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UNANSWERED QUESTIONS LETTER - MARCH 2024

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Agenda Item 7



Legal and Democratic Services

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Date: 28th March 2024

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL MEETING – 20th MARCH 2024

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 7 to 45 were unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

Q7 Cllr S Golton – Does the Executive Member for Communities agree that levels of policing should reflect levels of crime?

A Executive Member for Resources

West Yorkshire Police resourcing levels are determined using the AID+ Model, which is an evidenced based resource allocation tool that aims to accurately reflect community need and demand on Police resources across the five districts in the county.

There are several variables built into the Aid+ model that are subject to regular review and these include the number of incidents reported to police , the total number of recorded crimes and ASB incidents. Based on the different variables and the need to provide effective policing across all five districts in West Yorkshire, the resourcing levels are proportionately allocated locally.

In addition, geographically based resources are supplemented and supported by an effective specialist protective service capability (e.g. public order policing, roads policing, homicide and major investigation detectives etc) all of which can be deployed to specific incidents and geographic areas as and when the need arises to support locally based resources such as Neighbourhood Policing Teams at time of increased demand or to support critical incident investigation and community reassurance work.



District based operational commanders have significant influence in how they best use the allocated resources provided to them to police local areas.

Q8 Cllr M Iqbal – Please can the Executive Member for Housing provide an update on the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Thank you for the question Cllr Iqbal. Flooding has been a long concern for Leeds, we all remember the scenes on the 2015 boxing day floods and the high river levels we saw over the last winter. As extreme weather events increase in frequency, the potential for flooding and the horrific impact it has on peoples loves rises. I'm proud of the work we have done in Leeds to secure our city against the dangers of flooding, including a strong push to deliver a 1 in 200 year defence to account for the changes we are seeing to our climate. The Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme has been delivered in phases and is the culmination of over 10 years of scheme development and investment in creating flood defences for the city along the river Aire to protect against a flood like the devastating one we saw on Boxing Day 2015 during Storm Eva.

I think this whole chamber will welcome the news that FAS2 is nearing completion. The completion of the work will be a huge milestone for the city and I would like to thank the officers who have worked diligently in design, installation and operation of the defence. Its also important to note that because of the work we have done to date better flood protection is already being afforded in some locations across the city. As a whole including the operation of the large storage area at Calverley, all defences will be completed by September this year, providing an enhanced standard of flood protection across the whole scheme. When it is complete, the scheme will reduce the risk of flooding to a 0.5% chance of occurring in any given year, including a climate change allowance.

Of course, knowing the environment is always changing and shows no sign of improving when it comes to flooding we are not content to leave our work here. Across the wider city a range of flood alleviation schemes are being developed and implemented, which will see the investment of over £200m in over 20 schemes by 2027-28 better protecting communities in catchments all across the city from the impacts of climate change.

Its important that we remember that big schemes like this are not just limited to one are of public benefit. FAS2 will see, and has seen, a huge number of new trees planted, helping with carbon capture and promoting new areas of biodiversity. We have recently planted the first 1,000 trees in the area surrounding the Leeds FAS2 flood storage area between the Horsforth Vale housing development and Cragg Wood in Leeds. The newly planted whips were grown from seed at Leeds City Council's plant nursery, The Arium,

I know that as a representative of a ward that is so intertwined with the river, you have an extra interest in the defences that help keep your residents and neighbouring wards safe. FAS1 completed in late 2017 and has been operated 9 times since then, it was last operated during Storm Babet in October last year and has successfully prevented flooding in Leeds City Centre. The Flood Risk Management team continue to inspect and carry out maintenance works on the weirs to ensure they are in good working condition and they look to manage flood risk assets along the river in a way that supports the waterfront areas. Its important that in the same way as FAS2, we are not content to leave these works simply as is. The area currently protected by Leeds FAS1 will also have its level of protection doubled from a 1% chance to a 0.5% chance of flooding occurring in any given year from the works done on the FAS 2 scheme. We are always looking at how we can use these municipal features to enhance areas and recently commissioned 2 murals on the doors on the control buildings to reduce anti-social graffiti and create a visual enhancement for the areas using UKSPF funding.



Q9 Councillor W Dixon – Would the Council's Administration offer financial support or free parking to the Friends of Middleton Park volunteers and Middleton Bowls Club members, their visiting opponents and match officials if/when parking charges are implemented at Middleton Park?

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

It is proposed that Middleton Park visitor centre car park will be based on voluntary donations and therefore visitors will not be obliged to pay to park vehicles if they choose to use this car park.

Q10 Councillor S Hamilton – Could the Executive Member please comment on the Chancellor's announcement on extending the Household Support Fund and what it means for Leeds?

A Executive Member for Communities

The Chancellor announced in his Budget that the Household Support Fund, which was scheduled to end on 31 March 2024, will be extended for a further six months.

This fund is a major lifeline for our most deprived households and for our invaluable third sector in Leeds. We have therefore lobbied for the extension of this fund and welcome the new announcement, although it is disappointing that we are back to last-minute six month extensions rather than allowing us sufficient time to plan for a full year's spending.

