



Democratic & Central Services

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To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL MEETING – 23RD MARCH 2016

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 9 to 21 unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

Q9 Councillor R Finnigan - Can the Executive Board Member for Development confirm when we will have a planning policy on supporting Public Health?

A The Council's planning policies already seek to support the health agenda. A key part of the Core Strategy is the delivery of the homes, including affordable homes, and jobs that are fundamental to the health of our community. Our planning policies are concerned with providing and protecting greenspace, promoting opportunities for cycling and walking and ensuring access to a range of facilities. Our policies are about the delivery of sustainable development and the creation of places that enable our citizens to lead healthy lives.

The Council produced a Health Background Paper (CD1/24) for the Core Strategy Examination which provides further detail on how health interests are dealt with in the plan.

Q10 Councillor B Urry - Can the Executive Member for Communities comment on the recently published rough sleeper figures for the last year?

A Core City comparison is as follows:

Authority	Number rough sleepers 2014	Number rough sleepers 2015	Change
Birmingham	20	36	+16
Bristol	41	97	+56
Leeds	15	13	-2
Liverpool	8	15	+7
Manchester	43	70	+27
Newcastle	7	8	+1
Nottingham	9	14	+5
Sheffield	10	11	+1

Leeds is therefore the only Core City to report a reduction in rough sleeper figures across the two years. Leeds has the lowest rate of rough sleeping per 1,000 households (0.04) compared to Bristol (0.51) and Manchester (0.33).

The Leeds figure was based upon a city-wide count by staff from Leeds City Council and CRI (commissioned street outreach service) involving a three hour walk across the city centre with other staff (in cars) targeting areas where people are known to have slept rough in the wider city – including multi-storey blocks.

The rough sleeper figure in the city will fluctuate on a daily basis but officers are absolutely confident that work carried out in Leeds means that numbers have stabilised and the city does not have the numbers experienced in cities such as Bristol, Manchester and Birmingham.

Q11 Councillor A Lamb - Will the Executive Board Member for Children and Families update Council on any plans for a site for the approved new free school in Roundhay?

A As Councillor Lamb will be aware, the new school in Roundhay is being brought forward as a Free School and as such the Education Funding Agency (EFA) is leading on the site search. The Council will provide all the support it can to try and identify an appropriate site and I know that officers have discussed this matter with the EFA only last week. Once the EFA have completed their assessment, no doubt they will make their preferred option(s) public. Council officers will continue to provide the necessary assistance to ensure that these much needed school places are delivered.'

Q12 **Councillor S Golton - Could the executive member for community safety please confirm the number of dog owners that have been subject to successful enforcement for letting their dogs off a lead in public areas?**

A Dogs are allowed off the lead in certain public areas as long as they do not cause a nuisance or are a danger. However there is a Dog Control Order in place that requires dogs to be on the lead in specified areas. This Order applies to all footpaths and verges adjacent to carriageways (including gated alleyways) within the Leeds City Council district. The Order also applies to cemeteries, crematoria and some specialist or ornamental gardens.

From the 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 the Environmental Action Service issued 35 fixed penalty notices for dogs being off the lead in specified areas. The great majority were issued for dogs being off the lead adjacent to the highway and would be usually issued to owners who allowed their dogs to roam/stray unattended. In addition 2 prosecutions were taken both resulting in guilty verdicts. I'm unable to provide figures for informal enforcement activity, i.e officers requesting owners to put their dogs on a lead.

To put in context over the 12 month time period the Locality Teams received 38 requests for service from the public specifically relating to dogs being off the lead. However 262 requests for service were also received for dogs straying.

The data for 2014/15 is similar with 34 fixed penalties served.

Q13 Councillor A Khan - Does the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning believe that Starter Homes will address affordable housing need?

A The Housing and Planning Bill contains within it government's intention to build 200,000 starter homes nationally for first time buyers. The Bill defines the first time buyer as being under 40 years old and offers a 20% discount from the market price for 5 years (subject to a price cap of £250,000 for new houses outside of London).

