

**UNANSWERED QUESTIONS LETTER - JANUARY 2024**

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 9



## Legal and Democratic Services

Governance Services

1<sup>st</sup> Floor (West)

Civic Hall

Leeds LS1 1UR

Contact Name: Kevin Tomkinson  
e-mail: kevin.tomkinson@leeds.gov.uk  
Direct Line:

Your ref:

Our Ref:

Date: 30th January 2024

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor

### COUNCIL MEETING – 17<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2024

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 9 to 59 were unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

**Q9** Councillor E Pogson-Golden – Special schools are disproportionately affected by the increase in staff wages as there is a far higher staff ratio - why is this not reflected in the funding allocated?

**A** Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

Special schools are funded at a rate of £10,000 per place commissioned by the Council. In addition to the place funding, we also provide top up funding that is calculated on the basis on the specific needs of individual pupils on roll at the school in the year. We allocate funding in accordance with the requirements of the DfE's High Needs Block (HNB) Operational Guidance. The guides requires the Council to pay a Minimum Funding Guarantee. For 24/25, the DfE have set the range for the MFG at 0% to 0.5%. We have not yet determined the level of MFG for 24/25. The DfE also provide a grant to cover the cost of teachers pay and pension increases. The approach that we have adopted in Leeds is that we passport the entirety of that grant to settings in accordance with the formula used by the DfE to calculate the level of grant paid to Leeds.

Since 2018/19, the HNB of the Dedicated Schools Grant is distributed by the DfE according to a needs driven National Funding Formula. The provisional allocation for Leeds is £134.6m. However, in 24/25 we have been capped by £2.92m meaning that our allocation is £2.92m less than would have been allocated by the national needs driven formula. Since the



introduction of the National Funding Formula in 2018/19, Leeds has lost £34.06m to the cap (£24.56m loss of funding for the HNB and £9.5m loss of funding for the Schools Block).

**Q10** Councillor A Scopes – Could the Executive Member update on the impact of Government funding announcements on children’s social care in Leeds and the impact that will have for looked after children in Leeds?

**A** Executive Member for Children’s Social Care and Health Partnerships

The recent Autumn Statement failed to prioritise the children and young people we represent. One in five children and young people in Leeds live in poverty. Families are breaking down, and the number of children in care is up by more than 27% since 2009/10.

The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care urgently called for a radical reset of children’s social care services and move away from costly crisis intervention, towards more meaningful and effective help for families. The review called for £2.6bn investment over 5 years to overhaul the system. But the Government has only announced £200m so far.

The County Councils Network warned that their authorities were set to overspend by almost £650m this financial year due to spiralling costs, particularly in children’s social care. They also said they are now worse off after the Autumn Statement and are no longer confident they can balance their budget in 2024/ 25.

Over 80,000 children in England are looked after, each with their own challenges. And a national shortage of placements has seen some private children’s residential providers dramatically inflate their prices. The average placement cost is now around £6,000 per child, per week.

That is why in Leeds, we’re investing in eight more of our own residential homes, which will this year, see us nearly double the number of places we are able to offer for children and young people. Our own places keep children here in Leeds, are more affordable, and crucially, can stick with children through longer periods of difficult behaviour, offering greater placement stability than our private sector competitors are prepared to.

Our care leavers have asked us as a council and as corporate parents to consider what we can do through positive change and action. I am committed to bringing a paper to Executive Board next month that will cover our work towards making care experience a protected characteristic.

The Government already has a blueprint to fix children’s social care but they have not acted on it. We will continue to urge them to invest in the early intervention and prevention is desperately needed. This will benefit young people and save money in the long run.

**Q11** Councillor L Buckley – Given one of our corporate priorities is to embed the Team Leeds ethos into our democratic function by continuing to build positive and collaborative relationships with our residents and service users, including drawing on people’s personal skills, will the Executive Member for Housing please explain how this strategy aligns with ending tenant representation on Housing Advisory Panels?

**A** Executive Member for Housing

I’d like to put on record, a massive thank you to all the people who have volunteered their valuable time, and provided great knowledge and insight, in serving on our city’s Housing



Advisory Panels over the years. The proposal to bring HAPs to an end is being driven by the need to offer engagement mechanisms that are more inclusive and cost effective. The Regulator for Social Housing has set new expectations on landlords to ensure we involve a broad and diverse range of local communities and individuals, and the ending of HAPs is an opportunity to do this. We currently have 85 HAP members, with low representation from younger and ethnically diverse communities. Over the next few months we will be working on developing a new local service offer that continues with some of our core local roles, for example, supporting local tenants, residents and community groups but that also seeks to communicate, involve and respond to feedback in new and less formal ways involving a larger number of residents.

The move to create more inclusive approaches, listening and responding to the wider tenant voice, is something we have done with the creation last year of the Tenants Voice Panel. This saw us move from working with a small number of generally elderly residents (around 30) attending different service improvement groups to a more diverse 200 residents now acting as a wider consultative group taking part in a range of activities and consultations. We are keen to involve all HAP members and others so they have the opportunity to help design the new local offer. All tenants on the HAPs will of course be welcome to participate in the new approaches if they wish.

**Q12** Councillor D Chapman – Can the Executive Member for Resources advise how much money has been spent on the conversion and refurbishment of Adams Court in the last 5 years?

**A** Executive Member for Resources

The Council's estate has been rationalised over the last 12 year and this process is continuing in order to meet the Council's challenging financial position. This has delivered over £8m per annum of revenue savings, at least £25m of capital receipts and reduced the Council's office estate by in excess of 1.5 million sq ft. In 2021, in light of estate changes necessitated through more flexible and hybrid working adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council required its office estate to be further rationalised and it's retained buildings to be refreshed. A number of buildings were closed including St George House and Enterprise House in the City Centre in addition to planned closures of Killingbeck Court at Seacroft and Hunslet Hall. This allowed modern furniture and equipment to be repurposed across the estate with majority of the surplus equipment supporting the upgrade of existing furniture and IT in Adams Court, to provide an enhanced working environment and accommodation which could meet the needs of hybrid working. To complement the repurposed equipment, a limited budget was secured to procure additional equipment to support a more flexible environment in which staff could access areas such as breakout spaces, focused work areas and confidential pods, this being important given the confidential nature of the work undertaken by social care teams based within the building.

The total cost of this work amounted to £228,007.54, made up of £183,829.60 for the purchase of new furniture, £38,947.94 for the delivery of new IT equipment including conferencing equipment and £5,300 of costs for Civic Enterprise Leeds to relocate furniture and equipment from other buildings.

