

Democratic & Central Services

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To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL MEETING – 29TH MARCH 2017

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 12 to 36 unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

Q12 Councillor S Bentley - Could the executive member please advise council why we have not yet followed in the footsteps of councils such as Southwark, Camden and Wandsworth in charging estate and letting agents fixed penalty notices for tardy removal of the unsightly boards left outside many homes throughout the city?

A Leeds City Council takes a proactive approach to dealing with estate and lettings agent boards where these are a problem. We have powers under the Planning Act which allow us to prosecute against breaches of the advertisement regulations; and as Members will know, we also have a specific Letting Board Code approved by the Secretary of State and in operation within the Headingley and Hyde Park areas of the city. The Council undertakes a number of prosecutions in relation to breaches of the Letting Board code. Regular surveys and follow up are undertaken in the Code area by planning compliance officers.

The London councils identified in the question have some additional powers under a specific Act of Parliament, the London Local Authorities Act 2004, which sets out that a number of planning offences, including these, may be dealt with by issuing a fixed penalty notice rather than just through prosecution. Unfortunately these specific powers are not available to Leeds City Council. If Cllr Bentley would like to lobby central government on this issue I would gladly support this.

Q13 Councillor S Hamilton - Please can the Executive Member provide an update on the progress of new-build Council housing in Leeds?

A The Council Housing Growth Programme will deliver c1000 properties; it is the first new council housing to be built at this scale in the city for some 30 years.

To date 514 new build units have been delivered: – this includes general needs housing, apartments for older people; the council's first extra care scheme and 388 new build homes delivered through the PFI.

A further 49 units are on site and there are 169 which are at feasibility stage.

The programme also includes the acquisition of 126 long term empty properties (using grant funding from the HCA) and to date 67 properties have been acquired.

The programme forms part of the "Housing Growth and High Standards in all Sectors" Breakthrough Project which is at the heart of the Council's Business Plan and demonstrates the authority's commitment to housing as a central component to the city's economic well-being.

Investment through the Council Housing Growth Programme has made significant contributions to the well-being of communities. Built to the Leeds Standard, the new homes are built to high space standards, good standards of urban design and to a highly energy efficient specification to help tenants reduce their fuel bills and limit their impact on the environment.

The first scheme to complete was Railway Close (on East Park Road) where the good quality design, space standards and energy efficient design is a benchmark for high standards and sustainability in new housing. Resident reaction has been very positive, feedback from one new resident, reported that her young son's respiratory condition had improved enormously since moving into her new home.

The Council's first Extra Care Scheme Wharfedale View (Yeadon) has been delivered and consists of properties for rent and shared ownership.

In March 2017, the scheme won Team of the Year at the Committed to Construction in Humber and West Yorkshire Awards in recognition of the collaborative and partnership approach to design and construction.

The development has also been shortlisted for Residential Scheme of the Year by the RICS.

The Little London, Beeston Hill and Holbeck PFI project has been an important contributor to growing and improving council housing stock. The new council homes have been built to high energy efficiency standards which reduce CO2 emissions and lower fuel bills. The project was however not just about housing and there was additional investment to extend the local primary school and to build a new integrated community centre to serve the local community. In addition there is evidence to suggest that following investment by the Council in these localities there is new interest by commercial investors in development.

Q14 Councillor J Pryor - Does the Executive Member responsible for regeneration welcome the recent investments in Leeds's oldest street?

- A** The recent investments in Kirkgate, which forms Leeds's oldest street, are part of a council administered grant scheme and are the welcome first steps towards securing wider heritage led regeneration of the area. The works follow a successful bid by the Council to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a heritage focussed grant scheme for the lower Kirkgate area.

This lower Kirkgate Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) aims to intervene to help address the market failure in this part of Leeds City Centre by building on the special historic interest that the area retains. The THI is a £2.4 million publicly funded programme offers grants as an incentive to owners carry out schemes of repair and restoration by covering any conservation deficit i.e. the funding gap where the total project cost of restoring a building and returning it to productive use exceeds the market value of the building.

In total the project will see a total of circa £5.5 million of public and private investment into the area and 2971m² of vacant historic floorspace brought back into use. The first project has been completed at 92 Kirkgate which has seen an empty property converted into a bar/café/artisan bakery. A second grant offer has been made to 93 Kirkgate and work is currently underway on site. The proposed use is a vinyl record store/bar – further building on the independent shopping nature of the area.