There has been no further information on the Fund extension since the Budget Statement and so there has been no guidance issued clarifying the scope, remit or target beneficiaries of this new round. In short, we know that some money is coming, we don't know how much it is, and we don't know what we can spend it on yet.

Once guidance in respect of operational delivery has been issued by the Department for Work and Pensions, we will be looking to frame and develop our delivery plan for Leeds ensuring we meet the requirements attached to the new funding, target those most in need and ensure best value is achieved.

Q11 Councillor L Buckley – Will the Executive Member for Sustainable Development & Infrastructure please explain the Council's policy on the removal of obsolete street furniture?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Highways have an established system of inspection in place to ensure the safety of the highway and its assets. They are designed to identify defects that are likely to create a hazard or serious inconvenience to the public and determine appropriate risk levels to enable an appropriate response.

We would only remove street furniture that Highways are responsible for and is agreed as either no longer fit for purpose or presents a material risk of injury or damage.



For street furniture not owned by highways, efforts will be made to determine the asset owner and details will be forwarded requesting its removal or repair within appropriate timescales.

Q12 Councillor C Campbell – Following the Council's funding of the extensive refurbishment of Chippendale Swimming Pool in Otley, ward members were promised primary school swimming would recommence in 2023. This has not happened.

Could the executive member inform Council why and when primary school swimming will recommence at the pool.

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

Since the refurbishment of Chippendale Swimming Pool, recruitment to positions to support school swimming was unsuccessful and as a result the school swimming programme was successfully relocated to the nearby Aireborough Leisure Centre during 2023.

Discussions with the school and local members have continued throughout the year and all parties are aware that at present there are no plans to recommence Council school swimming sessions at Chippendale Pool. Active Leeds will continue to provide support for the technical operation of the pool, including the pool treatment, staff training and energy costs as per the current Service Level Agreement, for the benefit of the school and the local community.

Please note, that swimming lessons are still available commercially at Chippendale, or via Active Leeds at Aireborough Leisure Centre. Likewise there are public swim sessions at weekends at Chippendale Pool.

Q13 Councillor D Jenkins – Please could the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Active Lifestyles update Council on the Enhance Programme?

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

The Enhance Programme is a great example of the Council supporting the third sector to work closely with the health system to ensure safe and sustainable discharges from hospital and neighbourhood teams, and avoid delayed discharges and readmissions.

This initiative is managed by Leeds Older People's Forum (LOPF) and funded by Leeds Community Healthcare (LCH) to enhance capacity and strengthen partnership working between LCH Neighbourhood Teams (NTs) and local third sector organisations. The Council plays an active role in the programme's steering group, which provides oversight and sets future priorities.

The Enhance Programme started in March 2022, initially funded for one year. LOPF have worked so far with 14 third sector delivery partners to provide the Enhance programme across Leeds. The ways of working between the partners have continually developed and improved based on learning from previous years.

This investment in the third sector enables flexible, effective and tailored cross-sector wrap-around welfare support for individuals, which positively complements clinical service provision. This reduces the pressure (planned and unplanned) on the LCH Neighbourhood Teams, whilst empowering individuals to manage their own health needs and improve their own social connections, quality of life and/or wellbeing.

To date, 1283 people have been supported by the Enhance delivery partners. Most of those have been from the 60 - 84 age range with 29% being from the 85+ age range. The youngest



service user was 20 and the oldest was 100. Around 45% of the people being supported were from the most deprived areas of Leeds (IMD decile 1 areas). In addition, most people supported were classified as severely frail (31.1%).

Moving forward into 2024-25, the Enhance Programme is planning to:

1. Build and further develop relationships and effective ways of working between the Enhance delivery partners and health teams.
2. Ensure the Enhance delivery partners are reaching into communities experiencing health inequalities and frailty.
3. Effectively target Enhance support to service users where time savings for health services are greatest.
4. Gather information and undertake an evaluation to demonstrate impact of the Enhance Programme on people and the wider health and care system in terms of demonstrating resource efficiencies and value for money.
5. Develop a robust business case to secure sustainable funding.

Q14 Councillor W Dixon – Would the Council's Administration agree to listen to the findings of the consultation on car parking charges in our parks?

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

Consultation has taken place on introducing car park charges at Golden Acre Park, Middleton Park, Otley Chevin Forest Park, Roundhay Park, and Temple Newsam Park. As a result of feedback during consultation there are now no plans to introduce charges at Middleton Park visitor centre which will now be based on voluntary donations or at Oakwood Car Park which will instead limit parking time to 2 hours.

Q15 Councillor A Scopes – Please can the Executive Member comment on what the Chancellor's Budget announcement means for looked after children, whom we all share corporate parenting responsibility for and the most vulnerable children in Leeds?

A Executive Member for Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships

The Chancellor's Budget failed to allocate adequate funds to improve the picture for vulnerable children in Leeds and across the UK. The underlying issue of child poverty, exacerbated by austerity and cuts to the benefits that protect families, remains unaddressed.