Given the continued budget pressures and in order to maximise the use of our estate, in October 2023 Executive Board agreed to the release of Adams Court which could be achieved through relocating staff to other buildings within the Council's estate. Once again, the furniture and equipment from Adams Court is being repurposed across our retained properties to provide enhanced facilities for staff and the delivery of modern working



environments where new furniture has not been specifically purchased to upgrade office facilities.

As part of the works delivered to Adams Court, there has been no new investment into the building fabric other than to address responsive maintenance requests.

**Q13** Councillor J Tudor – Waiting lists for social housing are increasing nationally with families waiting longer before they are helped, please can the Executive member provide an update on what is Leeds doing to support those in most need?

**A** Executive Member for Housing

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment reported to Members of Executive Board in December seeking permission to consult and review our allocation policy. The recommendations in this report were agreed for consultation. We will be consulting with interested parties over the coming months and we will be presenting our final proposals in the Autumn. The key issue with this review will be to ensure those in the most urgent need are supported first and it is hoped the suggested changes to the Allocation policy will help achieve this. However, with the continued reduction in social housing through Right To Buy it's estimated we will sell a further 550 homes next year. We are continuing to build new homes and we estimate we will provide a further 512 new council homes over the next 3 years.

Our homelessness prevention model remains successful with positive homelessness preventions being achieved in 80% of cases where a household is threatened with homelessness.

**Q14** Councillor E Pogson-Golden – Locally and nationally disability prevalence has risen by 5 percentage points from 19% in 2011/12 to 24% in 2021/22 alongside this pupil at all Special Schools are now more complex - Why has the funding model not yet changed to reflect this local and national picture?

**A** Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

The funding model has changed. In 2013/14, the High Needs Block (HNB) was created by the DfE for the funding of education for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. In 2018/19 the DfE then implemented a National Funding Formula for the HNB with associated guidance in the form of the HNB Operational Guide that is published annually.

The current Operational Guide includes provision for a Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) in 24/25 within a range of 0% to 0.5%. By way of further example, the guidance in 23/24 required MFG of 3% for all special schools compared to the funding levels in 21/22 (ie 2 years previously) and then a further 3.4% on top of that. These funding increases were implemented by the Council in full.

**Q15** Councillor K Dye– Please can the Executive Member provide an update on the work which is being done on energy efficiency of homes in Leeds

**A** Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space

To meet our net zero commitments and make sure people can afford to stay warm in their own homes, we have to improve the energy efficiency of almost all homes in Leeds. We have a strong programme of work ongoing, including extending Leeds PIPES to almost 300 flats in



the Lovells, the newly launched Home Upgrade Grant for homes without gas central heating and ongoing work in Housing Leeds properties. We also have an exciting pipeline in development and expect to launch new partnerships with the private sector this year, that will provide solutions for less well off homes, as well as middle income householders. We are also working with funders to finalise schemes to support hundreds more back to back homes to have transformational insulation work, which we expect to announce soon.

**Q16** Councillor N Harrington – Would the Executive Member for Sustainable Development & Infrastructure please disclose how many Speed Indication Devices are installed across the city and how many are currently not working?

**A** Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Leeds City Council has facilitated the implementation of 270 Speed Indicators Devices (SID) across the City to support local communities in addressing local concerns. At the present time our records indicate that there are 258 which are fully operational and 11 which are not and 1 which has been returned from the manufacturer and is awaiting erection on site.

Leeds City Council continues to repair broken devices where possible but in cases where we are unable to do so, these devices are returned to the manufacturer for assessment to see if the damage is repairable and within warranty.

**Q17** Councillor D Chapman – Should Leeds 2023 have invested more in creating long term legacies in all 33 wards?

**A** Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

Leeds 2023 Year of Culture has created long term legacies at ward level in several areas:

The **My Leeds Summer** series of ward level events created an increased appetite for ward level cultural events and a framework for future community level cultural leadership and event delivery. The creative skills training programme which each Neighbourhood Host undertook included event delivery and grant-making and gave them a set of valuable skills to use in their communities, increasing their employability within the creative industries. Some Neighbourhood Hosts have already got jobs in the cultural sector as a result of the My Leeds summer programme. A legacy plan for the continuation of this programme is being developed by Leeds City Council alongside Voluntary Action Leeds and various community level partners.

- The total audience for My LEEDS Summer events across all 33 wards was 31,280
- The 33 Neighbourhood Hosts planned celebration events in each ward of the city. As part of this, they recruited individuals, community groups and volunteers to apply for a small grant to celebrate their ward and show off their talents and there were a total of 512 applications across all wards.

The **Creative Learning** programme run by Leeds 2023 involved engagement with schools in all 33 wards, and a legacy for this work is being led by the L33 (formerly the Leeds Cultural Education Partnership) working alongside the University of Leeds, Leeds City Council and many other cultural education providers throughout the city.

- LEEDS 2023 has engaged with 62.4% of schools across the city and in all 33 wards
- 34,626 pupils from Leeds schools engaged with the LEEDS 2023 programme



The **Leeds 2023 Volunteering** programme attracted a large number of volunteers from all 33 wards, many of whom were engaging in cultural volunteering for the first time. As part of Leeds City Council's work around legacy, the volunteer data has been handed over to Leeds City Council to offer an ongoing volunteering programme for the city's cultural events. New volunteering opportunities will be available for this cohort of culturally-engaged residents from April onwards.

- The total number of confirmed volunteers is 1008.
- The number of volunteer hours across LEEDS 2023 events was 6,838 and 4,820 on events organised by partners as part of the LEEDS 2023 programme.

**Q18** Councillor D Jenkins – Please can the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Active Lifestyles give an update on Asset Based Community Development?

**A** Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Active Lifestyles

Lord Mayor, we are immensely proud at Leeds City Council of what Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) has achieved in our city over the past decade. Last year we held our 10-year celebration event with over 150 attendees, including members of third sector organisations, interested representatives of other local authorities and city councillors who came together at Slung Low in Holbeck to celebrate the 10th birthday of the ABCD programme.

As part of the event, attendees had the chance to take part in different activities to broaden their understanding and learning of ABCD in Leeds and Leeds City Council's' four-tiered approach: Grassroots/community level, Practitioner level, Service level, A whole system level. The day included themed workshops, Q&A sessions with experts in asset-based approaches, networking opportunities and the chance to listen to contributions from those involved in the ABCD in Leeds programme. Key themes included reflecting on the success and challenges of the past decade, whilst also discussing what opportunities were available in the future to potentially grow ABCD so more communities in Leeds and beyond can benefit from its approach. It was a huge success!