Other owners are at various stages in the process such as applying for necessary planning consents or working up applications for grant funding. The critical project, the First White Cloth Hall, has recently been purchased by Rushbond and council officers are currently working with them on a potential scheme to repair the building and bring it back into use. Rushbond have also acquired the nearby Corn Exchange and these properties, when viewed together have the potential to make a significant impact on the area.

- Q15** Councillor B Anderson - When will the Executive Member with responsibility for air quality be bringing forward proposals for addressing the problems identified by her department for Main Street in Pool in Wharfedale?

- A** Main Street, Pool in Wharfedale will be formally declared as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). As part of this designation an Action Plan detailing remedial measures to tackle the problem within the AQMA is produced. The Action Plan for this AQMA will be informed by specific measures designed to tackle the local issues as well as being aligned to the broader aims and objectives of the city wide Leeds Air Quality Action Plan that is designed to deliver reductions in vehicle emissions and improve air quality across Leeds and the wider region.

In order to determine the local measures for Main Street in Pool that could be taken to help improve air quality a detailed survey of vehicle type and numbers using Main street has been undertaken and this information is being used to help develop the action plan. Additionally air quality monitoring will continue both in and adjacent to the AQMA in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the action plan and further inform the identification of measures to reduce emissions. The levels of air pollution at this location are linked to the high levels of traffic, which is predominantly private vehicles (cars), that can be slow moving, or stationary for periods of time and are in transit in close proximity to kerbside houses due to the narrow geography of the area. As such traffic management measures will be considered as part of the action plan to reduce the impact of vehicle emissions.

Air quality monitoring will continue at Main Street, Pool at the current monitoring points throughout the time that the site is designated as an Air Quality Management Area. In addition work is ongoing to identify further monitoring points in and adjacent to the Air

Quality Management Area boundary, to help provide a better understanding of the extent and direction of vehicle emissions impacting on air quality.

Ward Members will be kept informed by the Environmental Health Manager with regular updates on air quality monitoring results and all proposed actions in relation to the air quality action plan.

Q16 Councillor J Bentley - With the council's new-found conscience on air quality issues, will the executive member please join us in welcoming the move by Westminster City Council to charge motorists who are repeatedly caught idling their engines when stationary and confirm that we shall be taking the same forward-thinking approach here in Leeds?

A We are interested in the move by Westminster Council to charge motorists who are repeatedly caught idling, but also note the issues they experienced in successfully pursuing offenders through the Fixed Penalty Process.

Prior to introducing a charging regime, Westminster and other areas of London undertook substantial public engagement to make people aware of the consequences of idling. As part of our local communications plan and as one of the key messages of national clean air day, there will be a campaign to raise awareness of the impact of idling on air quality and the consequential impact on health.

As part of the assessment in areas of poor air quality, any locations where idling is contributing to the problem will be identified and dealt with. However, in the Air Quality Management Area at Queen Street, Morley buses idling was identified as a key issue but the change was made through discussion with the bus companies rather than by implementing a charge.

We will consider all options when we bring our outline plan to Executive Board in July to ensure that the air quality in the city is improved as quickly as possible.

Q17 Councillor A Garthwaite - Can the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability update Council on the ongoing work to promote recycling in Leeds?

A We have delivered a significant and diverse programme of work to promote recycling since this commitment was made by the Executive Board last year. Our focus has been on key messages around getting the basics right in terms of what can be recycled, but we have also delivered on some more innovative methods of engagement. To highlight the key activities:

- The 'invest to save' programme of behaviour-change campaigns aims to help residents make the most of existing services and understand their recycling responsibilities. Recent glass recycling campaigns have seen an increase in tonnage over the Christmas period compared to last year. The 'Metal Matters' campaign that was launched this month is a great example of how we're working with the private sector to draw in match-funding and industry expertise. We aim to increase metal capture rates by around 10% over the next 12 months.
- For schools, universities and community groups we have had a regular flow of visitors through the Visitor Centre at the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility (RERF) and at the Materials Recovery Facility where the green bin materials are sent for separation prior to reprocessing.