In Leeds, we recognise the severity of the situation. More than one in five children in our city is living in poverty. Over two thirds of those children are living in households where at least one adult is in work. We are working with our partners, charities, schools, colleges and universities, and our child friendly ambassador network. We work together to deliver early help and prevention, co-ordinate multi-agency collaboration and engage with children and families, so that our resources are put to best effect.

For the millions of children at risk of poverty, there was no long-term plan from the Chancellor to the fix broken systems which is so desperately needed to really change lives. A comprehensive national strategy is necessary and is long overdue.



Q16 Councillor M Robinson – Previously, Leeds City Council had a policy of repairing pot holes within a 48-hour window, will the Executive Member for Sustainable Development & Infrastructure please confirm when this policy ceased?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The Leeds City Council policy for repairing potholes is as follows:

Each pothole that is identified or reported is placed into one of three categories.

- Category 1. These are the highest priority repairs and should be attended to by the end of the next working day.
- Category 2. These are classed as urgent and should be attended to within 7 days.
- Category 3. These are classed as non-urgent and should be attended to within 28 days.

This policy follows guidelines which are set out in the National Code of Practice, “Well-Maintained Highways – The Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management”

The Code of Practice was commissioned by the Department of Transport and came into effect in October 2018. It provides guidance for authorities when developing their approach to highway infrastructure in accordance with local needs, priorities and affordability.

In summary, the Service never had a 48 hour option, it was changed from 24 hours, to next working day in 2016 after a review. The reason for the change was to reduce the need for operatives to do lone working on a weekend to hit a 24 hour target.

Q17 Councillor D Chapman – In reply to a question at the January meeting the Executive Member for Resources said:

“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”.

Is the Executive Member aware that this building has been in used by the same people as it was in 2020 and therefore has presumably incurred the same costs for the last 2 years whilst at the same time the building is still officially in ‘void management’ and therefore is closed to new users and therefore new revenues? Does the Executive Member think this represent Value for Money for taxpayers?

A Executive Member for Resources

The building was previously a Community Centre. The decision to declare the building surplus to their service needs was recommended by the Communities Team with the decision being taken by Executive Board. This was driven by the need to reduce the operational running costs of the Community Centre portfolio and due to the limited use of the centre. The property was subsequently moved into void management.

The property is a leased in property and due to restrictions on the lease, discussions are required with the freehold owner to seek agreement to allow greater flexibility around future use.



Given the risk posed to properties held in void management, which often become a target for anti-social behaviour, continued use of the property by the Youth Service only has been allowed to support local activities to young people. The building is no longer managed as a community centre and therefore lettings of the space cannot be made. The future use of the property is being considered as part of the Locality Building Review.

Q18 Councillor K Dye – Please can the Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space provide an update on EV charging infrastructure in the region?

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

Leeds City Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy has been developed to identify the key actions and the role of the council in facilitating and supporting the development of infrastructure required to support the transition to zero-tailpipe emission vehicles.

The council is working with West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) in delivery of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funded charging, which is in line with the government process that has directed the allocation of budget at the combined authority level.

LEVI funding is predominantly designed to assist with supporting provision of on-street EV charging in areas where charging infrastructure is lacking, and where the commercial investment case may be more challenging. Therefore, without this key intervention, these areas may have to wait for a longer period of time for charging to be provided if left to the market. This funding is also designed to support provision in areas of deprivation, housing types that lack off street parking or areas of the city where connection costs to the grid may be higher and therefore require subsidy. The scheme will be delivered across three phases; a pilot phase that aims to delivery charging in 20-30 locations with up to 100 charge connectors, followed by two city scale phases that in total will aim to deliver charging across approximately 250-300 locations with 1000 or more connectors provided.

According to Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) data and the House of Commons library dashboard, as of January 2024 there are now over 50,000 plug-in vehicles registered in Leeds. Whilst the number of public chargers is an important metric, the bulk of charging is done at the home or workplace, with many thousands of private chargers installed across the city at homes and offices/occupational settings. Leeds planning conditions have for many years now required the provision of electric vehicle charging at new developments, that has supported the significant number of plug in vehicles registered in the city.

The below table shows the provision of public charge infrastructure across the core cities, with the provision of rapid charging also highlighted, along with the availability of charging per 100,000 of population. The data also shows that Leeds is among the top-ranking cities in terms of all three metrics; the total number of public charges (2nd), the number of rapid chargers defined as 50kW of above (2nd), and the number of chargers per head of population (3rd).

| City | Public Chargers (Rapid) | Public Chargers / 100k of population |
|------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Liverpool | 581 (29) | 120 |
| Leeds | 499 (104) | 61 |
| Birmingham | 498 (160) | 44 |
| Glasgow | 376 (78) | 59 |
| Sheffield | 236 (67) | 43 |



| | | |
|------------|----------|----|
| Nottingham | 226 (73) | 71 |
| Manchester | 160 (60) | 33 |
| Bristol | 139 (41) | 30 |
| Cardiff | 135 (45) | 38 |
| Newcastle | 130 (29) | 44 |
| Belfast | 114 (17) | 33 |

The Council is currently concluding its second phase of On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) grant funded charge points which has seen a further 27 dual 7kw charge points installed across 9 Council car parks. A third phase will be delivered in 2024/25 providing a further 17 dual 7kw charge points across 11 locations. These charge points are all located within walking distance of areas of housing without off-street parking, acting as an enabler for all communities to transition to electric vehicles.