In 2013, the Adults and Health department implemented a pioneering, asset-based approach to community development (ABCD) that is supporting neighbourhoods to thrive. ABCD and asset-based approaches begin by finding out what the people living in a community care enough about to work on together to change, develop and/or sustain. It is about focusing on what's strong, not what's wrong, recognising and celebrating the uniqueness of neighbourhoods and the interdependencies of communities, exploring the gifts, skills and assets and empowering citizens to make the changes that are important to their community. This approach moves us from looking to service based solutions, to one where we nurture residents to come together, build connections and sustainable friendships. Focusing on the strengths of communities, enabling, and empowering communities is not only more cost effective, by reducing the need for traditional service provision, but it delivers real social and economic change.

The ABCD programme is supporting the Best Council Plan priorities Health and Wellbeing, Age-Friendly City and Safe, Strong Communities and most directly the outcomes related to 'be safe and feel safe,' 'enjoy happy, healthy, active lives' and 'live with dignity and stay independent for as long as possible.'





The ABCD model in Leeds has developed steadily over the last few years, from three test and learn ABCD community 'pathfinder' schemes in 2013 to currently having fourteen with three more planned for 2024. Pathfinders are delivered in partnership and hosted by third sector organisations who employ a 'community builder' to identify 'community connectors', enthused people in the community with gifts or talents to get involved, developing community led asset maps together and provide 'Small Sparks' (small seed funding) to kick start ideas from people in the community, for the community.

We have funded 20 ABCD Pathfinder sites over the last ten years. Some have had a specific focus for example, learning disability, Carers, children's literacy, and some have worked with specific communities of interest for example the Roma community. Currently eight ABCD pathfinder sites are working in the top 1% deprived priority wards with three in the top 2% of most deprived wards, the remaining three in the top 10%.

In 2019, we commissioned Leeds Beckett University to evaluate the ABCD pathfinder model. The two-year evaluation study evidenced a range of positive benefits including:

- Improved health and wellbeing of residents as people increased in confidence and interacted more through being involved and accessing services.
- Strong evidence that people had better social connections through ABCD and promising evidence that friendships were being made.
- ABCD strengthened local groups and new community activities and that led to new networks and a growth in community spirit.
- ABCD in Leeds has helped people to discover their own talents and skills through connecting them with others socially. Examples of differences in generations bridged and neighbourhoods being more inclusive of people with disabilities.
- Up to £14.02 of social value returned for every £1 invested (a pilot study on SROI undertaken as part of the research).

The ABCD programme includes a comprehensive training and development offer to support asset-based working within the Council, the Third Sector and beyond:

- We have developed an ABCD Awareness training offer in the third sector.
- Created an ABCD Learning Collective session in communities and for the Third Sector.
- Delivered training to over three hundred council staff about ABCD and asset-based approaches.
- Developed an Asset Based Leeds City Council Learning Network for all staff to reflect and consider working practice and approaches through an asset-based lens, creating asset-based 'Community builders' across the council.
- We have trained Local Care Partnerships across Leeds to develop an asset-based approach to community building.

A range of Council services have now developed asset-based approaches including Active Leeds, 100% Digital and the Tenant Engagement Service. Local Care Partnerships are also developing an asset-based approach to community building.

In addition, we have secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to deliver the following:

- A Neighbourhood Matching Scheme - Voluntary Action Leeds are developing a scheme to build on the interest in formal and informal volunteering opportunities that nurture neighbourliness.



- Development of the 'Hey Neighbour' scheme - Leeds Older People's Forum are developing the scheme tested in 2022 that enables individuals and small community groups to develop an asset-based approaches in their own neighbourhoods and communities through micro grants and community partnerships.
- An ABCD Pathfinder site based at Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation.

We have a built a strong partnership with the Third Sector in Leeds and many of our partners are working with us to develop ABCD and asset-based approaches and create opportunities for people to come together to share ideas and showcase work.

## ABCD Plan

Our ABCD Plan sets out our ambition for ABCD i.e.: 'to expand Asset Based Community Development across Leeds, shifting power to people and supporting communities to thrive.' It links clearly with the Best City Ambition which puts an emphasis on working with people in a different way, investing in prevention, using asset-based approaches, and building community capacity. To support this, we have developed four priority areas, each supported by a programme of work:

1. Raise the profile of ABCD in Leeds.
2. Build on the pathfinder model.
3. Focus on social capital, community building and neighbourliness.
4. Asset-based approaches underpin and transform ways of operating in Leeds.

These will be interconnecting work areas that will support the successful delivery of the four priorities of the ABCD plan on a page.

Raise the profile of ABCD in Leeds - Building on our international, national, regional, and local networks:

- ABCD Institute, UK, and Ireland ABCD Network, ADASS, New Local, LGA, West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership to support a whole system approach.
- Continued high visibility on our social media channels to share good practice and highlight success.

Build on the pathfinder model - Build the infrastructure, capacity, and the legacy of the ABCD Pathfinder model.

- We will expand the ABCD programme with three further Pathfinder sites this year collaborating with our partners in Localities, Public Health, and the Third Sector to ensure a whole system approach, to avoid duplication.
- We will conduct a Measurement Impact Review of existing ABCD Pathfinder sites that will inform and shape our future thinking on the community power agenda, which supports the Best City Ambition to shift power to communities.
- We will collaborate with our partners in the Local Community Anchor Network Leadership group to develop a re-imagined ABCD Pathfinder model to support a whole system approach with the Third Sector.

Focus on social capital, community building and neighbourliness.

- Manage the three asset-based UK SPF Grants that focus on 'people and place' linking micro assets to local economy.
- Work with our partners to build on the legacy of Leeds 2023.
- Support elected members to develop their knowledge of strengths-based community development.



- Explore funding opportunities that will support different ways of working to improve the sustainability of the ABCD programme.

Asset-based approaches underpin and transform ways of operating in Leeds. - We will continue to work at a whole system level to support asset-based thinking and practice.

- ABCD Awareness training and ABCD Learning Collective session in communities and for the Third Sector.
- Asset Based Leeds City Council Learning Network for all staff to reflect and consider working practice and approaches through an asset-based lens, creating asset-based 'Community builders' across the council.
- Develop a Local Authority Training and Development Offer, with an aim to generate earned income for the Council.

**Q19** Councillor E Pogson-Golden – Why has Broomfield SILC been overlooked in the last few years in terms of building projects by the council? The building is unfit for purpose and this is having a huge impact on the learners.

**A** Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

Also see responses to Question 23 & 26.