- Digitally, we're providing information to citizens in new ways, like with the Leeds Bins App that includes the 'What Goes Where' tool that has seen 12,000+ downloads since its launch in July.
- The innovative 'Green Up' tower block recycling programme is an incentive scheme being trialled in seven council multi-storey blocks, providing a monthly prize for the block that increases their recycling the most.
- Re-use is also on the increase, and I'm very proud to have announced in March the opening of our second re-use shop in the city, in partnership with Revive, based at the Kirkstall Road household waste sorting site. This is already proving popular and successful.

Although the impacts of this programme of work will be fully realised over the longer-term, results already show green bin recycling increasing by 2.4% (or 745 tonnes) when comparing this year to last year, while contaminating materials have fallen by 15%. Each tonne of recyclables diverted from the black bin saves around £90-100 per tonne in disposal costs. Although behaviour change takes time, it is very pleasing to see these early positive impacts on the recycling performance in Leeds.

Q18 Councillor C Anderson - Could the Executive Member for Children and Families please advise what steps the Council are considering in order to keep children safe when they are walking to school?

A The Influencing Travel Behaviour team provides Pedestrian Skills Training to children in Years 1,2 and 4 at primary schools across the Leeds district.

In 2015/16 a total of 9,501 pupils received the training, which is based on the Green Cross Code (Think, Stop, Look and Listen). The training is age appropriate and ranges from classroom based lessons for Year 1 pupils, to children being taken out of school and practicing how to safely cross the roads for Year 4 pupils.

The Green Cross Code is also reinforced to primary school pupils in 'assemblies' and at other training events where it is a complimentary yet constituent part of that training i.e. Bikeability Cycle Training and Scooter Training.

The Sustainable Education Travel Strategy (currently being updated) and the Leeds Safer Roads Action Plan provide additional information about the numerous interventions and initiatives that are being planned and delivered to keep children safe whilst walking to school.

Q19 Councillor S Bentley - Can the executive member for planning detail the consideration he has given to the potential of modular housing above car parks as a means of contributing to the city's affordable housing requirements, given the success of schemes along these lines in Manchester, Bournemouth, Marylebone and Scunthorpe?

A I can confirm that the Council has been in discussion with Legal and General, who as Members will know have opened a factory near Leeds to manufacture modular housing units, about how we might be able to use this approach to construction in our own housing development.

I think the design that Cllr Bentley is referring to is that developed by architect Bill Dunster from Zedfactory. I agree that it looks interesting and may well help to make effective use of existing surface car parks. However, if Leeds were to receive an application for this type of development I can imagine views would be varied and importantly, the full range of planning considerations would need to be considered, including air quality where I suspect Cllr Bentley might herself have concerns.

As Leeds is always in the business of doing these things better than anyone else, I would however point Cllr Bentley to the approved schemes for CITU's development and Low Fold and the former hydro site, where they will shortly be bringing forward modular homes in an architect-designed scheme which not only will be manufactured on an adjoining site, but will be of the highest environmental performance quality. And there will be parking in the basement.

Q20 Councillor B Anderson - Can the Executive Member for Highways comment on the robustness of the Council's pothole repair policy in light of the recent Court of Appeal decision, *Crawley v Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council*?

A The council's current policy on the categorisation and repair of potholes is robust which enables us to successfully defend over 80% of third party liability claims.

The case in Barnsley was based on a very specific set of circumstances. A street was reported to the council's call centre as having deep potholes on Friday afternoon at 16:20. This was logged on their system but only inspected on Monday, which was the next working day, in line with the council's policy. The inspector categorised the defect as Category 1 and the defect was repaired on the Tuesday.

The case initially went before a District Judge who ruled in favour of the council on the basis that whilst the defect was dangerous and actionable it had a defence under section 58 of the Highways Act 1980.

On appeal, the Circuit Judge held that the District Judge was mistaken in their finding that the reporting mechanism 'did not give rise to any necessity to go out straight away' and criticised the council's system of responding to reports of defects out of hours finding that council staff should be trained to evaluate reports from third parties about defects, alternatively they should be instructed to forward reports to an 'on-call' highways inspector.

Barnsley took the case to the Court of Appeal and lost by a 2 to 1 majority decision. Whilst this was a split decision based on a relatively narrow point it does have implications for all councils who operate a similar system to Barnsley, including Leeds.

The code of good practice for highway maintenance, Well-Maintained Highways, has recently been revised, and is now called Well Managed Highway Infrastructure with a recommended implementation date of October 2018. The new code implements the concept of affordability and relies heavily on a risk based approach for managing highway maintenance.

