million which we will spend on combatting loneliness in coming years.

The important point in this question is that there is a very clear link between the two important goals of reducing social isolation and being an age-friendly city. Being a friendly and welcoming city is of course a huge help to those people who are isolated and feeling lonely, but it is also about recognising what the whole city can do and the value it can add to the lives of older people.

Age friendly Leeds's ambitions are wider than tackling loneliness. Our ambitions include building a city that supports older people in keeping healthy through having active lives, through participating in decision making, in being able to get around, in living in good homes and of course being respected and being treated with dignity.

All these areas have an impact on people's social isolation, which is why there is so much good work happening across the Council to fulfil our ambition to become age-friendly. There are great things going on in Parks and in the realms of Sport and Culture, in Housing and Libraries and Planning; as well as in Adult Social Care.

The question about the value of these services and the part they play in an age friendly city that is tackling social isolation is priceless.

Q10 Councillor S Golton - Does the Executive Board member for Adult Social Care believe the Council is tackling the issue of Blue Badge fraud effectively.

A The Council is taking a pro-active stance on tackling blue badge fraud and Civil Enforcement Officers working within Parking Services carry out routine checks as part of their daily work. The misuse of blue badges is almost universally deplored and as a result any cases of abuse detected are now routinely referred for prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Leeds has received positive media coverage for the work it has done and more importantly we have received resounding support for the work from various groups working in the arena of Disability and Equality of Access. In the past 18 months the Council has seen over 100 cases successfully prosecuted through the Courts with significant fines being

imposed; this is seen as providing a strong deterrent which is hoped will change behaviour of the small minority of people who abuse this important and valuable scheme.

In August the Council received a visit from the Transport Minister, Robert Goodwill MP where the positive and proactive stance we are taking was demonstrated.

- Q11** Councillor K Maqsood - Can the Executive Member with responsibility for housing confirm the current funding for the Council Housing Growth Programme, including what proportion of this is from HCA grants?

A Executive Board and Full Council Approvals

Overall authority to spend is £72.47k as at 8th September 2014. A further £8.6m of HCA funding will be injected giving a total CHG programme of £81.08m to invest in Council Housing Growth over the next 4 years.

The total HCA approved funding is now £9.052m as detailed in the paragraphs below.

In June 2013 the HCA confirmed an allocation of £440k resources to deliver Phase 1 of the Empty Homes Programme, included within this phase was a LCC contribution of £1.8m amounting to £2.253m. The programme included 2 main elements - firstly, to buy 20 private properties which have been void for more than 6 months with a view to refurbishing them for letting as Council Housing, and secondly, to convert 2 empty community centres back into housing for letting as Council Housing.

In July 2013, the Council successfully secured Care and Support Specialist Housing Funding via the HCA and this £1.575m of funding will supplement Council resources to deliver 45 new Extra Care Housing units at Haworth Court, Yeadon on the site of an existing sheltered scheme. Total Scheme cost is estimated at £7.4m.

In July 2014, LCC were successful in securing £8.6m grant funding from the HCA to support a programme of 408 affordable homes (12 of the 13 schemes bid for). The Newbuild element attracted £6.8m and will deliver 308 new build properties, LCC are contributing £34.2m to these bids which totals £41m for these 12 schemes.

Also included within the bid is phase 2 of the Empty Homes programme which will return 100 properties to use this attracted £1.836m from the HCA, LCC are contributing £7.164m to these bids which totals £9m which will deliver the 100 properties

The Council House Growth programme also has a Right to Buy Programme which currently has £7m of right to buy receipts specifically for a 1 for one replacement grant programme. There are no grant funded commitments to date.

The committed programme is detailed in the table below :-

Council Housing Growth Programme Committed				Funded by		
Newbuild Programme	Confirmed Units	Estimated Units	Total Funding	HCA Ph1 Grant	HCA Affordable Housing Programme 2015/18 Grant	HRA
1. East Park Road	32		£3,344,185			£3,344,185