Q19 Councillor P Stables – What is the target time for Council Housing repairs to be completed from request and what percentage is currently being achieved?

A Executive Member for Housing

The target timescale for responsive repairs to be completed are determined by the priority banding that the repair is assessed and raise against. These bandings are categorised as follows:

Emergency – aim to attend withing 3 hours and complete within 24 hours

Urgent – 3 working days

Routine – 20 working days

Between November and January 88.43% of repairs were completed within timescale.

Q20 Councillor N Harrington – Will the Executive Member for Housing please tell us how many responsive repairs are currently outstanding across the city?

A Executive Member for Housing

There are currently 16,338 live repairs across the city. Each week, the repairs service receives approximately 4,000 new repair requests and therefore the current volume of live repairs (Work in Progress) equates to approximately four weeks' worth of reported repairs and in line with current targets. Significant work has been undertaken to eliminate the backlog of repairs which stood at approximately 30,000 in March 2023. The volume of new repairs continues to be high at c20% above pre-pandemic levels.

Q21 Councillor D Chapman – In response to a question at the January Council Meeting, the Executive Member advised that in 2020 Leeds City Council spent £505,266.83 on Thwaite Mill. This was to meet leasehold obligations as well as additional improvement works. Since then routine maintenance costs have also been incurred. The Council 'hope' that this will offset 'dilapidation costs' that may be applied by the Canals & Rivers Trust should the Council decide to end their lease on this much loved heritage attraction. As exiting the lease will only save c. £220k p.a. does this represent value for money for taxpayers?



A Executive Member for Resources

The council does not take any decisions affecting our visitor attractions lightly. However, the financial pressures we are now facing have forced us to look at options which would never have previously been considered. Ending the lease on Thwaite allows us to balance the urgent and unavoidable need to make cost savings with continuing to provide a diverse, high quality, accessible experience for our visitors at Leeds Museums and Galleries' other eight sites, all of which are owned by Leeds City Council.

As well as the leased nature of the site, and the size of the saving, Thwaite attracts lower visitor numbers (11,114 in 2022) in comparison to other Leeds Museums and Galleries (LMG) sites. The site has the second lowest income level as a proportion of expenditure of all LMG sites (19%). This is despite consistent marketing and promotion of the site through a new brand identity (2019), site leafleting, web and social media promotion, inclusion in the LMG What's On, proactive media coverage and so on.

Surrendering the lease for Thwaite Mill will save £220,000 per annum, and is therefore important in the context of the Council's budget pressures. In addition, liabilities associated with holding the building will also be foregone. Given the lease includes provisions for dilapidation costs to be paid by the tenant, which in this case is Leeds City Council, the works undertaken proactively in 2020 by the Council will reduce its liabilities upon surrendering of the lease. It should be noted that this liability exists whether the lease is surrendered early, or upon the lease ending as per the lease agreement in 2030.

Q22 Councillor E Carlisle – Newly-released research by Adfree Cities highlights that low-income communities are disproportionately overshadowed by billboard advertising – and that these are proven to contribute to health and wellbeing inequalities. Is Council looking at options to restrict the proliferation of these in Leeds, for example using planning regulations to stop the conversion of standard boards to digital?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Digital advertisement screens (both new and converted from existing billboards) require consent under The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. This requires an application for Advertisement Consent to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority - which is similar to an application for planning permission (but does not require a public consultation to take place). An application for Advertisement Consent can only be assessed against 'public safety' and 'amenity' however the impact from the digital advertisement on the residential amenity of local residents as part of the 'amenity' impact would be considered in that process.

It is important that the Council adheres to the 2007 Regulations and determines applications based upon only the permitted criteria set out above in order to limit the risk of losing any decisions taken at appeal, where costs could also be awarded against the Council.

Q23 Councillor B Flynn – Will the Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space advise me how many of the new trees planted for the Woodland Creation project in the city failed to grow since the programme started, what percentage this was of the total trees planted, and the same information for Adel & Wharfedale Ward?



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

The woodland Creation Initiative started in 2020 delivering the agreed targets for creating 50 hectares of new woodland every year for 25 years. Each scheme has a planting and establishment plan for every woodland site of three years establishment management which includes replanting sites where there is a poor uptake rate. In 2023 we reviewed all sites planted in winter 2020/21 and 2021/22 this included inspecting sites across the city recording successes, sites requiring replanting, protective measures and further management as well as identifying themes across the initiative. A number of sites required replanting due to poor survival rates due to many factors such as weather conditions, vandalism etc.

In 2023/2024 planting season over 150000 trees were planned for replanting across these sites. 2022/23 woodland sites across the city will be inspected throughout the summer of 2024 with a similar exercise carried out and any replanting, protective measures and further management identified and planned for 2024/25 planting season.