The council will be reviewing its repair policy in order to align itself with the new code and we will be considering the Barnsley judgement at that time.

Q21 Councillor S Golton - Could the executive member confirm for council how many customers have signed up to white rose energy and how much revenue this has generated so far?

A Since the launch in September 2016, White Rose Energy has acquired approximately 4,000 customers with a total of 5,911 live connections (gas and electricity) at the end of the end of February 2017.

Up to the end of February 2017, this has generated around £9,050 of revenue for the council. The project is now generating over £3,500 each month and is on track to meet the contractual minimum of 10,000 customers by September 2018.

Q22 Councillor D Cohen - Could the Executive Member for Children and Families explain what the administration is doing to improve educational outcomes for vulnerable learners in Leeds, and what explanation can she give for Leeds lagging behind other cities in the educational outcomes for those vulnerable learners?

A We have recently expanded the three obsessions associated with Child friendly Leeds to include attainment and achievement in addition to regular attendance at school. This is known as the 3As.

We also recognise the need for more focused work to support vulnerable learners in the city. Defining vulnerability in terms of the 3As enables us to clearly identify those children who are in danger of not succeeding; if their attendance is low, if they are not attaining in line with age related expectations, or if they are not achieving beyond the core curriculum.

Whilst more details will be explicit in the Annual Standards Report, it is the intention to tackle issues on a school by school and child by child, basis depending upon the gaps in attainment that may be present in the school. The local authority's strategy is to focus on methods used for improving learning outcomes for all children living in poverty, including white working-class boys. If adopted effectively, the strategies will raise outcomes for all groups.

- Extra support, through the re-structuring of the 0-19 team, will be put in to 0-19 education providers to ensure equity of outcomes.
- Leeds will continue to work in partnership with schools, settings and partner head teachers to promote and progress bespoke projects to close the gap in Leeds. This has included wider sharing of information, training for governors focussed on vulnerable learners, the Achievement for All conference, a restructuring of the 0-19 team to focus on closing the gap and a commitment to cluster working to support schools in addressing barriers to learning.
- Promote one-to-one tutoring as this can be very effective for struggling students, particularly reluctant readers from deprived backgrounds. One-to-one tutoring using structured, phonetic programmes can be very effective
- Develop and promote a wide range of strategies to close the attainment gaps for children, especially those with English as an additional language or who are living in poverty; including
- rigorous monitoring of progress and use of data
- raising pupil aspirations using engagement/aspiration programmes

- engaging parents (particularly hard-to-reach parents) and raising parental aspirations
- developing social and emotional competencies
- supporting school transitions
- Further develop the vulnerable Learners group across Children's Services to heighten the need for all interactions between the local authority and families to have a focus on learning
- Promote 'A Life Ready for Learning' by setting up a learning fortnight to promote preparedness for learning across the city.
- Partnership work with third sector groups, teaching schools and research partners will direct and support the needs of less advantaged individuals or groups within schools.
- Continue to monitor and record data on the performance gap to ensure a strong focus on improvement and to target further action.
- Maintain and develop the work that is already being done to further reduce the gap through city wide partnerships

Due to major changes in the testing systems that determine levels of attainment, there have been high levels of turbulence throughout the system both nationally and locally. It is difficult, therefore, this year to take a true measure and compare how vulnerable children in Leeds have done in relation to their counterparts in other core cities. Regardless of national assessment changes there is a pattern that Leeds children and young people from non-disadvantaged backgrounds achieve generally close to or in line with similar children nationally. For children and young people from what is termed disadvantaged backgrounds, Leeds' results are often below their peers. This pattern is also seen in a number of other Yorkshire and Humber authorities and is a regional issue.

There is intent to close these gaps locally, regionally and nationally. The challenge is that there is no one answer; the opportunity is that everyone has a role to play. Whilst school performance is an important consideration, a child lives in a family and in a community, and how learning and the aspiration to learn is reflected in the entirety of a child's life really does matter. It is for that reason that the Children and Families service has set up a vulnerable learners group aimed at ensuring that every contact that a professional in Leeds has with a child or young person in the city has learning as a key part of that intervention. We believe that by emphasising the 3As and explicitly stating that learning is a key function of each and every action plan in the city, attainment levels will rise.

Q23 Councillor S Golton - Can the executive member provide further detail on the means by which the new-build programme will be delivered including the remit of any local housing company?