The starter home initiative may well be attractive to those who can find deposit of 20% on a £200k mortgage for a house which is worth £250k. The question is whether this initiative does anything to meet unmet need in Leeds. Given that the average price of housing in Leeds is £180k and people can enter the market at £120k, the proposal, as it stands, is irrelevant to allowing people to get their first home. Without assistance to secure a deposit, the starter scheme will only help those who can already afford a home.

The concern is that the government's support for the scheme, combined with some developers' preference for this type of property, will see a marked reduction in the delivery of affordable rented property. Affordable rented housing through s106 remains a valuable source of supply has delivered thousands of homes. The assessed need for affordable housing in Leeds stands at 1100 properties a year. The present government strategy of skewing support towards their starter home policy will not enable that target to be met.

If national planning policy is reworded to give preference to starter homes or to give developers the option to choose, this will be at the expense of delivering a range of affordable housing options to meet the needs and aspirations of those on average and lower incomes who cannot realistically enter the housing market to buy a home.

Assistance to enable people to buy their own homes, if sensibly targeted, should play a part in a housing strategy but so should support for social housing and affordable rented housing. The Council wants a way forward which provides decent homes to everyone, regardless of their income. This policy will only help those who can already help themselves.

Q14 Councillor A Smart - Will the Executive Member for Employment, Enterprise and Opportunity update Council on work to help more young people into high quality apprenticeships?

A The Council's Employment and Skills Service, including the Leeds Apprenticeship Hub, engages with a range of employers across the city to support them to recruit apprentices. We consistently encourage employers to work with training providers that will help them to offer apprenticeships that are high in quality, with wages above the apprenticeship minimum wage where possible. We remind employers that apprentices offer a great deal of value to their business, and deserve just as much investment as their existing workforce, including graduates.

We also work with employers and training providers to encourage the provision of higher level apprenticeships. At any one time in the city there are approximately 220 apprenticeship vacancies, of which less than 5% are at higher levels. The ongoing area based reviews of the post-16 education and training sector are focused on ensuring that there are high quality technical routes to employment with a particular focus on apprenticeships. The Council and the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership are working with local providers to ensure that the planned changes improve responsiveness to local employer needs and support local business growth with a particular focus on those businesses which will be required to pay the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017.

To attract more young people to start an apprenticeship, offering higher level qualifications, with the potential for career progression and to access higher salaries, is increasingly important. New apprenticeship standards, many of which are at higher levels, offer a great opportunity to excite young people and employers about the opportunity that an apprenticeship offers. The Council and other public sector employers can play their part by offering more higher level apprenticeships to contribute to the achievement of the Public Sector Targets for Apprenticeships planned to be introduced this year.

The challenge is not just the demand for high quality and higher level apprentices, but the awareness of young people of the benefits of an apprenticeship. The fact that over 5,000 young people and their families attended the Leeds Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair at the First Direct Arena on the 14th March delivered by the Council shows the appetite from young people, but also demonstrates that this interest is currently under-served by schools. The Council is working closely with schools through the More Jobs, Better Jobs breakthrough project to try and address this information deficit.

Q15 Councillor M Robinson - Has the Executive Board Member for Children and Families given any additional thought to the impact of the Council's school transport policy on residents living in rural communities, such as East Keswick and Bardsey?

A It is recognised that the provision of transport assistance in a city like Leeds is complex, and there are occasions when it can appear illogical, especially to families living in outlying areas or communities where the nearest schools are relatively more distant than for most other people. When changes are introduced rigorous consultation takes place and great care is taken to communicate them. It is imperative that the transport policy is consistently applied to ensure all families are treated fairly. The policy is continually reviewed and wherever cost-effective, common-sense solutions to issues that are raised can be implemented they are done so. Similarly, wherever inconsistency is identified steps are taken to put this right. Detailed consideration has been given to the policy implementation as it applies in Bardsey and East Keswick, and it has been determined to date that the policy must be applied consistently and fairly to other communities and families. However, should new proposals be put forward they would be given fresh consideration.

