

**Democratic & Central Services**

Governance Services

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To: All Members of Council

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Date 29 January 2015

Dear Councillor

**COUNCIL MEETING – 14<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2015**

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 13 to 20 unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

**Q13** Councillor A Carter - Will the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel confirm how much Greenbelt land, both in hectares and percentage terms, will be developed as part of the Council's Core Strategy?

**A** The adopted Core Strategy makes clear that it will be necessary to review the green belt in order to find land to meet the targets set out in the Plan. The Core Strategy does not prescribe the amount of green belt land that will be needed. That is a matter for the Site Allocations Plan.

About 836ha of land currently in the green belt is proposed for development in the package of sites to be considered at Executive Board on 11<sup>th</sup> February. This represents about 2.5% of the total green belt in the district.

**Q14** Councillor Colin Campbell - Is the Executive Board Member for Cleaner, Stronger and Safer Communities satisfied with the notification residents received about the changes to Christmas bin collections?

**A** Leeds has for many years operated a revised collection schedule over Christmas and New Year, consisting of a city wide rescheduling of kerbside collections, where some collections are pulled one day forwards and some are collected one day later, with normal collection schedules recommencing early January.

In advising residents of these changes, a variety of methods and delivery options have been previously tried to provide timely reminders. No distribution method has been without issue and the complication of understanding if residents did or did not received the information. Issues, both in this and previous years, are exacerbated where collections are pulled one day earlier rather than rescheduled for one day later than resident's normal day.

The contact used this year was £46,000 less than the cheapest postal option and whilst acknowledging a variable picture across the city and pockets of disruption to residents, the overall level of complaint received was not higher than in previous years. With the key issue being where collections were pulled a day forward, the operational service responded to address complaints received with crews completing their daily scheduled work then falling back and retrace previous days work. (residents "normal" collection day.)

However, the service is meeting with the contractor, to present evidence of the issues faced, with a view to deduct a reasonable and proportionate sum from the expected payment. The service will also consider alternative operational options to a city wide Christmas rescheduling and collections being pulled one day forwards.

**Q15** Councillor M Harland - Could the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing tell Council what is being done to assist vulnerable people to stay warm in their homes this winter?

**A** Leeds City Council are engaged with a number of partners to tackle fuel poverty using three distinct approaches:

1. Improving energy efficiency in all homes across the City and raising incomes to reduce the likelihood of fuel poverty. This has included:
  - a. Referring, signposting and direct marketing to encourage private householders to take up national grants such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), which has funded improvements to 910 properties so far. We will shortly be launching the Better Homes Leeds Scheme which will assist households with a range of energy efficiency measures for at least the next three years through a combination of ECO funding and Green Deal finance.
  - b. Continued upgrading of heating and insulation in Council owned properties . Approximately 31,464 properties have already been improved with cavity wall and loft insulation4,300 homes with external wall insulation and approximately 40,000 properties with central heating in the past
2. Targeted support to those likely to be in fuel poverty, particularly low income households with multiple deprivations and concentrations of hard to treat properties. These have included:
  - a. Wrap Up Leeds Plus included targeting of deprived system built estates to install external wall insulation across tenures in 2013. We worked with Yorkshire Energy Services to improve 195 properties.

- b. The Leeds Green Deal Communities scheme, which is aiming to improve approximately 404 properties in lower income areas of Leeds with solid wall insulation and which has been designed in conjunction with the Department of Energy and Climate Change and our private sector contractors.
  - c. Groundwork Leeds' Green Doctor scheme to provide home visits to vulnerable households including energy advice, small scale measures such as draft proofing and referrals to more substantial measures. This has assisted 1,505 households since 2012.
3. Proactive Interventions targeting vulnerable people:

The DOH Cold Weather Plan for England was first published in 2011, there have been yearly updates since then with the most recent being published in December 2013. The Cold Weather Plan highlights the need for a more proactive approach to identifying and targeting high risk groups to ensure they are protected from the hazardous effects of cold.

The plan emphasizes an all year round approach to building people's resilience to cold through the delivery of high impact interventions using a targeted approach.