A The delivery of the new build housing through the Council Housing Growth Programme has been via a range of different routes. Of the 1000 unit programme, over 500 have been delivered to date through the Beeston Hill and Holbeck and Little London PFI, through the direct procurement of construction contracts and through off plan acquisitions of properties from developers (plus a programme of empty homes acquisitions).

The programme has adopted a procurement strategy which has a mixed approach to working with contractors including packaging of sites to increase value for money and early engagement with the market to capture best practice. The Yorbuild Framework has been the route through which tenders have been put to the market to date.

As the programme develops and a focus on how the Council Housing Growth Programme can deliver extra care housing, other procurement frameworks will be explored. This is with a view to using our investment as a catalyst and working with specialist providers to develop a mixed tenure programme. More detail on this will be brought to Executive Board soon.

Off plan acquisitions to date have been to deliver a site in Gipton wherein the Council purchased properties and the developer agreed to develop market housing at risk – bringing an entire 50 unit scheme into development; in addition to the purchase of a scheme in Bramley which had been a former pub site which had become derelict.

Within the current programme we are exploring the use of modular construction and are looking at a pilot scheme which will use Legal and General's new modular product (Legal and General have developed a pioneering modular build technology and established a production unit just outside the city).

This scheme, which is located in Holbeck adjacent to the PFI investment, will also be a pilot for housing for sale. As part of a mixed tenure new build programme, the scheme will enable the Council to test approaches to developing properties for sale through its current in-house programme. Taking the learning from this, vehicles will be explored including continuing to expand the current house building programme through in-house development plus a consideration of local housing company or similar models as the Council continues to deliver new homes.

Q24 Councillor M Robinson - Can the Executive Board Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning set out what the total cost of the Leeds Cycle Superhighway is and how much of this has been covered by Leeds taxpayers?

A

Funding Source	Funding (£000)
Department for Transport CCAG	18,052
WYLTP Match Funding	7,500
Public Health (Leeds)	170
Department for Health Walking Grant	250
CityConnect Programme Funding Total	25,972

The table above shows funding elements which make up the Cycle City Ambition Grant administered by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and which financed the Cycle Superhighway in Leeds and Bradford.

The local contributions are those from the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (WYLTP), for which the West Yorkshire Combined Authority is the accountable body.

The final outturn cost for the scheme will not be known for some time. All expenditure will fall within the allocated programme budget governed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and made available for cycling enhancements.

Q25 Councillor R Stephenson - Does the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning agree or disagree with his colleagues on the Labour-controlled Manchester City Council that blanket 20mph zones make no difference to speed or accidents?

A There are some key differences in approach to 20 mph speed limits between Leeds and Manchester, with Manchester implementing blanket 20mph speed limits without traffic calming features over a large geographical area.

In contrast we in Leeds have continued to target areas around schools with higher incidence of road traffic casualties and introduced traffic calming features where surveys indicated that average speeds were above 24mph, in line with ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) and ROSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) Guidelines.

Phase 3 of the Leeds 20 mph programme which piloted the current approach of a 20mph speed limit/ zone over larger residential areas (still centred on schools) shows an average casualty saving of 8 per annum in the three years after implementation, demonstrating the effectiveness of the current approach that was considered by the Council's Scrutiny Board.

Q26 Councillor B Anderson - What is the Executive Member with responsibility for tree management doing to address the backlog of tree works in the north of the city?

A All enquiries about trees are assessed and where appropriate inspected by a trained tree specialist to determine what, if any, work may be required. This is based on an inspection and risk assessment approach which allocates a category to each tree that defines the timescale applicable for any work that needs to be carried out. This in turn enables priorities to be determined in allocating resources to address issues identified. The main categories and timescales, where applicable, are as follows:

- Category 1: Emergency completed within 24 hours
- Category 2: Urgent completed within 7 working days
- Category 3A: developing risk completed within 6 months
- Category 3B: developing risk completed within 18 months
- Category 4: no unreasonable risks and therefore no mitigation required

In line with this approach and our published tree guidelines, tree work is prioritised to ensure that higher identified risks are mitigated first. This can lead to lower priority work being delayed and therefore category 3A and 3B have target completion dates as a guide to direct resources where capacity allows. Where delays would lead to target completion dates being exceeded, a re-inspection is scheduled to assess whether tree condition has declined further.