Adel and Wharfedale: Trees inspected in 2023 and have planned replant and management in place. Tile Lane 25% success rate – replanted to 100% winter 2023/24 Holt Park 30% success rate – replanted to 100% winter 2023/24 Holtdale Lawn – very poor uptake of 1% due to vandalism and site use. Replanting and fencing is programmed for this site Bedquilts – planted 22/23 will be inspected summer 2024. 15 Standard trees at Holtdale Approach planted in 22/23 will be inspected summer 2024. 3 Standard trees at St Martin Drive planted in 22/23 will be inspected in summer 2024. Holt Lane POS planted in 22/23 and 23/24 will be inspected in summer 2024.

Q24 Councillor D Chapman – The Department of Transport, Value for Money Framework clearly states that there is a duty to ensure value for money in all areas including procurement and project expenditure and that this applies at a local government level. Could the Executive Member for Sustainable Development & Infrastructure explain why this Council insists on wasting money on road schemes which are known to represent poor value for money and therefore by definition do more harm than good?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Leeds City Council delivers projects from a range of funding sources with 'value for money' typically used as part of a business case submission to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to secure extra funding for transport projects on top of its core maintenance work. The assurance framework adopted by WYCA follows the WebTag process aligned to the five case model. This includes the economic case which places a heavy emphasis on delays for vehicles together with prescribed traffic growth factors that can overestimate future year impacts.

Within the economic case there are varying levels of 'value for money' aligned to the benefit cost ratio which for schemes that prioritise walking/cycling and public transport over the private car can result in assessments deemed 'poor value for money'. However, within the five case assessment the Strategic Case provides the ability to highlight the areas where the economic case maybe weak, due to the modelling requirements, but the wider case is strong. In assessing schemes we therefore review their fit with the aims of the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy, most notably the creation of safe, sustainable alternatives to the private car. We and other highways authorities continue to make representations to DfT and WYCA about the WebTag process and its over-reliance on change in vehicle delays.



Q25 Councillor P Stables – The LGA has recently released a report that calls for powers to ban pavement parking to be extended to all areas across England to save lives and make our streets safer. Does the Council welcome this?

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

I very much appreciate and share the concerns about adverse impacts inappropriate parking on footways can have for residents and users, especially those who may be visually impaired or who might have mobility difficulties, or use wheelchairs or prams. The practice of parking on footways is one which the Council does not encourage in any way and especially where this poses specific issues for road safety we will work with the parking service, police and local communities to deter the practice and where necessary take enforcement action.

Whilst I understand the frustration and annoyance that some pavement parking can generate, it often takes place in residential areas where the roads are narrow and where residents really struggle to park their vehicles as they try to avoid obstructing other traffic and pedestrians. It is not an offence to park on the footway, but it is to obstruct one. Everyone has their own view of this problem and so the police generally will only act if the obstruction physically prevents the passage of either pedestrians or vehicles.

For these reasons using formal pavement parking bans can be fraught with difficulties on our crowded residential streets and sometimes could well contribute to more problems than are solved, for example, by displacing parking, this could result in the creation of different problems elsewhere or obstructing access for residents or even the emergency services. Generally, in Leeds we have sought to avoid pavement parking bans by the careful management of problem parking at hot spot locations by using traffic management measures and other Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) restrictions. The council promotes many TROs annually and whilst costs are always an important factor to consider, the costs are not prohibitive in delivering a TRO if it is considered the most appropriate restriction. This approach can be successful because rather than moving the problem parking elsewhere it leads to better facilities for parking and thus manages the situation in the affected locality to everybody's advantage.

Nevertheless, I fully understand the frustration of pedestrians, particularly our vulnerable road users who need to be able to use the pavement but are obstructed from doing so by thoughtless parking and that additional legislation might well be helpful in some situations.

However, any such changes should be well considered and framed in the context of the situations local Councils and their communities are faced with. In the meantime I believe the key to successfully accommodating the movement and mobility needs of local people is through careful dialogue and work to understand the problems and craft the right solutions which are often possible using existing legislation and sensitive enforcement to achieve agreeable outcomes in what are often delicately balanced situations in terms of residents' views and aspirations.

The management of parking forms a major part of the Council's transport planning activities and we continue to keep this important issue under review. So whilst at the moment I am not fully convinced that the London model of a blanket pavement restriction would be right for many of our streets, I very much support your ambition to see conditions improved and remain open to creative suggestions as to how new national regulation changes may assist. We will continue to use and consider traffic regulation orders, other than blank pavement banning orders to help support us improve access for all in our local areas.



I trust the above explains our current approach and why we need to wait for the national guidance in this regard which is currently under review.

Q26 Councillor N Harrington – Will the Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space please update Council as to when the result of the Parking Charges consultations will be shared with Elected Members?

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

Officer delegated decisions have been made which include reports that outline the results of consultation on the introduction of car park charges at Golden Acre Park, Middleton Park, Otley Chevin Forest Park, Roundhay Park, and Temple Newsam. These have been published and are available to view on the Council website.