2. Howarth Court	45	0	£7,348,407			£7,348,407
3. The Squinting Cat	0	18	£2,345,000		396000	£1,949,000
4. Broadleas	0	30	£4,520,650		660000	£3,860,650
5. The Garnets	0	26	£3,625,000		572000	£3,053,000
6. Thorn Walk		23	£2,494,194			£2,494,194
7. Beech Walk, Gipton		21	£2,494,194		462000	£2,032,194
8. Beech Mount, Gipton		6	£791,434		132000	£659,434
9. Whinmoor Public House, Whinmoor		22	£2,629,851		484000	£2,145,851
10. Mistress Lane, Armley		77	£10,436,174		1694000	£8,742,174
11. Brooklands, Seacroft		20	£2,373,845		440000	£1,933,845
12. Middleton Park Avenue, Middleton		34	£4,457,870		748000	£3,709,870
13. Miles Hill Meanwood		30	£4,306,922		660000	£3,646,922
14. Acre Mount, Middleton		24	£3,022,228		528000	£2,494,228
TOTAL	408		£54,189,954		£6,776,000	£47,413,954
Empty Properties Programme				HCA original	HCA AHP	HRA
Total						
Empty Homes Programme						
Empty Homes Phase 1	22		£2,253,000	440000	0	£1,813,000
Empty Homes Phase 2	100		£9,000,000		1836000	£7,164,000
TOTAL	122		£11,253,000	£440,000	£1,836,000	£8,977,000
TOTALs	530		£65,442,954	£440,000	£8,612,000	£56,390,954

Q12 Councillor A Sobel - Does the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing agree with the recent protest march by Keep Our NHS Public calling on the government to halt the radical privatisation of the NHS?

A Firstly, I am sure that members in this chamber would share my admiration and support for the hundreds of people who played their part in the Keep our NHS Public march from Jarrow down to Westminster – including colleagues here - who took part in the Harrogate to Leeds stage of the march.

The fact that these people were willing to commit themselves to such an undertaking clearly shows just how passionate they are about our NHS and how concerned they are by the road they see it going down under the current government.

I know that many in this chamber share these same concerns. It was why I tabled a white paper motion raising those concerns at the last council meeting. It is now becoming increasingly clear from coverage in the media and protests like the one referred to that people are worried about the direction the NHS is being pushed in and the consequences this will have, not only on the nation's healthcare but on the future of the NHS itself.

It is clear that changes introduced by this government in the Health and Social Care Act risk eroding the very principles on which the NHS was founded and which have served this country so well for over 60 years. Our health service is being pushed down a road of privatisation, lining the pockets of already wealthy companies and individuals while waiting lists for patients grow and our hospitals and GP surgeries are stretched beyond their capacity through lack of investment.

Since the Health and Social Care Act was pushed through Parliament, 70% of tenders for NHS services have gone to private providers who are largely unaccountable and whose interests lie more in their own profits than the needs of patients.

The nation's healthcare is sliding towards a crisis and it is time to revert back to the founding principles which made the NHS the world's greatest healthcare system. This Government have fragmented care to the benefit of companies and organisations at a time when it should be integrating it around the needs of people and patients.

It is time that we all stand up for the NHS and say a resounding "no" to privatisation.

Q13 Councillor M Robinson - Does the Leader of Council believe that high profile, senior officers and leaders should set the right example for their workforce to follow?

A Yes, everyone, both officers and members should behave in line with the Council's values and policies.

Q14 Councillor C Townsley - Is the Executive Board member for Transport & the Economy satisfied that the designs for the Horsforth and Rodley roundabout improvements on the outer ring road provide suitable provision for cyclists?

A

- The Council has sought funding for both of these roundabout improvements for many years, given the long standing congestion issues that each has endured. Funding was obtained for Rodley via the Department for Transport's Pinch Point fund, combined with some developer funding. A carefully negotiated settlement for Horsforth roundabout came to fruition at the same time.
- Designs had been developed and these proposals were presented to the April meeting of the Leeds Cycle Consultation Forum. Some members of the Forum felt that the proposals did not provide the same level of facilities as the Leeds Bradford Cycle Superhighway.
- Forum members then submitted alternative proposals which the design team reviewed. After very careful review, it was felt that the alternative proposals as a whole would not meet the objectives of the Horsforth and Rodley schemes, but it was possible to include a number of the suggestions which were made.
- Additionally it is intended that the schemes will provide cycling and walking provision on the Ring Road between the two roundabouts. This is line with Council's stated ambition to provide a series of Superhighways which includes routes on the Outer Ring Road and the A65 Corridor. It has been possible to undertake some facilitation work within the current contract which will make the introduction of these routes easier.