At any one time this therefore means that there will be a list of work and the following is a summary of jobs outstanding in the north of Leeds:

Category	Outstanding Jobs
2	4
3A	73
3B	41
4A	17
4	3

As indicated, category 1 and 2 work is carried out first, whereas lower category works have target completion dates as a guide and therefore can be rescheduled. Management of these lower category works is therefore based on identified risk in order to ensure that limited resources available are deployed to the maximum effect. This is particularly important given the challenges that are being faced with the current budget situation and it is unlikely that any further resources can be allocated to enable more tree works to take place.

It should also be noted that since April 2014 there has been a fund available each year from the housing revenue account to address tree issues that might otherwise be category 4 (which in the past were rarely scheduled for work but in the year after introduction meant that 142 jobs could be completed) but nevertheless impact on the health, wellbeing and quality of life of residents. Examples of this include daylight loss or TV/satellite signal and in either case work is carried out according to specific criteria and where applicable consultation is undertaken with other residents.

It has also been possible since May 2016 for a complainant to choose to pay for work on council trees subject to approval, following consultation and in line with best practice. This arises where trees on council land impact on private residents, local businesses or other organisations but do not pose a risk to public safety and could be for reasons of health, wellbeing and quality of life, or council trees affected by development that require landlord consent.

Q27 Councillor M Robinson - Would the Executive Member for Children and Families explain what the Council is doing in response to reports that some children in Leeds have been missing school due to not being able to access appropriate sanitary protection?

A The media recently ran a story about a charity, Freedom4Girls. over concerns that teenage girls were having to miss school through lack of access to sanitary protection products.

The two young people featured in the Freedom4Girls story attend academy-run alternative provision in the city that serves three local authorities in West Yorkshire. We have been in contact with the school and have been assured that there are no safeguarding concerns as a result of this or any other issues.

Recent research published by the Child Poverty Action Group shows that more and more children are living in poverty in the UK, with the number now reaching 4 million. We know that poverty can have a devastating impact on the lives of children and young people and on their life chances.

In Leeds we recognise that children and young people need to be in school in order to be able to succeed and achieve their potentials and we have worked very hard over the last six years to improve school attendance across the city. The local authority has an excellent relationship with schools in the city – both maintained and academies - and has continued to offer support through retaining our learning improvement service, which also provides a health and wellbeing service that schools can and do buy in. The service

supports schools with relevant training, teaching resources and direct delivery of key PSHE lessons to children and young people in schools, as well as working with parents.

Children's Services has strong working relationships with schools in Leeds, and all primary and secondary schools have procedures and plans in place to support girls to access sanitary protection at school should they need to.

Q28 Councillor R Stephenson - Is the Leader of Council committed to supporting the British manufacturing industry and if so will she disclose from which country materials for the construction of the new Whinmoor Grange nursery are being sourced?

A Unfortunately, there is not a UK based glasshouse manufacturer that could provide a horticultural building on this scale.

Public procurement is bound by the EU treaty principles of non-discrimination and free movement of goods and services. This prohibits discrimination between suppliers on the grounds of nationality.

The Whinmoor Grange nursery development was the subject of a competitive procurement exercise that was evaluated on a price quality basis. The contract for construction of the building was awarded to an Anglo Dutch consortium and the materials required for use during construction have been sourced accordingly.

The landscape construction element of the project, including the establishment of the building footprint and all associated drainage works, was undertaken by the Parks and Countryside service acting as internal service provider. The landscape construction team includes two apprentices who have been able to significantly enhance their skills following their involvement in the project. Furthermore the services enhancement team has been actively engaged in the build process since inception. This team includes former employees from Roseville Enterprises and following their integration into the Parks and Countryside service, the authority has been able to continue to provide opportunities for supported employment of vulnerable adults.

When considered in the round and giving due regard to ground works, building costs and professional fees, circa 55% of the total cost of construction for the project will be attributable to continental suppliers of good and services.

Materials purchased from the continent include the provision of fabricated steel, glazing and cladding, and a number of bespoke horticultural products including screens and benching and heating systems.

The glasshouse commissioned at Whinmoor is bespoke and could in essence be viewed as a product. The requirement for steel in the construction of the glasshouse at Whinmoor is significant, however the cost is in effect determined by the fabrication of that steel to the exact requirements of the system and its bespoke application to Whinmoor. For example the supporting trusses appear uniform but in effect there are circa 200 variations with slight nuances that have been used at Whinmoor. There is a similar situation with regards to the glazing, this is bespoke to the product and manufactured to fit the exact requirement of glasshouse system.