There are 3 possible funding grants the LA receive from the DfE to support capital works at schools:

1. Basic Need Funding – to support the creation of new learning places to meet the LAs statutory sufficiency duty.
2. School Condition Grant – to complete capital maintenance works to schools where the LA are the responsible body.
3. High Needs Pupil Capital Grant (since 2021/22) – to support new and improve existing learning places for children with SEND.

Unfortunately, there is no capital grant made available by the DfE to the LA to address wide scale suitability issues of school buildings. As explained in the 'Learning Places Programme and School Condition Update Report' which went to Executive Board in September 2023, the LA are not sufficiently funded to address back log maintenance issues within the school estate.

In 2021 the DfE published key findings from the condition of school buildings surveys (CDC1: Condition Data Collections version1). These findings stated the average condition need within the Yorkshire and Humber Region was £463,366 per school to bring buildings back to a satisfactory level. This estimate indicates a total of £127.4m of backlog maintenance exists within all state funded schools in Leeds (275 schools), and £66.3m within those where the Local Authority is the responsible body for condition (143 Schools).

An Academy Order was received on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 with Broomfield South SILC choosing to convert to academy status and become part of the Cockburn Multi Academy Trust. After a period of uncertainty and the academy order being on hold, the LA were formally made aware in October 2023 that the school were no longer converting. During this period, capital investment from the LA continued to ensure Priority 1 Health and Safety works at the SILC were completed. This has included new electrical distribution boards and rewiring works over the last two years through the Council's Planned Maintenance Programme via the School Condition Allocation grant.



The DfE did not include Broomfield South SILC in the School Rebuilding Programme in 2020 or in 2021 with them stating, based on the DfE's own Condition Data Collection, that the school was in satisfactory condition. The LA have continued to monitor the condition of the school by commissioning independent condition surveys. In 2022 the DfE gave LAs the first opportunity within the School Rebuilding Programme to submit nominations. In 2022 the DfE's condition data still stated the school was of satisfactory condition. Using information the LA had collated in respect of condition, along with the unsuitability of the site for expansion due to the condition of the older block, the LA submitted a nomination for Broomfield South SILC. In March 2022, and after visits to school site by DfE appointed surveyors, this nomination was rejected by the DfE.

**Q20** Councillor A Maloney – Can the Executive Member update on the Levelling Up Fund bid in Holbeck?

**A** Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Government announced in November 2023 that Round 3 of the Levelling Up Fund would not be a bidding competition and that funds would be allocated to strong bids that were submitted but not funded under Round 2 of the fund. The Heart of Holbeck project was one of six across the city that were submitted in August 2022 under Round 2 and whilst no feedback on the relative strength or scoring of these was provided to the Council, we were notified in November 2023 that this was the strongest of the Leeds submissions and would be allocated all of the £15.95m funds originally bid for, to support regeneration of St Matthews Community Centre and an expansion of community facilities into an adjoining building, retrofit of back-to-back housing and renewal of local public realm and green space.

In early December the Council was asked to provide a response to an initial validation exercise that confirmed our continued willingness and ability to progress the project and the continued availability of £3.8m of match funding. Following this in late December the Council was requested to complete a more detailed response to further questions, updating the bid assumptions, costs and delivery arrangements. This work is currently underway and will be submitted by the set deadline of 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

The Council is awaiting clarity from government on when funds will be released to enable certainty for the delivery programme, though significant work is already underway to ensure we are delivery-ready. Each of the projects within the bid will require rapid and robust refinement given the length of time that has passed since the original project development in early 2022, the level of inflation that has occurred, and to ensure these can be delivered by the government's spending deadline of March 2026. Officers are working closely with Holbeck Together, one of the main intended beneficiaries of the Levelling Up Funding, to update and refine the project details. A communications and engagement programme will soon be implemented to ensure local people and businesses are able to influence the design and implementation of the projects.

**Q21** Councillor B Flynn – Would the Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space please advise when the new refuse routes will be operational, and can you please ensure that those estates currently without an individual recycling collection like the Holtdale estate in Adel and Wharfedale ward are first in line when the new routes begin?

**A** Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space

Following consultation on the revised, draft black and green bin collections routes with ward members in late 2023, some small changes have now been made to incorporate that local

feedback, including to routes in the Adel and Wharfedale ward where a number of further changes were identified and agreed.

The service is currently undertaking the final checks with crews to ensure any remaining anomalies are picked up. It is planned to implement the new collection routes across the city in late February/early March 2024 and the Christmas collection day leaflet sent to all Leeds households gave notice of this.

Due to the redesign of the collection routes being a citywide exercise, this means all routes will need to change at the same time and will be implemented over the two-week collection cycle. As per the consultation meetings and discussions with local ward members, this includes the introduction of fortnightly recycling collections in the area of the Holtdale estate agreed with ward members.

**Q22** Councillor R Downes – Would the Exec Board Member responsible please advise what progress is being made in considering changing the name of Leeds Sailing and Activity Centre (LSAC) at Yeadon Tarn to "Leeds Watersports and Activity Centre" to better clarify the range of sports offered at the centre?

**A** Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Active Lifestyles

Concerning the opportunity to change the name of the centre, no further consideration has been given to the formal renaming of the Leeds Sailing and Activity Centre at this current time. That said, the Council's Active Leeds Website and Active Leeds app lists out clearly the range of activities at the site which are extensive for both schools and members of the public. The website display includes a full list of activities:

- Archery (soft)
- Bell boat
- Birthday parties
- Boat hire
- British Canoe Union course
- British Rowing Courses
- Bush craft
- Canoeing
- Cave (indoor)
- Climbing/abseiling
- Kayaking
- Off-road biking
- Orienteering
- Powerboating
- Royal Yacht Association courses



- Sailing
- Stand Up Paddleboarding
- Tailored packages for schools, youth and community groups
- Traversing wall - climbing
- Windsurfing

The Council may consider this opportunity to change name at some point in the future.

**Q23** Councillor E Pogson-Golden – Broomfield SILC is desperate for a new building and it is not cost effective to carry out remedial repairs - do the Council have plans to support the school?

**A** Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

See also responses to Q19 and Q26.

The Local Authority continue to support the school with any urgent Health & Safety Capital works and continue to feedback to the DfE regarding areas of worsening condition. The LA are also supporting Broomfield SILC to understand how best to utilise their Devolved Formula Capital Budget (from the DfE) and address any accessibility issues in the most cost-effective way. If in the future a rebuild was supported by the DfE, or the LA, then the LA and the school would be required to continue to meet their maintenance duties by completing remedial works to ensure health and safety compliance until any new build was ready for learners.