Q16 Councillor J Bentley - Would the executive board member for children's services please inform council on the number of Leeds children not attending school and receiving home education? What steps does the council take to ensure that the education received by these children is of an equal standard to those in main stream schools and that these children are getting the same opportunities to achieve their full potential?

A 1. Elective Home Education

Currently today there are 334 young people registered as electively home educated where parents have chosen to take responsibility for their child's education –

The 334 breaks down to 130 primary children, 1 pre school child and 203 secondary children. This year to date we have received 133 referrals and 77 closures. There are 9 young people with an EHC plan who continue to be monitored by SENSAP team. Two of these are post 16 and remain on the list as registered as home educated before 16.

Under the law, parents who choose to home educate should provide a full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and special needs if any. However there is no current national framework to assess this suitable education and parents do not have to follow any particular national curriculum type education – so it is not possible for the council to ensure that the education received is of the same standard as in main stream schools nor that these young people can access the same opportunities – these responsibilities lie with the parent.

The LA does not have the right to assess the education of elective home educated children but can intervene if it would appear that no suitable education is taking place. The reporting of this may occur when other agencies are also working alongside the parents or occasionally from parents themselves requesting support to return to school. Parents are requested to share their educational plans with the EHE team at referral and a teacher over looks these to see if they seem suitable to that particular child's age and aptitude – using information on educational progress received from the previous school. If the education on offer is clearly not suitable or not in place at all, the LA can move to school attendance order process which enforces through court a return to a mainstream school. The team will offer support to the parents before taking this action.

Information for parents on educational websites, career pathways and access to GCSEs as an external candidate are shared at the initial meeting, sent by post and available on family information Leeds website.

2. Young people not attending school and receiving home education through LA teams

There are a number of young people who are not attending school due to issues related to SEMH, other medical needs or with an EHC plan and awaiting specialist provision.

- Medical needs teaching service is currently supporting 21 young people with mental health/ medical issues with one to one sessions in home tuition. The hours of tuition depend on the individual circumstances of the young person and what they can manage with their particular needs. All tuition is with qualified teachers and each has an individual education plan agreed with their school including access to career support. Educational progress is closely monitored. The service is seen as in the OFSTED category of outstanding. The education is of an equal standard to school – very personalised to the young person's circumstances.
- Pupil tuition team offer home tuition to girls on maternity leave for up to 18 weeks and supports reintegration back to their mainstream school. The PTT teachers support the girls to continue to access the education from their school and ensure they have access to the similar opportunities in learning in Maths, English and other examination subjects while also being a new mum. There are currently 8 girls accessing this service.
- Complex needs offer home tuition from qualified teachers to a small number of young people with an ENC plan who are awaiting specialist provision. The teachers offer highly individual tuition based on the needs of the young person and their education plan.

Q17 Councillor F Venner - Could the Executive Member responsible for Environmental Protection and Community Safety update members on the #1pieceofrubbish campaign?

A Background

The idea behind the 1 Piece of Rubbish initiative is to encourage as many people as possible to pick up a piece of rubbish every day, take a photo, throw it in the bin and then post that onto social media. In doing so, friends and followers are encouraged to do the same. The initiative is not principally about removing litter, more to profile issues around littering behaviour so that fewer drop litter at all and more engage with their responsibility for the quality of local environments. The plan is to continue to profile the initiative and continually cascaded the principles to a wide and every-growing audience. This, to maximise awareness and raise the collective conscience on littering in a time-efficient way.

Activity so far

Internal and external communication on the initiative has to date included:

- Promoting the campaign on websites, linking to www.1pieceofrubbish.com
- Following @Clean_Leeds and @1PieceOfRubbish on Twitter and re-tweeting 1 Piece of Rubbish messages
- Using personal social media accounts to get directly involved by picking up a piece of litter every day and tweeting with the hashtag #1PieceOfRubbish
- Cascading this information through networks

To help with promotion, the Council is working with Leeds University who will be producing promotional material such as posters, banners and flyers.