Q29 Councillor B Anderson - When does the Executive Member responsible for highways anticipate the order for the 20mph zones in Adel will be coming forward?

- A** The Adel 20mph Scheme is part of the proposed 20mph programme for the coming financial year.

Subject to approval of the Highways and Transportation Annual (Capital) Programme at the end of April, it is anticipated that implementation of the package of 20mph schemes will begin during the summer, and be completed during the autumn. The precise timetable for the Adel scheme will be dependent on the response to the Traffic Regulation Order which will be advertised in early summer at the beginning of this process.

- Q30** Councillor M Robinson - Will the Executive Board for Regeneration, Transport and Planning agree to ensure that the Elmet Greenway is included in plans for the East Leeds Orbital Road to benefit cycling in the East of the City?

- A** The Council is aware of the Elmet Greenway proposals and very much supports the intent to create strategic and local pedestrian and cycle links between settlements using countryside routes. The ELOR scheme does aim to promote the uptake of active travel by integrating high quality pedestrian, cycle and equestrian infrastructure into the design. It will include two high quality orbital routes along the length of ELOR which will link into the existing rights of way and provide access out into the open countryside from existing and new housing areas – a formal segregated route on its inside and a more informal leisure route / bridleway along the outside.

In addition ELOR will include 5 high quality crossing points including bridges and underpasses linking into existing rights of way and proposed new routes.

As part of the development of the proposals, the disused railway has been considered in detail. The route that the Greenway would follow does not currently offer a continuous journey as it is severed in a number places, including the gardens of a number of private residential properties in Scholes and the removal some years ago of a bridge over Leeds Road/Barwick Road. In addition the disused railway line has been fenced off by the landowner at the abutment of the former bridge, which prevents access up onto the route from the highway. As a result not all of the disused railway line is available for conversion to a cycle or pedestrian route or practical to access.

The proposed ELOR scheme will out of necessity cross through the disused railway line and further sever it as a north-south route and whilst the Council recognises the value in reusing former track beds for cycling, there appears to be no commitment to upgrade this route over the development period of ELOR. Without a definitive programme to do this it would be difficult to justify the cost of a bridge or to secure the necessary land that would maintain only a short section of a disconnected route.

While it will not prove possible at this stage to develop the former rail line as a direct cycle route across ELOR, it will still be possible for cycle and pedestrian travel from Barwick Road to the rail line north of ELOR via the proposed orbital leisure route, with crossing of ELOR facilitated by a new bridge at Wood Lane, a short (290m) diversion away, thereby maintaining the possibility of one day achieving the ambition of a link between Manston and Wetherby.

- Q31** Councillor R Stephenson - Will the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning formally apologise to residents and business owners in the Harewood Ward for his recent proclamation that there wasn't a huge amount of disruption caused by the closure of Linton Bridge?

- A** If Cllr Stephenson has read the whole article then he will be aware that the quote taken above has been taken out of context.

I did not intend to minimise the obvious difficulty that the closure of the bridge has caused to people in Linton, Collingham and the surrounding area, but to highlight the relative impacts of the Tadcaster (with a population of 7000 having to use a 12 mile diversionary route) and what happened at Linton.

Linton Bridge has been the Council's highest priority infrastructure repair to follow from the floods, shown both in our work to repair this quickly and through the allocation of the vast majority of funds provided for post flood repairs.

- Q32** Councillor B Anderson - What discussions has the Executive Member with responsibility for transport had to address the issues on the A660 in terms of the inadequate bus services?

- A** At present, the A660 is served by over 30 buses per hour travelling in each direction throughout the day. It is one of the best served routes in the city from a public transport perspective although services can be subject to considerable delay especially in the peak hours.

Cllr Anderson will be aware that the A660 was at the centre of both supertram and NGT schemes- both of which would have radically improved public transportation and user experiences on the route.

In December, we submitted a business case to DfT for £173.5m as part of a wider £270m package of short term investment in public transport in Leeds. Five corridors were identified, including the A660, for consideration of improvement measures.

An announcement from DfT on their decision on the business case submission is expected this month.