**Q24** Councillor S Seary – Would the Executive Member for Sustainable Development & Infrastructure please disclose how many speeding fines have been issued in the first month on the A647 and A6120 using the average speed camera infrastructure since their switch on at the beginning of December 2023?

**A** Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The information which Councillor Seary has requested is not held by Leeds City Council as the issuing of penalty endorsement notices for speeding is the responsibility of the Police. Leeds City Council has on behalf of Councillor Seary requested this information from West Yorkshire Police and on receipt we will forward onto him.

**Q25** Councillor D Chapman– Will the Executive Member for Economy, Culture & Education confirm that Ward Councillors will be invited to take part in the independent review of Leeds 2023 Year of Culture being undertaken by the Audience Agency?

**A** Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

Everybody registering to attend LEEDS 2023 events has been sent a link to surveys from the Audience Agency, allowing them to provide their views and to feed into the Audience Agency's independent review of the Year of Culture.

The Audience Agency is undertaking a “scoop-up” survey to gather final feedback on the year and this survey will be sent to all ward councillors later this month.



**Q26** Councillor E Pogson-Golden – There is a huge demand for special school places and expansion at Broomfield SILC has been discussed a number of times with the Council. Would the land behind the school - the old Nesfield site - be available for expansion?

**A** Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

There is demand for specialist places in the South of the city, and the LA have previously explored an expansion solution for Broomfield South SILC utilising the former Nesfield site, along with adjacent green space.

Since then, Children and Families have been working closely with colleagues in City Development to source other sites within, and outside, of the council's existing portfolio. These investigations have been unsuccessful in identifying a solution.

Therefore, as the demand for places continues, along with the current condition of the Broomfield South SILC site, NPS (Norfolk Property Services – the LAs Joint Venture Partner for technical, design and structural expertise) have been commissioned to complete a 'Master Plan' of the site to inform a comprehensive options appraisal with estimated costs.

This piece of work will consider a re-build of the older school block (circa 1970s) including an expansion of 100 specialist learning places. All site options will be considered, including a) existing site in its entirety, b) adjacent greenspace and c) former Nesfield site. The initial report is due shortly to enable us to consider what is affordable and achievable.

**Q27** Councillor M Robinson – A number of farmers in my ward have been victims of equipment theft, in some cases worth up to £50,000, resulting in disruption to their ability to farm and significant damage to their livelihoods. Can the Executive Member for Resources look to raise the often overlooked problem of rural crime with the Police and partners and enquire about their strategy to tackle this concerning issue?

**A** Executive Member for Resources

Crime and ASB prevention support is provided in rural areas through a number of associated arrangements including through the work of the Stronger Communities Team who lead a multi-agency anti-social behaviour partnership reporting to the Safer Leeds Executive, seeking to deliver strategic solutions to any such issues reported to police and council where appropriate.

Specific policing of farm theft is provided by both local neighbourhood policing teams and specialist officers who attend at and investigate such incidents including the theft of plant (heavy machinery).

These officers receive specialist training and work closely with partner agencies such as the NFU (National Farmers Union), Environment Agency, the Wildlife Trust and many more.

In terms of crime, the police have introduced patrol plans around the affected geographic areas to disrupt the offenders. They report several recent arrests which has contributed to a significant reduction in offences being committed in recent months.

**Q28** Councillor D Chapman – Local Residents have been raising issues with inappropriate, dangerous and disruptive parking on Pottery Lane and the Locks in



Woodsford for years. The issues are apparently not of a sufficient priority to be included in this year's TRO process. Can the Executive Member guarantee that the issues will be taken seriously and improvement action taken in the next fiscal year?

**A** Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The demand for Traffic Regulation Order work across the city is significant with many sites across multiple wards being put forward.

In order to manage the number of incoming requests, a formal prioritisation assessment is undertaken taking into account various factors including injury collision record, general safety concerns, community severance etc. This assessment takes place January – March prior to the programme being confirmed for the forthcoming financial year.

This location has been added to the 'site list' of potential schemes for 2024/25 for consideration. It is therefore not possible at this stage to confirm whether this location will be recommended for inclusion in the 2024/25 works programme until the prioritisation assessment has been completed.

Colleagues within Traffic Engineering are aware of the concerns being expressed in relation to Pottery Lane and have visited the location to assess the problem and identify potential solutions.

A budget of circa £100k is usually made available for this work across the city each year, potentially from a variety of sources, permitting approximately 8-10 schemes to progress each year.

External funding may increase the chances of a proposal being included and this might be something local ward members might wish to consider.

**Q29** Councillor R Finnigan – Can the Executive Board Member responsible for development reconfirm the amount generated by the City Council's 85% share of the total CIL payment from the Laneside Farm Development in Churwell and also confirm how much of this sum is ringfenced to be spent in Morley?

**A** Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The application (Ref. 19/01988/RM) relates to the residential development at Laneside Farm Churwell for 450 dwellings and is currently being implemented by Persimmon Homes. 15% (68 dwellings) would be affordable and therefore would benefit from CIL relief.

The remaining 382 units would generate a total CIL contribution of £1,733,530.43.

The Leeds CIL Charging Schedule was adopted and then implemented on 6th April 2015. The Council's Executive Board make key decisions around spending of the future CIL income, directing it into two main funding streams, a 'Strategic Fund' and a 'Neighbourhood Fund'. The Strategic Fund has previously been used to help fund the Learning Places Programme across the city, the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme Phase 2 and the East Leeds Orbital Route.

The Neighbourhood Fund (15%) will be spent in Morley. In the Nov '23 Finance report to EB, the strategy proposed by Strategic Investment Board was to utilise the current secured Strategic CIL funding as matched funding contributions for Strategic Highways and





Transportation Schemes. The use of future CIL monies through the Strategic Fund is yet to be determined for receipts received in 24/25. Once a decision is made on how future CIL monies will be allocated and specific spending proposals agreed, it will be possible to identify the amount of the Strategic Fund that is invested into Morley.

**Q30** Councillor N Harrington– Would the Executive Member for Housing please update Council with the number of empty Housing Leeds properties are there across the Outer North East Wards of Alwoodley, Harewood and Wetherby?

**A** Executive Member for Housing

There are currently 28 council properties vacant in the above wards, 5 of these are being allocated and 23 are currently having repairs carried out to them.

Within Leeds over the last 12 months there has been a significant reduction in the number of empty council properties reducing these from 1088 to 709 as of the 3<sup>rd</sup> January this year, a reduction of 308 in total and further reductions expected over the remainder of the financial year.

**Q31** Councillor D Chapman – Could the Executive Member advise how the 5 district centre car parks under consultation regarding the proposal to introduce charging for were identified?