Q27 Councillor C Hart-Brooke – With Beryl bikes now visible right across the centre and some selected suburbs, can the Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure update on how uptake and profitability of the bikes compares with forecasts and what the plans are for over the next 18 months for the network?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The Leeds City Bikes e-bike hire scheme operated by Beryl was launched in Leeds in September 2023 and despite some acts of criminality in the first few weeks, early usage figures in Autumn 2023 were encouraging.

The final phase of funded e-bikes and docks will be implemented by the end of March 2024 to provide the 515 e-bikes and 80 docking stations required. Further bikes and docks will be provided in line with Beryl's contractual obligation to move the scheme to 655 bikes and 116 docking stations by the end of June 2024. Recent installations have taken place at The University of Leeds and at other student campus' where there is expected to be high usage.

There has been an increase in recent weeks with the current usage statistics showing that the scheme has reached 1100 rides per week. By July, the predicted usage is approximately 9000 rides per week. The key performance indicators do not come into play until the full scheme has been provided.

Work is ongoing to promote the scheme and promote increased ridership. A new package of minutes has been introduced by Beryl of 100 minutes for £16 with no unlock fee, or 50 minutes for £8.50 with no unlock fee (valid for 12 months) which is proving more popular than the original passes. Increased ridership is expected with longer days and improved weather in Spring, Summer and early Autumn, dropping over winter months.

A report will be produced in Summer/ Autumn 2024.

Q28 Councillor P Stables – When will those residents who don't have off street parking available to them be able to charge their electric vehicles at home?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The Council do recognise that a proportion of residents in Leeds may struggle to install home chargers because they don't have a suitable parking space off the highway and they are



considering a number of solutions that may allow those residents who wish to take full advantage of the benefits of driving an electric vehicle.

As a service, they have developed an action plan entitled 'Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy - Action Plan to 2024' Within this action plan they have set out longer-term ambitions.

Currently, despite it being promised no national guidance regarding on-street charging has been received from Central Government. This is expected to consider the use of pavement gullies, if parking bays are appropriate to ensure access, what measures should be taken when occupants move home, how to deal with multiple vehicles at the one location, would licence fees either one off or annual be applied.

In addition Officers are also in regular dialogue with other local councils, both regionally and nationally to ensure that everyone benefits from we sharing and learning from best practice and progress.

Below are some solutions that are available or are under consideration for residents in this situation. These include:

- EV Charging Hubs - located in City Council and private car parks, including our Park & Ride sites.
- Pavement Gullies – to safely run EV cables through pavements from home chargers to the kerbside. Currently being considered and may trial a small number in due course with the aim of seeking residents to engage with as part of any trial.
- On-Street Chargers (such as bollard chargers) where other options are not suitable;

In due course, it is likely that Highways & Transportation will introduce a process that will allow the authorisation or installation of equipment on the pavement.

Q29 Councillor C Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible for street cleansing please say why he has reduced the amount of cleansing in the city centre meaning that anyone going to work early in the morning has to wade through litter?

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

Whilst we are currently reviewing the impact of the environmental services budget savings proposals for 24/25 across the cleaner neighbourhood and city centre cleansing teams, we can confirm that no reductions to service have been made to date.

We are not aware of any areas within the city centre reflecting the high levels of litter mentioned in the question and the service has not received any complaints of this type. The city centre cleansing team has received several positive comments and compliments about the high standard of cleanliness in the city centre from other 'Core-City' representatives, members of the public, and visitors to the city over the last few months.

We remain committed to working with partners to ensure that the environment within the city centre's core area is maintained to a very high standard of cleanliness, especially at key times such as the morning and during transition periods between the night-time economy activities finishing and the day-time economy activities starting. The team's priorities will continue to be undertaking effective mechanical cleansing of streets; emptying litter bins; clearing and investigating fly tipping; removing offensive graffiti and ensuring the city centre streets and public spaces remain clean, safe, and accessible to all. The city centre team will also continue



to play a lead role in ensuring high standards of cleanliness are maintained before, during and after major events such as Pride, Leeds Festival and Leeds Christmas Markets and during the night in response to the cities growing night-time economy needs.

Q30 Councillor C Hart-Brooke – In the suburbs of Leeds many residents feel blighted by inconsiderate parking and report that there is too little enforcement of existing yellow line and time limit restrictions, designed to give locals some protection and deter flagrant offenders. Will the Executive Member consider requesting more patrols of enforcement officers in the suburbs of Leeds so that residents who live close to negligent parking hotspots outside our city centre see more enforcement happening in their localities.

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

We have recently reviewed our approach to District parking and we are recruiting a further 6 officers to improve the number of patrols. We do respond to requests for enforcement and encourage Members and local residents to contact us with any information.

Q31 Councillor W Dixon – Will the administration fund the removal of grass verges to improve traffic flow and provide more parking for residents?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Grass verges play an important part of the street scene for many communities, as well as being of great help at prevent surface water building water build ups that can contribute to urban flooding. As such the council does not support a blanket approach of removing grass verges.

Q32 Councillor B Flynn – Will the Executive Member for Resources please advise how much was spent on external consultants during the last full council year and the current year to date?

A Executive Member for Resources

Within both the revenue budget and the capital programme it is estimated that spend on consultants in 2022/23 was £7.323m and in 2023/24 the spend to date is estimated at £15.291m.