Over the last twelve months Leeds City Council have led a wide range of programmes to get messages out to people and to target resources appropriately; the key programmes are outlined below:

### **Leeds 2014/15 Winter Wise Campaign.**

Services across Leeds City Council and the NHS are urging residents to stay winter wise this winter, with guidance on how to keep warm during the winter months. Leaflets and resources are available to the public and frontline workers on the Stay Winter Wise webpage which includes advice on how to stay warm at home, how to reduce energy bills - including claiming the warm homes discount, winter travel arrangements and advice on flu jabs:

<http://www.leeds.gov.uk/residents/Pages/Winter-wise.aspx>

In addition, Radio Aire and Magic 828 is promoting key messages as part of the broader 'getting ready for winter' campaign. Also, an email cascade system is being developed by Public Health, Adult Social Care, Emergency Planning and Leeds CCGs to inform key stakeholders of cold weather messages and Met Office weather warnings.

### **Winter Wellbeing Small Grants**

Local community groups and agencies have had the chance to bid for fifty-nine thousand pounds worth of Leeds Public Health funding to run a variety of projects across the City, aimed at helping vulnerable people during winter and reducing social isolation. Over thirty projects have been funded by the scheme administered by Leeds Community Foundation, including clubs and activities, home visits, befriending schemes and help for rough sleepers, all of which will take place between January and March 2015.

### **Winter Wellbeing Packs**

Organisations in Leeds in previous years have regularly provided winter wellbeing packs to the most vulnerable residents. Winter wellbeing packs aim to build cold weather resilience and contains a fleece blanket, hot water bottle, thermo mug, unisex gloves, thermal socks and a winter wise leaflet. Therefore, funding has been allocated from multiple partners (e.g. Community Committees, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Housing Leeds) resulting in the distribution through neighbourhood networks, the third sector and other organisations who have outreach work as part of their service.

### **Commissioned Services**

As with successful campaigns in previous years, new and extended services to help residents over winter will be funded by Leeds City Council Public Health, along with Leeds South & East and Leeds North Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). Leeds West CCG have funded the Patient Empowerment Project working in partnership with LCC PH to increase awareness, support and access to existing local services in community to improve patient's health and wellbeing, including winter wellbeing.

### **The Warm Homes Service**

Environment and Policy Team (LCC) commission Care and Repair Leeds's Warm Homes Service, repairing and installing heating systems and boilers for private householders where a member of the household is vulnerable or suffers from a cold related illness.

Increased funding has been made available for the Warm Homes Service, as part of the cold weather planning programme, to cope with the increased number of vulnerable households without heating when their system breaks down. They will service or repair heating systems and repair or replace broken boilers where a member of the household is vulnerable or suffers from a cold related illness. This service is available to homeowners and private tenants. Contact: 0113 3918336 or [ravinder@crleeds.org](mailto:ravinder@crleeds.org)

### **The Green Doctor**

Groundwork Leeds' Green Doctor scheme will undertake additional home visits for low income households including elderly and those with young children, providing face to face practical advice on how to reduce energy bills and maximise income. Where appropriate, they also provide basic energy efficiency measures such as draught-proofing, reflective radiator panels, pipe lagging.  
Contact: 0113 2380601 or [greendoctorleeds@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:greendoctorleeds@groundwork.org.uk)

### **CAB Winter Wellbeing Advice Service**

Arrangements are being finalised to re-start Chapeltown CAB's service to provide combined fuel bill and income advice to low income households in community venues including schools.

- a. Providing emergency heating repairs and improvements to private households suffering from cold related ill health, through the Health Through Warmth/Warm Homes Service, run by Care & Repair Leeds, which has assisted 1,861 private sector households since 2012.

- b. Providing essential services to vulnerable people over winter, including additional funding for home visits through the Green Doctor scheme and heating repairs through the Warm Homes Service. Also additional services, such as a small grants fund for winter community projects across Leeds, administered by Leeds Community Foundation, and combined fuel bill/heating advice through Chapeltown CAB. For the first two years, this funding was provided by the Department of Health centrally, however, since this ceased, LCC Public Health have provided funding for these services.