**A** Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green space

Parking Services manage 37 free car parks in district centres. The sites chosen were considered the most suitable for charges as they are larger sites that are currently well used.

**Q32** Councillor P Stables – The council currently controls weeds across Leeds by spraying with diluted glyphosate, which some studies suggest may be linked to cancer. As the contract ends on the 31st March this year, have alternative methods of weed control been considered?

**A** Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space

As a council, Leeds has significantly reduced its use of herbicides within parks and open spaces with the majority of use now restricted to treatment of hard surface footpaths and to control invasive weeds species. We do regularly examine alternative approaches and these were considered when establishing our current arrangements. Unfortunately, they do not meet our specification when all factors such as environmental impact (including water usage and vehicle/equipment emissions), speed and treatment frequency, public disturbance and whole life costs are considered. At each renewal of contract arrangements or following a change in legislation or safety guidance, we undertake an options appraisal and should new technology or weed control mechanisms be available we examine these against our requirements. We do on occasion have concerns raised with us regarding the safety of Glyphosate however the compound is classified as low hazard by the UK regulators and is approved for the tasks we use it on. It is a situation we keep under review and where alternative effective options are available we will consider these.

**Q33** Councillor D Cohen – Given the increasing frequency Leeds is experiencing high winds, and seemingly healthy trees being torn up by these winds, does the Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space agree with me that we need to



review our investigation, assessment and risk scoring of trees requiring maintenance and attention?

**A** Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space

Over the last four months, there has been a number of named storm events in the UK that have started earlier than would normally be anticipated. This has generated significant work for the councils arboriculture team. Notwithstanding that, not all storm events are equal in severity and all are bespoke in terms of their impact and the consequent proportionality of the required response. The existing process of inspection used by the arboriculture team makes use of a nationally accepted risk assessment method and is robust. Any tree has the potential to fail due to adverse weather conditions regardless of its condition pre storm. Furthermore, given that storm impact and damage cannot be predicted and is indiscriminate, it would be disproportionate and inefficient to move away the existing system at this time.

**Q34** Councillor D Chapman – Can the Exec Member for Economy, Culture & Education advise how much of the £1.9m unsecured loan to the Leeds 2023 Culture Trust for the Hibiscus Rising project has been repaid and what is the realistic timescale for full repayment?

**A** Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

Executive Board agreed to front-fund the project costs for Hibiscus Rising up to £1.83m. This is being held against the capital programme contingency reserve and is being reduced as fundraising for the project progresses. To date, a total of £389,407 has been raised from a combination of Trusts and Foundations, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England and crowd-funding. It is anticipated that an additional £100k of funds will be raised through the sale of the Hibiscus Rising maquette

Further fundraising opportunities are being progressed and some private sector sponsorship is also in the pipeline to offset the overall cost of Hibiscus Rising. At this current time, it is proposed that the fundraising will be drawn to a close at the end of 2024, at which time the total amount of funds secured will be known.

**Q35** Councillor E Carlisle – Can the Executive Member detail the number of public comments on planning applications since last year's changes to the planning portal, compared to previous periods – and (whilst recognising that the volume of comments is bound to fluctuate over time, depending upon applications in the system) comment as to whether they think the portal changes have made any impact on public engagement and confidence in the process?

**A** Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

In assessing the impact upon participation levels during the pilot period, the number of comments submitted at this time has been counted.

The number of comments received 6<sup>th</sup> June to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022 was **4,343**, this compares with **7,108**, for the same period in 2023.



The number of planning applications received 6<sup>th</sup> June to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022, was **2,313**, this compares with **1,998**, for the same period in 2023.

Consequently, there has been an uplift in the level of participation in the planning process – which has increased by 39% during the pilot period (compared to the same period the previous year). This is despite a 14% drop in applications being received.

**Q36** Councillor A Lamb – Would the Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure please confirm the outcome of the 6-month pilot scheme to withhold public planning comments will save just £10,000 per annum, given the remainder of the justifications are for vacant posts and data breaches which may never happen?

**A** Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

As set out in the report to Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth) 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024, the pilot not to display 3<sup>rd</sup> party comments, has resulted in resource management benefits, improved participation in the planning process and more effective risk management.

The financial savings achieved has enabled the service to be more agile in responding to the changes to the planning system arising from new legislation (the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act), to focus on core statutory activity and to contribute more widely to the Council's overall financial challenge. The £10,000 saving reported is at a point in time and opportunities for further savings will be kept under review. However, taken as a whole, the service will also continue to redeploy resources where necessary and bid for additional resources (both nationally and regionally) to boost capacity and gain further specialisms where needed.

In terms of overall costs, compliance with the GDPR regulations is a major risk. It should be noted that the LPA in Basildon Council was fined £170k for the accidental disclosure of personal data online in relation to a planning application.

In Leeds, this risk is accentuated by the high volume of applications and comments being received by the LPA and the numbers of comments in need of redaction (beyond names and addresses). It should be emphasised that around 15% of the total number received are returned as unacceptable, with a further 5-10% to make GDPR compliant. The probability of disclosure is high, notwithstanding the interventions in place for this to be managed and mitigated. Clearly, by no longer publishing comments it removes the risk of accidental disclosure entirely.

**Q37** Councillor D Chapman – Can the Executive Member for Resources advise if any of the funds raised from the regretful sale of Rothwell Council Offices will be invested in much needed renovation and refurbishment of other Rothwell assets?

**A** Executive Member for Resources

The Capital Receipt generated from the sale of the Former Rothwell Council Offices will be used to support the Council's overarching budget position. Any investment required into other assets within the Rothwell ward will be considered on a prioritised basis as part of the Council's planned maintenance programme; will be met or supported from existing service budgets where investment is required to support additional service outcomes; or will be prudentially borrowed where there is a clear business case for investment supporting increased income generation.



**Q38** Councillor W Dixon – Does the Council accept the consultation on car park charges is bias towards accepting charges in our parks and suggests the decision is already made? A whole page of the consultation asks question around, I quote, “What would you regard as a reasonable fee for car parking if it was introduced?”. All questions have a list of prices, yet no option to select ‘nothing, free or oppose’.

**A** Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space

The first question contained within the consultation allows people to set out whether they agree or disagree with charges. The questions related to pricing enable people who don’t support charging to still be able to give a view on charges if they were to be introduced.

**Q39** Councillor S Firth – What involvement did the Executive Member for Resources have in the awarding of a £700k framework call-off contract to Fujitsu for the Council’s website programming development?

**A** Executive Member for Resources

The Executive Member for Resources didn’t have involvement in the awarding of a £700k framework call-off contract to Fujitsu for the Council’s website programming development. This was an officer decision in line with the constitution and delegation scheme being used, and the arrangements set out within the overall report on Resource Augmentation.