The Parks Forum and 550 parks staff will be briefed next month to become involved in the campaign.

In SSE, the Council is working with local schools and youth groups and have arranged a number of litter picks with competitions w/c 18 April and w/c 25 April. The competition will involve children designing an anti-littering poster where the designs will then be used as templates for permanent aluminium signage, displayed throughout the local community. Schools involved include:

- Temple Learning Academy
- Meadowfield Primary School and Children's Centre
- Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School
- Halton Primary School
- Temple Newsam and Colton Children's Centre

Local Press coverage has been secured via the Yorkshire Evening Post and the 'Made In Leeds' TV channel.

A number of local and national events and campaigns have also been used to promote 1 Piece of Rubbish. These include:

- Keep Harehills Tidy – This is a 2 year campaign in Harehills to support behavioural change by people who live, work and visit Harehills. The theme for March is littering Awareness. A number of clean ups with local primary schools were arranged during launch week w/c 14 March, with pupils subsequently encouraged to pick up 1 piece of rubbish every day to eventually create a litter pile.
- Clean For The Queen – This is a campaign launched by Country Life magazine in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy to clear up Britain in time for The Queen's 90th birthday. Several clean up events were organised across Leeds and these were shared via social media with the hashtags #CleanForTheQueen and #1PieceOfRubbish
- Friends Of Roundhay Park litter pick – This took the theme of 1 Piece of Rubbish in February and was promoted through the Clean Leeds twitter account and Friends of Roundhay Park Facebook account.

Social media

The #1PieceOfRubbish social media presence has been high with targeted Twitter promotion through the @Clean_Leeds account. Managers of LCC social media accounts have also been briefed and are regularly tweet and retweeting campaign messages to help increase reach and engagement. Reach has so far been high through Clean Leeds considering the account is only 2 months old. 353 people are following the account and messages are reaching up to 134,539 twitter accounts each week Leeds University are working with the Council to develop an Instagram and Snap Chat account to extend the social media platforms using 1 Piece of Rubbish.

- Q18** Councillor M Robinson - What actions has the Executive Board Member taken to ensure that the Government releases funding for works to repair Linton Bridge and when does he expect work to commence on the bridge repairs and construction of a temporary footbridge?

A Funding:

We have been working actively with Government since the day of the storm damage, participating in and sending communications regarding recovery and funding priorities to the Ministerial Flood Recovery Group on a regular basis. Senior officers and Members have met Ministers to discuss and highlight Storm Eva damage on a number of occasions.

After the obvious concerns for homes and businesses, Linton Bridge has always been our number one priority for funding assistance from government. The Budget announcements of last week confirmed that Leeds will receive £4.5m towards the repairs to infrastructure across the city. The repair of Linton Bridge (excluding the temporary footbridge) will take £3.9m of that. With a total repair bill to Leeds infrastructure of £5.9m excluding CRT damage estimated at £3m, there is clearly work to do now to understand this level of allocation, press for further funding and/or prioritise funding for repairs beyond that of Linton Bridge, which includes the decision to install a temporary footbridge.

Repairs and Programme:

Works are currently on site to temporarily repair scour damage under the (settled) south pier, expected to be complete by the end of March. In addition, the design of a temporary propping system is ongoing to facilitate dismantling of the southern arch. The reconstruction of the southern arch, and the permanent strengthening of the foundation of the pier, will then be subject to normal competitive tendering, and the procurement will be undertaken in parallel with the temporary propping to mitigate any delay to the reopening of the road bridge.

The programme for these activities is still being developed.

- Q19** Councillor S Bentley - Could the executive member for community safety please advise what work their department is doing to ensure that all dog owners are compliant with the most recent legislation regarding canine chipping?