This expenditure on consultants needs to be seen in the context of expenditure of £2.4bn that the Council budgeted to incur in both its revenue budget (General Fund and HRA) and the Capital Programme in 2023/24.

This spend on external consultants recognises both the limitations on the capacity and skills set available within in house resources to deliver the Council's priorities.

In addition some of the expenditure incurred upon external consultants is funded by partner contributions e.g. £4m Health contribution to Adults and Health in 2023/24.

Q33 Councillor C Hart-Brooke – Can the Executive Member request and share information from the West Yorkshire Mayors team on what the net increase in police and PCSOs will be this year (after leavers, moves, retirees and other attrition) and when local communities



blighted by ASB and other issues will see more boots on the ground resulting from her commitments?

A Executive Member for Resources

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime has advised resourcing levels for West Yorkshire Police currently stands at 535 PCSOs which is above our **pledge to the Police and Crime Panel (which is 509 PCSO's)**.

This figure of 535 PCSOs is higher due to the temporary increases that the Mayor was able to negotiate following the precept conversations with West Yorkshire Police. As we do not know what future funding looks like, we cannot pledge above the 509 in future years.

The total number of **Police Officers** has **increased from 5531 to 6021**.

We celebrate the better than pledged performance regarding additional police officers and staff, which means the Mayor has exceeded her election pledge. However, numbers cannot be guaranteed beyond April 2025, as the Home Office have not yet given us our settlement or precept allowance from this time.

Q34 Councillor W Dixon – Does the administration have robust plan on reducing the time council properties are in void?

A Executive Member for Housing

Housing Services introduced measures to reduce the number of void properties following the remobilisation of services after Covid restrictions where lifted. At that time there were circa 1300 void properties in the city. As of today the service has reduced this number to 642 or 1.22% of its total stock.

There is a target in place to continue to reduce the numbers of voids to around 1% and it is expected that this target will be reached by the summer of this year. Following this our focus will then shift to improving the speed at which homes are relet however improvements are anticipated based on the reduced volume of voids and levels of available resources.

Q35 Councillor C Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible for Sustainable Development & Infrastructure please explain why residents have to suffer harm from dangerous and unfilled potholes across the city, making journeys hazardous no matter what type of transport you are using?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

You may be aware from national and our own local media coverage, there is a considerable backlog in Highways Maintenance work nationally and across the city; the latter is the case, despite the Council contributing circa £190m worth of additional funding, to that received from Government, since 2004. The backlog across the City is estimated at £288m.

Potholes can occur at any time. However, the incidence of potholes increases during the winter months when water makes its way into cracks in the road, freezes and expands, causing surfaces to deteriorate further.



The condition of roads are assessed in accordance with the approved Asset Management Plan. This policy follows guidelines which are set out in the National Code of Practice, “Well-Maintained Highways – The Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management”

The Code of Practice was commissioned by the Department of Transport and came into effect in October 2018. It provides guidance for authorities when developing their approach to highway infrastructure in accordance with local needs, priorities and affordability.

This informs the production of the Annual Highways Maintenance Programmes and a look forward draft programme for several years ahead. Local ward members are consulted on the draft Highways Maintenance Programmes each year, in Summer time, with their being some (albeit limited) flexibility to adjust the programme amongst roads in a similar (poor) condition and needing similar treatment

In the interim, colleagues will continue to attend site to fill in any potholes reported or observed through their inspections.

The Leeds City Council policy for repairing potholes is as follows:

Each pothole identified or reported is placed into one of three categories.

- Category 1. These are the highest priority repairs and should be attended to by the by the end of the next working day.
- Category 2. These are classed as urgent and should be attended to within 7 days.
- Category 3. These are classed as non-urgent and should be attended to within 28 days.

Temporary repairs are undertaken in emergency circumstances to reduce the risk to public safety until a more permanent repair can be undertaken.

Q36 Councillor C Hart-Brooke – Can the Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure confirm how many claims for damage from potholes and poor road and pavement surfaces the Council has received in each of the past three years, what percentage of claims are paid out and what value have the Council paid out in each of those three years?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

A review of the three previous years claims indicates that our insurance section, combined with the work undertaken by Highways ensures that we can robustly defend those claims that we do receive and although the quantity has increased, both the number received and the value of those resulting in a payment remains low.

The details are:

1st April 2023 to 12th March 2024

Total claims 287

Settled Claims No. 27 – amount £10,624.57

No Damages 68

Outstanding 192 claims still being assessed.

% paid out= 9.4%



1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

Total claims 268

Settled Claims No. 113 – amount £33,948.75

No Damages 151

% paid out= 42.2%

1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

Total Claims 138

Settled Claims No. 46 – amount £13,665.34

No damages 91

% paid out= 33.3%

Q37 Councillor W Dixon – Will the administration support Middleton Park ward councillors and offer more financial support beyond the community committee funds to bring our playgrounds back into use?

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

The administration recognises the importance of investment in the city’s parks and greenspaces, hence the investment of £1m of discretionary capital to be used in 2024/25 financial year. A proportion of this will be used to address pressing health and safety issues on the councils playground stock.