**Q40** Councillor D Chapman – Could the Executive Member for Economy, Culture & Education provide a summary of the total investment made by Leeds City Council in the year of Culture be that from Core Funds, other funds or in the guise of unsecured loans?

**A** Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

Leeds City Council has a grant agreement with Leeds Culture Trust to the value of £10,665,000 from 2019-2024. The contribution to LEEDS 2023 from the core council budget was reduced by making substitutions applying funds from the Business Rates Pool and Leeds’ allocation of Gainshare from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. These external funding sources cannot be used to deliver core council services. Overall, substitutions reduce the Council’s total net commitment from £10,665,000 to £5,731,893, with grant payments coming from the council’s Culture and Economy budget.

In June 2022, Executive Board agreed to front-fund the cost of Hibiscus Rising by £1.83m, of which £1.4m has been provided to Leeds Culture Trust to date. This is being held against the capital programme contingency reserve and is being reduced as fundraising for the project progresses.

In September 2023, Executive Board approved the provision of an unsecured loan as cashflow assistance to cover claims to HMRC for Theatre Tax Relief and Museums and Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief for financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. The loan agreement for the total sum of £1,845,407 states that the sum will be repaid by Leeds Culture Trust upon their receipt of Tax Relief from HMRC, no later than December 2024. The loan is being financed from general reserves and balances.



**Q41** Councillor W Dixon – The Council’s consultation on car park charges states, “5. We would look to offer a range of payments methods including credit or debit card, mobile phone, or cash payment for pre-paid tickets. We are not proposing to accept cash payments on-site due to the risk of theft and/or vandalism.” Will cash be accepted?

**A** Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space

If car parking charges are introduced, the car parking machines would not accept cash but pre-payment tickets would be able to be bought with cash from a variety of venues.

**Q42** Councillor D Seary – Would the Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education please disclose how many, both in terms of absolute number and as a percentage of the total, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) were not completed within the legal timeframe of 20 weeks during 2023?

**A** Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

89 out of the 956 were completed on time (9.3%), 867 were finalised after the 20 week deadline (90.7%)

**Q43** Councillor D Chapman – Can the Executive Member for Economy, Culture & Education advise what is happening to the component parts of the Making a Stand ‘sculpture’ and who is responsible for restitution costs for any damage to the pavements in City Square resulting from its installation?

**A** Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

The wooden fins from ‘Making A Stand’ will be repurposed back into the timber supply chain as planned at the outset of the project’s conception. All material has been assigned to be repurposed and is being collected from site this week. The material has been donated to a range of groups including an enterprise which builds outdoor classrooms, an artists and makers space and the creation of a new public artwork in an outdoor location in Leeds’ German partner city of Dortmund.

The restitution costs for City Square have been built into LEEDS 2023’s project budget and the restitution method has been tried, tested and agreed with Leeds City Council in advance of the de-rig. There is a 12-month warranty relating to defects for the contractor delivering the de-rig.

**Q44** Councillor W Dixon – If the car park charges will be cashless, perhaps Councillors making these decisions could have visited south of the River first. Could the Council Administration please advise how people can pay for parking in Middleton Park where many people don’t have any phone signal?

**A** Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Spaces

If car parking charges are introduced, there would be car parking machines so that people can pay with a card if the phone signal is weak at any of the sites across the city. As per the response to question 41, there would also be an option to buy pre paid tickets with cash.



**Q45** Councillor S Seary – Would the Executive Member for Communities please disclose how many public access defibrillators purchased by the Council are currently active with guardians looking after them and who is funding the ongoing costs to maintain these units?

**A** Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Active Lifestyles

In 2019, the council's Adults & Health directorate funded the installation of 54 Community Public Access Defibrillators (CPADs) as part of a one off funding project to be placed in a range of non-council community settings across the City. Funds were provided to install each CPAD and to replace up to x2 sets of pads (to be replaced every 2 years or when used), one replacement battery (to be replaced at 5 years), and x5 starter kits (to be replaced when used).

There are currently 51 CPADs in place from the original provision due to 3 being stolen or damaged. Our latest records show that each of the of these 51 CPADs currently has a guardian assigned to them.

**Q46** Councillor D Chapman – The Mechanics Institute in Rothwell has been 'closed' and a void property for several years. Whilst local Councillors campaigned successfully for youth services and a local community group to be allowed back into the building as there was no alternative local option (which Council leaders and Officers should've known before deciding to 'close' it) the building remains in Void and closed to potential new users and therefore new revenue streams. As the building is leased and cannot be sold off to the highest bidder as so many community assets are being, will the Executive Member for Resources advise when the Mechanics Institute will be re-opened.

**A** Executive Member for Resources

The Rothwell Windmill Youth Centre was agreed as a closure by the operating service in November 2020 in order to meet the financial challenges that the Council was facing at that time. The property now sits in void management. This decision was taken by the service due to the cost of running the building and the usage of the property, which is leased in from the Trustees of the Mechanics Institute. Alternative options are being explored for the building as part of the Council's ongoing estate review to determine whether the building can facilitate other asset changes and releases within the city.

**Q47** Councillor M Robinson – Can the Executive Member for Communities please confirm, to the best of their knowledge, the number of sub-postmasters/postmistresses affected by the Horizon IT scandal in the Leeds City Council geography and outline the support that is in place for this group?

**A** Executive Member for Communities

This is a matter dealt with nationally by the independent public statutory Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

There has been no direct or indirect local authority engagement or involvement across the country from the inquiry including in Leeds, so we are not aware of the specific number of subpostmasters and subpostmistresses in Leeds that were involved.



There are various supporting mechanisms in place nationally to subpostmasters and subpostmistresses including free support offered to witnesses and those participating in the inquiry, and we would encourage anyone working or living in Leeds affected by the failures of the Post Office and Horizon to avail themselves of this support.

**Q48** Councillor C Campbell – Could the Executive Member for Sustainable Development please give Council an update on the actual start date for the refurbishment works to Mercury Row, Otley?

**A** Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The start date which was previously provided to Cllr Campbell had to be postponed due to a late increase in costs which were received from the framework contractors prior to starting due to site constraints. This resulted in works costs being more expensive than budget provision.

Work has been ongoing over the Christmas period to find a resolution to this matter. The works have now been authorised to progress and the contractors have committed to start on site during the first week in February. The Directorate apologises for this delay.

**Q49** Councillor R Stephenson – Can the Leader of Council confirm if Leeds City Council is cooperating with the National Fraud Initiative's investigation into multiple contract working, where council employees are allegedly moonlighting on second jobs when they're meant to be working from home for the council?