A From 6th April 2016, dogs over 8 weeks old must be microchipped (excluding working dogs or where a vet provides a certificate stating health reasons against). No keeper may transfer a dog to a new keeper until it has been microchipped.

The Local Authority may serve a notice requiring the keeper to have the dog microchipped within 21 days. Where the keeper of a dog fails to comply, the Local Authority can arrange for the dog to be microchipped and recover from the keeper the cost of doing so. Also, it's possible to take possession of the dog without the consent of the keeper for the purpose of checking whether it is microchipped, or to microchip it.

Offences include failing to comply with the notice described above or to obstruct an authorised person from exercising their powers as above. A keeper may appeal to a first tier tribunal, against a notice served. An appeal suspends the effect of the notice until the appeal is determined or withdrawn. On appeal the tribunal may cancel, confirm or vary the notice.

Primary breeches are likely to be because:

- A breeder (or keeper) has transferred a dog without it being microchipped (offence)
- A keeper has possession of a dog which hasn't been microchipped (notice)
- The details aren't up to date for the current keeper (notice)

Approach to be taken in Leeds:

From 1st April 2016, the Council will begin a 3 month publicity campaign with regard to the new legislation. No enforcement will be undertaken during this period.

The campaign will involve:

- Regular press releases
- Communications through existing engagement routes including community committees and Housing Advisory panels/TRAs
- Social media publicity
- Direct communications to licensed breeders & rehoming kennels in Leeds
- Direct communications with any dog owners we come into contact with (including via both contracted kennels)
- Microchipping events
- Liaison/linkage with National campaigns including DEFRA, Dogs Trust
- Communications with vets and pet shops

Dog wardens will continue to offer scanning and microchipping to any dog they come into contact with. Microchips are provided free of charge by the Dogs Trust. Manor kennels currently do not offer this service but we are looking at a contract variation to coincide with a potential contract extension to encourage this service to be offered.

Enforcement in Leeds

After the 3 month campaign period, enforcement will be undertaken, using a risk based approach.

Where the dog warden service come into contact with dogs, either through home visits in relation to complaints, stray seizures, impounded dogs, the dog will be scanned for a microchip. If not microchipped or the microchip details are not up to date, the keeper will be offered the opportunity to have the dog microchipped by the service free of charge (subject to the microchips being provided by the Dogs Trust).

If this offer is declined, a notice will be served upon the keeper requiring the dog to be microchipped or the details updated within 21 days.

In cases of non-compliance, any enforcement action would be in line with our current enforcement policy taking into consideration the seriousness of the offence, public interest factors and the risk to the public of continued non-compliance. In general, we would prosecute where considered to be in the public interest.

Q20 Councillor M Robinson - Will the Executive Board Member for Economy and Culture inform council which cities Leeds is twinned with and how many of these cities have backed our capital of culture bid?

A Leeds City Council has active twinning links with the following cities, each of which has indicated its backing for our European Capital of Culture bid:

Brno – Czech Republic
Dortmund – Germany
Durban – South Africa
Hangzhou - China
Lille – France
Siegen – Germany

We are also building new partnerships with cities across the world to support our bid, but there are no plans to form any new twin city partnerships.

Q21 Councillor B Cleasby - Given the threat of fracking to significant areas of Leeds, could the leader of council please explain why there were no Leeds City Council officers or administration members at the LGA seminars on this subject that took place in March in Leeds, Manchester and London?

A As Cllr Cleasby will be aware this administration fully recognises that fracking is a potentially significant issue for parts of the district. This is evident from the White Paper motion tabled at the Council meeting on 11th November last year. I would also note that authorities within the City Region have agreed to work collaboratively in understanding and addressing fracking issues and proposals.

With regard to seminars I am aware that notice of an event in Leeds on 17th March to be run by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) was circulated to Plans Panel members and officers but as I understand it this event did not go ahead as planned. I am not sure whether or not this is the event that Cllr Cleasby is referring to.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Tomkinson
Principal Governance Officer