Q15 Councillor B Anderson - Will the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel tell us what plans the administration has to bid for the £200m worth of Government funding announced to encourage development of brownfield land?

A The administration of course welcomes any initiative that would assist the Council and developers in accelerating the delivery of new homes on brownfield land to meet the city's housing needs as set out in the Core Strategy. We are currently considering the government's recently issued prospectus for local authorities to create 30 Housing Zones across the country, each of which could access a share of £200m for site preparation and infrastructure provision. It is though essential that any expression of interest to be submitted by the end of October is brought forward in partnership with land owners and

development interests to ensure it is deliverable, viable and right for the city, particularly as these funds are to be provided in the form of loans to the private partners and will require repayment.

Q16 Councillor S Golton - Could the Executive Board member for Digital and Creative Technologies, Culture and Skills outline how residents in employment will be able to access Libraries if evening opening hours are ended?

A The current proposals to reduce opening hours are predicated on the financial situation facing the council.

Evening opening hours are not ending. Reductions are however being proposed when libraries are at their quietest so that the impact on all our customers is minimised

Every book issued or computer used creates a timestamp for that use, so if a customer is served borrowing or returning a book or uses a public internet computer the time of that interaction is recorded. This enables the service to see on an hour by hour basis the relative demand for each of the library's opening hours against its own average level of use. Therefore the impact of any proposed reduction in opening hours can be clearly linked to its potential impact on customers.

Following consultation, where there was concern at the lack of local access to a library in the evening (for instance for people working 9-5) the service has sought to accommodate this through the provision of at least one late opening evening to supplement the weekend opening. In addition, consideration has been given to the geographical spread of evening opening hours and ease to get to another library.

For instance, the current proposals are for the Central Library to be open 4 late nights until 7.00p.m.

Q17 Councillor B Anderson - Could the Executive Member with responsibility for overpayments of Housing Benefit please advise me how many and to what value have the Council been able to recover overpayments of Housing Benefit using Direct Earnings Attachments since their introduction through the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and available in legislation since 8th April 2013?

A As at 31st August 2014 the Council has 324 Benefit overpayment invoices for collection by Direct Earnings Attachment, and during the current year we have collected £19,329.68 due to taking this action. Whilst the legislation was effective from April 2013 we awaited the outcome of an early pilot exercise before implementing from April 2014.

Q18 Councillor C Campbell - Could the Executive Board member for Cleaner, Stronger and Safer Communities inform Council when the new Maypole for Otley will be installed?

A All works to erect a new Maypole in Otley should be completed prior to the new year.

As you may be aware the original maypole was put up in the 1960's and consisted of the wooden maypole set directly into concrete (contributing to its rotting). When it was removed it was effectively sawn off at the base. The original base will have to be removed with the concrete and a new one provided with anchoring sleeve as part of the scheme. Officers are preparing the technical drawings and bills of quantity.

We have found a supplier to replace the maypole to the same size and specification to the one that was removed. The supplier is a specialist wooden mast supplier to the yachting industry. They have provided a quote for supply only and this includes finishing treatments

and the attachment of the original metal features such as the weathervane. They have also provided dimension and weight information so that drawings can be made for its fixing to modern safety standards.

The original metal features have just been refurbished and these will be sent to the supplier for fixing.

Once the drawings are complete and we have an estimate of all the costs involved we will allocate capital funding in accordance with financial regulations to the project. At this time we will be able to formally commission the supply and installation of the new maypole and will be able to provide detailed time estimates for completion.

I have asked officers to keep both Ward Members and Otley Town Council updated with progress.

Q19 Councillor G Wilkinson - Will the Executive Board Member for Cleaner, Stronger and Safer Communities please give an update as to when those residents who do not have the benefit of a brown bin will receive one?

A The current garden waste collection routes are full to capacity and it is currently not possible to add new properties to these routes, without risking the failure of existing collections.

The service has budgetary provision for an additional garden waste route from the commencement of the garden waste service in March 2015. However, technical capacity is also needed to fully review and redesign the existing garden waste routes to deliver the most efficient routes which maximise collection productivity and minimise travel time. Currently this technical capacity is being fully utilised, completing the roll out of Alternate Weekly Collections

As such the service will bring forward a cohesive and clearly set out strategy for brown bins to be provided for new properties across the city, prior to End November 2014 and the ceasing of the garden waste service for the winter period. Residents can then be informed of how and when the service is to be provided during 2015.