**A** Leader of Council

The Council is aware that the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) has launched an investigation into "multiple contract working" whereby employees are allegedly holding down two or more jobs simultaneously. The NFI has launched a pilot scheme in London to assess the extent of the issue. Whilst Leeds City Council is not a part of this pilot, we have robust mechanisms in place to mitigate the risk of multiple contract working, and there have been no known recent cases that have required formal intervention.

**Q50** Councillor R Downes – In the discussions concerning car parking charges on Otley Chevin, has the Council taken into account the planning inspector's SAP remittal report?

**A** Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space

The charges will not be set at a level that would act as a deterrent, especially when you take into account fuel costs of travelling to alternative sites and the charges raised will help to improve the car parking at Otley Chevin, supporting the increase of their capacity by providing properly marked out spaces. The proposals set out in the consultation document included the potential to develop a season ticket offer for those who regularly visit.

**Q51** Councillor M Robinson – Can the Executive Member for Resources please provide Council with a breakdown of Council Tax by Ward in the same format as provided in November 2021 (Gross Charge, Exemptions/Discounts, Single Person Discount, Other reductions, Net liability after reductions, Council Tax Support, Net payable) for the current financial year?

**A** Executive Member for Resources



Financial Services have discussed this with the team and there is no report within the Revenues system which produces this information.

Writing a bespoke report is difficult as the system is configured with the ward boundaries as at 2003 rather than the current ones, and therefore data has to be extracted at account level and then matched against the LLPG. The Council Tax support data also has to be merged in to the Revenues data as they are in separate tables.

The data requested is therefore not readily available and would take up to 10 hours of specialist officer time to produce with any confidence as to its accuracy. This would require pulling officers off collection of debt or the annual billing process to produce this information. As you will be aware the Revenues Team as have the majority of services in the Council have had a reduction in FTE's to help with the financial challenge and therefore all staff are working at full capacity on priorities as detailed above.

I understand the Member raising this question has already had a response to this previous

**Q52** Councillor D Chapman – Could the Executive Member advise the budgeted payback period for the introduction of parking charges in Marsh Street Carpark (Rothwell)?

**A** Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space

The intention is to capitalise the set up costs and repay the amount over 10 years rather than pay the full cost at the start. This reduces the annual sum considerably and we expect to be in surplus within the first month of operation.

**Q53** Councillor B Flynn – Would the Leader of Council please advise how many external award and similar ceremonies Elected Members and Officers attended during 2023 in relation to Council business?

**A** Leader of Council

The information requested is not routinely collated and would be difficult to give a precise answer to within the wide scope of the question posed. However, notable awards ceremonies attended include the MJ Awards, BBC Radio Leeds Make a Difference Awards, WY Police Leeds District Awards, The Arts Foundation Futures Awards Ceremony, Compassionate City Awards, Unlock Net Zero Awards, Leeds City College Awards, Yorkshire Asian Young Achievers Awards, Leeds Architecture Awards, Leeds Sports Awards. I'm sure members will agree with the importance of recognising and celebrating successes and achievements in and by the city.

**Q54** Councillor D Chapman – Could the Executive Member for Housing explain the £20-£25m cost (included in the reply to Cllr Golton's question at the November meeting) of acquiring and developing the Sugar Hill estate?

**A** Executive Member for Housing

The previous answer referred to in the questions at Full Council in November 2023 stated that ".....the option of the Council acquiring the site and developing a scheme itself is estimated to have cost £20m to £25m and would have also exposed the Council to a significant amount of developer risk." This estimated range was based upon the Council's understanding of the costs set out by Leeds Federated Housing Association in its application





for Commuted Sums, which would similarly be incurred by the Council if it were developing the scheme directly. This cost estimate comprises site acquisition, construction, statutory approvals and all professional fees and on-costs.

**Q55** Councillor L Buckley – Given that the council are encouraging 100% digital and some areas of Outer North East have limited access to hubs and libraries, would the Executive Member for Communities please outline how the reduction of library and hub hours will benefit the communities they serve in those deprived areas?

**A** Executive Member for Communities

The proposed reduction in library opening hours is currently out to public consultation with responses due by Feb 12<sup>th</sup>. The proposed reduction in opening hours will enable the service to contribute to the Council delivering a balanced budget, as required by all services across the Council. The public and key stakeholder responses will be fully considered and analysed following the closure of the consultation to understand the impact ahead of any decisions being taken. This enables any appropriate mitigations to be put into place.

**Q56** Councillor D Chapman – Can the Executive Member advise how much money has been invested in the development of Thwaite Mills in the last 5 years?

**A** Executive Member for Resources

In 2020 Leeds City Council spent £505,266.83 on essential repairs to Thwaite Mill, to meet its leasehold obligations alongside some improvement works including lighting and the electricity supply. The majority of these works will help offset any dilapidations that may be due to the Canals and Rivers Trust, should the Council decide to end their lease on this property and no longer operate Thwaite Watermill as a heritage attraction. In addition to these costs there will be ongoing routine maintenance costs which have not been calculated as part of this answer.

**Q57** Councillor N Harrington – Would the Executive Member for Sustainable Development & Infrastructure please update Council with how much money has been spent on emergency pot hole repairs across the city in the last quarter?

**A** Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

I can confirm that for Quarter 3, 2023-2024, Highway Services repaired 1206 emergency (Category 1) potholes across the Leeds area at a cost of £85, 972.

**Q58** Councillor S Firth – Could the Executive Member for Communities confirm the total cost to move and transfer Crossgates Library from Farm Road to the Crossgates Centre, plus the annual rental cost for the new library space in the shopping centre?

**A** Executive Member for Communities

The move of the Crossgates Library into the Crossgates Centre was funded through the capital programme and will cost approximately £7,000 per annum. The value of the rental and service charge agreed at the time of the move is commercially sensitive and is therefore classed as confidential and restricted under 10.4(3) of the Council Constitution. Officers would be happy to discuss this with Cllr Firth should they require further information.



**Q59** Councillor S Firth – With the rash consultation on public park parking charges closing on 21st January, can the Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment & Green Space explain the cumulative impact of charging golfers to both park and play at Temple Newsam golf course will have on the profit-making enterprise for the council, or will they receive the parking discount or dispensation suggested for attractions?

**A** Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space

The council has contacted key stakeholders, including the golf course and their views will be taken into consideration as part of the consultation process. It would be premature to suggest what the outcome of the consultation could be as it is still live.

Yours sincerely

**Kevin Tomkinson**  
**Deputy Head of Democratic Services**