At the current time bus services are not directly controlled by the council, but by private companies. Through our discussions with First Bus and other operators we will see investment in excess of 280 new cleaner buses in the next 4 years, improving air quality, and making a valuable contribution to improving the health of the people of Leeds. These buses will also include the most up to date on board facilities eg wifi, device charging and next stop displays, improving the travelling experience and offering the potential for time on board to be more productive.

Finally, I hope Cllr Anderson would like to join with us in asking for more powers - including the ability to franchise bus services- and stop his government from enacting a Buses Bill that limits this power solely to London and areas with elected mayors.

- Q33** Councillor M Robinson - Will the Leader of Council join me in welcoming the completion of Leeds Freedom Bridge and thanking the LGBT community for their contribution to our City?

A 'The Council is proud to have supported the efforts of the LGBT+ community in the city to deliver the Freedom Bridge, in partnership with Network Rail. The bridge is a wonderful symbol of our ambitions to be an inclusive city for everybody. Lower Briggate is the heart of the cities LGBT+ Quarter and the Rainbow design on the bridge is attracting attention from all over the Country and abroad. Plans are being developed for a formal opening in the near future which we know will be a great opportunity for the community to come together and celebrate with people from across the city.'

Q34 Councillor M Robinson - Can the Executive Board Member with responsibility for highways explain what steps he has taken to examine quality assurance of the surface dressing programme following complaints across the Harewood ward and will he back my call for a scrutiny inquiry into the value for money of our current highways programme?

A Surface Dressing is seasonal work carried out during the summer months. An inspection is carried out on completion of the work to ensure that no immediate problems are apparent. If failures occur in the treatment these might only come to light after the first winter following the work.

The contract requires all surface dressing to be carried out in accordance with road note 39 and the specification for Highway works. All contractors must be sector scheme approved and all work is covered by the 2 year correction period. Defects classes for fatting up, tracking, bleeding, cabbings and tearing, fretting and streaking are defined in the specification for highway works. There is also the visual method of inspection for chipping loss as defined in BSEN 12272-2. If defects are found, the contractor will be required to rectify the problems.

In the past five years 252km of road have been surface dressed throughout Leeds at a cost of approximately £5.5m in comparison to the £33m it would have cost to resurface the roads had this preventative treatment not been carried out. Surface dressing is a proven low cost method of maintaining the life of a carriageway.

The code of good practice for highway maintenance, Well-Maintained highways, has recently been revised and is now called Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure. It has a recommended implementation date of October 2018. This new code requires a major change in approach with local levels of service being developed through risk-based assessment and includes the concept of affordability. The Council will be reviewing its policy in order to align itself with the new code.

In setting their work programme it is usual practice for all Scrutiny Boards to consider requests for Scrutiny. In doing so the Board also consider their commitments and available resources, prioritising appropriately. The City Development Scrutiny Board has been very focused on the NGT inquiry this year. Cllr Robinson was advised in June and November that the Board would not focus on his request in this municipal year. If Cllr Robinson still wishes to pursue this next year he is very welcome to contact the Chair of the Board.

Q35 Councillor M Robinson - Can the Executive Board Member for Resources and Strategy tell me what plans the Council has to improve broadband speeds where the state funding for the roll out of superfast broadband isn't guaranteeing adequate line speeds and coverage?

A The Council is working to improve access to superfast broadband for all residents and businesses in Leeds via the West Yorkshire and York Broadband partnership. The current position is that by the end of the current WY and York broadband infrastructure programme in 2020, 98% of premises in the WY & York intervention area will have access to superfast broadband. The WY & York partnership is currently looking at how to extend coverage for the remaining 2%, utilising further government funding, European Structural funds and private sector broadband investment.

Q36 Councillor M Robinson - Can the Leader of Council explain what steps the Council has taken to work with the Woodland Trust on the City Trees Pilot including all new planning applications meeting the guidance set out?

A The Woodland Trust is developing a 'City Tree Pilot' which is understood to be initially focussed on 3 cities in the UK. This is part of a broader vision for the Woodland Trust to implement a national street trees initiative. The council is in regular dialogue with the Woodland Trust in general and more specifically has shown enthusiasm for the prospects associated with this emerging initiative. It is understood that initial proposals for the pilot have now been agreed with a funder and written confirmation is anticipated in the near future. Should there be a formal approach then the council would like to be considered and will keep Members informed of progress and implications.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Tomkinson
Principal Governance Officer