## **Funding**

Leeds has been successful in leveraging in outside funding from a number of sources for its energy efficiency/fuel poverty schemes, enabling it to add value to Local Authority funding. These include:

- Energy supplier funding, such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO)
- Bespoke funding, direct from Central Government, for example Green Deal Communities funding from DECC
- Funding from Leeds CCGs

**Q16** Councillor P Wadsworth - Is the Leader of Council confident that the most vulnerable people in Leeds will be able to access support and advice services in future years given the CAB proposals, changes to opening hours at the contact centre and the move to a more on line customer access model?

**A** "Yes I am. This Administration's number one priority is to support those most in need in our city. That's why we continue to prioritise face-to-face services through the development of community hubs. It is also important we look to do things more efficiently at the same time, which is what any change proposals are about. Reducing the opening hours in the contact centre is not ideal, but in the financial circumstances we are in, the proposal recognises that between 8am and 9am and 5pm and 6pm, which represents 20% of the working day, we only get 7% of our total calls in that period. In times of significant financial challenge it makes sense to make such a change. Development of on-line services are about delivering efficiencies and adding choice, not about taking choice away. As regards the CAB proposals, these are again about increasing advice provision across the city, but doing so in a more efficient way."

**Q17** Councillor B Cleasby - Could the Executive Board member for Transport and the Economy advise Council on what fall back position the Council has should the Public Inquiry into NGT recommend the scheme does not proceed?

**A** The Council is optimistic that the Secretary of State will approve the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAo) for NGT later this year for the following reasons;

- There is general agreement that there is a need for improved public transport on the NGT corridors. Therefore doing nothing on these corridors is not an option.
- NGT will bring about improvements in public transport, in particular in its reliability and punctuality.

- NGT is consistent with local planning, economic and transport policies and is firmly established within those local policies.
- NGT is funded and deliverable.
- While some parties have put forward options for alternative solutions, there is no evidence that these have been developed in enough detail to present a realistic and robust alternative to the identified transport problems on the NGT corridors.
- To reject NGT in the hope that something better might come along would be wholly inconsistent with the policy framework and would deprive Leeds of a much needed rapid transit system.

Therefore it would not be prudent to develop at significant cost a fall-back position or alternative plans to NGT at this stage.

The Government has estimated £175m for NGT; should the TWAO not be approved, this funding would not be available for other transport schemes in West Yorkshire.

It would also mean Leeds falling further behind other Core Cities such as Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield and Nottingham in terms of high quality public transport systems which are undergoing regular extensions. This step change in public transport provision in the city would be lost for a considerable number of years.

**Q18** Councillor G Wilkinson - Will the Executive Board Member please advise when brown bins will be provided to those properties in the Wetherby ward that currently do not benefit from this service?

**A** Work to identify the remaining properties that are appropriate for garden waste collections, and that can be serviced using standard refuse collection vehicles, is well underway and has included consultation with Elected Members across the city. Many of the properties identified will receive a garden waste collection service for the first time in March 2015, including the Churchfields and Walton Gate developments in Wetherby ward.

Planning for the further properties that are appropriate for garden waste collections, but that need specialist, smaller vehicles to access them is also underway. However any further roll-out to these properties is dependent on the availability of those specialist vehicle resources and is linked to the final tranche of fortnightly collection arrangements. We currently aim to complete this further work by early summer 2015

**Q19** Councillor S Bentley - What steps has the administration taken to develop alternative plans to NGT in the event of the Secretary of State for Transport rejecting the scheme or allowing an alternative.

**A** The Council is optimistic that the Secretary of State will approve the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) for NGT later this year for the following reasons;

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- NGT will bring about improvements in public transport, in particular in its reliability and punctuality.
- NGT is consistent with local planning, economic and transport policies and is firmly established within those local policies.
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**Q20** Councillor D Cohen - Can the Executive Board Member for Transport and the Economy inform Council of the dates and times of the 'regular meetings' which he, or senior Council officers, have held with the Friends of Leeds Kirkgate Market, as referred to in the Yorkshire Evening Post on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December?

**A** Meetings were held between senior Council officers and/or Members and Friends of Leeds Kirkgate Market on the following dates:

10th March 2011  
 24th June 2011  
 8th June 2012  
 22 November 2012  
 18th March 2014  
 15th June 2014.

Yours sincerely

**Kevin Tomkinson**  
**Principal Governance Officer**