Q20 Councillor B Cleasby - Could the Executive member responsible for co-ordinating joint property use with the West Yorkshire Police explain what is meant by "the near future" as in this response to a request to the Police for information:- "At the present there are no Police buildings in Horsforth, however West Yorkshire Police and LCC are working together to provide accommodation for the Horsforth based PCSO's within the Brownlee Stone building. This is expected to be implemented in the near future."

A The principle has been agreed with West Yorkshire Police to locate a number of police staff into the Brownlee Stone Centre, Horsforth to work alongside council staff. West Yorkshire Police is now working through the detailed implementation of their New Operating Model for policing in Leeds. It is understood, that once this review has been completed, the police will be in a position to indicate the timing of any move into the Brownlee Stone Centre, but that at this stage Council officers are unable to advise on behalf of the police.

Q21 Councillor M Robinson - Could the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel tell me when legal ownership of the freehold of Bardsey Primary School premises will be transferred to the School Governors?

A Bardsey Primary School forms part of the Wharfe Valley Learning Partnership Trust. On 1 September 2014, Children's Services instructed City Development in relation to the transfer

to the Trust of the legal ownership of Bardsey Primary School, Deighton Gates Primary School and Primrose Lane Primary School.

City Development will carry out a site survey of all 3 sites on 9th September which will flag up any potential issues relating to the sites. Their surveyor will thereafter instruct Legal Services to prepare the transfers. Title documents and a draft transfer will be sent out once Legal Services have contact details for the Trust's solicitor.

Once the extent of the property to be transferred has been agreed in principle, City Development will undertake the required consultation and obtain a delegated decision to proceed with the transfer. Provided that the transfer is straightforward, and the delegated decision can be obtained quickly, it should be possible to complete the transfer of Bardsey Primary School within 4-6 weeks from the date that Legal Services is fully instructed.

Q22 Councillor C Campbell - Could the Executive Board member for Transport & the Economy confirm when work is planned to start on the 20mph zones promised for Coppice Wood Road, Rufford Lane and Prince Henry's Grammar School?

A Prince Henry's School - Newall Carr 20mph Scheme. This scheme forms part of the current phase of LTP funded school 20mph schemes. A report is being prepared seeking authority from the Chief Officer Highways and Transportation to advertise the legal orders and proceed with the works. Subject to this authority being approved and the outcome of the statutory consultation and legal processes, the intention is to complete this scheme in this financial year.

Rufford Park 20mph Scheme. This scheme is related to the schools expansion programme. A meeting is being scheduled for Thursday 11 September to discuss the proposed inclusion of speed cushions in this scheme. It is understood their inclusion is not supported but their omission and replacement with full width road humps would have a significant impact on the scheme costs requiring additional funding to be identified. The progression of the scheme will be dependent on the outcome of discussions regarding the features, resolution of any financial implications and the outcome of the statutory legal processes.

Coppice Wood 20mph Scheme. This scheme is being progressed with funding being provided by both Otley & Yeadon and Guiseley & Rawdon Members. We are awaiting the WBI financial process to be completed. As with the Rufford Park scheme, concerns have been raised about the proposed inclusion of speed cushions. These issues will be discussed at the meeting that is scheduled for Thursday 11 September. Again, the progression of the scheme will be dependent on the outcome of discussions regarding the features, resolution of any financial implications and the outcome of the statutory legal processes.

Q23 Councillor B Cleasby - Following the success of the Grand Depart of the Tour de France and the subsequent focus on cycling has the Leader of Council considered a Velodrome for Leeds City Region?

A The Council is keen to build on the success of the Tour De France and as reported to Executive Board in June this year we will be working to deliver a long term cycling legacy through the "Cycling Starts Here" city Cycle Strategy. Investing in cycling infrastructure (including cycle routes) will be a key part that strategy and there will be investment choices to be made moving forward. Specifically in terms of developing the sport of cycling and developing the top cyclists of the future, officers are in discussion with British Cycling over future investment. It is too early to say at this stage what the immediate priority will be but both an outdoor velodrome and closed circuit track have featured as part of those initial discussions.

The consultation is due to be concluded in September and proposals will be brought again to ward members where needed. An Executive Board report should then be expected in the Autumn.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Tomkinson
Principal Governance Officer