Q38 Councillor B Flynn – Will the Executive Member for Resources please advise how much was spent on equality, diversity and inclusion projects in the last full council year and in the current year to date?

A Executive Member for Resources

Full Council Municipal Year 2022 - 2023

- Workforce EDI Spend £5,740
- Communities EDI £24,145.29

TOTAL: £29,885.29

Full Council Municipal Year 2023 – To Date

- Workforce EDI Spend £11,340
- Communities EDI £30,646.95

TOTAL: £41,986.95

The community facing EDI budget includes support for the councils Equality Assembly and Equality Hubs which are the councils consultation and engagement forums for protected characteristic groups and the councils support for Equality International Days, Weeks and Months including genocide commemoration. This activity supports the councils Public Sector Equality Duty obligations under the Equality Duty 2010, including to give due regard to equality in decision making and the delivery of our functions, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.



Q39 Councillor W Dixon – Does the administration recognise the need for more staff answering the phones in services such as housing & housing options?

A Executive Member for Housing

Leeds City Council's contact centre answers around 16k calls each month on behalf of Housing Leeds and performance has been steadily improving over the last year with 94% of calls being answered so far in March with an average wait time of only 2.6 minutes. This is complemented by local housing offices which answer around 13k calls each month. Housing Leeds is currently rolling out an upgraded Customer Portal which enables customers to manage some tenancy and rent matters online, including the ordering of repairs. This will enable tenants who wish to manage their customer contact online and we expect to see call volumes reduce over the next year as the portal becomes embedded.

Leeds Housing Options is currently supporting around 1200 contacts weekly which is putting a pressure on existing resource within the homelessness services. We are developing ways to improve the customer journey which includes guiding customers to online portals where appropriate so that our ability to pick up the most urgent contacts is improved. We remain committed to balancing the increased demands, the most recent DLUCH data shows we continue to perform very well as a homelessness service.

Q40 Councillor P Alderson – Please can the Executive member for Sustainable Development & Infrastructure inform Council of when the Highways department will carry out the city's Rural Speed Review, or update members on any progress already made.

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

A review of all the A and B classified route speed limits was undertaken shortly after the Department for Transport (DfT) published their new national guidance in 2013. The outcome of this review resulted in speed limit changes on many roads across the City. Since this DfT publication, there hasn't been any recommended changes and therefore there are not any plans at the present time to conduct a holistic rural speed review across the city at this time. However, the Traffic Engineering team will review the speed limits on any road, if requested and not recently reviewed.

Within Leeds there are a significant number of rural roads which have the national speed limit designation applied. It is important to note, that any signed speed limit is the absolute maximum and not a "target" speed; it does not mean it is safe to drive at that maximum speed in all conditions. The Highway Code makes it very clear that drivers should drive at an appropriate speed taking into account the indicated speed limit, the type of vehicle, road environment, layout and specific conditions.

The national speed limit is the default speed limit applied across England for unrestricted roads and is set by national legislation. Currently, this is 70mph for dual carriageway roads, 60mph for single carriageway roads without street lighting, and 30mph for single carriageway roads with street lighting.

Leeds City Council is committed to ensuring speed limits in both the rural and urban environments are fit for purpose and compliant with the national guidance. As part of Leeds



City Council's recently approved Vision Zero ambition, further work has commenced on reviewing some of the historical national speed limits and this year, is proposing to implement speed limit changes on five strategic rural routes, lowering these default national speed limits from 60mph limit to 50mph. These initial five routes have been identified and prioritised for funding against their existing injury collision record (above the national average for such roads) which are reviewed annually and the casualty saving potential. Following the completion of this work in 2024, post evaluation studies will be undertaken to assess the injury collision saving benefits of these changes.

In addition to the above, another element of the Leeds City Council Vision Zero ambition is to request that the Department for Transport (DfT) review the current historical default rural (60 or 70mph) national speed limits, based on the principle that they may no longer be appropriate. At the present time, the DfT is consulting nationally in relation to the consideration to change the national default urban speed limit (road with a system of street lighting) from 30mph to 20mph, similar to the approach adopted in Wales recently. There seems considerable merit in these national speed limit reviews for both the urban and rural settings being run in parallel, and we will be engaging with the DfT on these matters.

If there is a specific road which prompted this question, please contact the Traffic Engineering Team, who will be able to look at the issue further.

Q41 Councillor W Dixon – Does the administration admit that patching our roads constantly costs the council more than it would to simply resurface them?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Patching is only undertaken to a proportion of a street or road, usually to a lower depth and not the full extent and as a consequence patching is cheaper in such instances. However there comes a point at which, if the extent of patching undertaken is exceeded, typically more than 35% it would make surfacing a more viable option.

Patching is generally undertaken when most of the road is in a sound condition, but the street has isolated areas of deformation, potholes and crazing. In this case patching will be applied at isolated locations and the street selected would then receive a follow-up preventative treatment such as surface dressing or micro asphalt. These treatments seal the surface, prevent the ingress of water and detritus, and prolong its life.

Engineers are aware of the point where patching becomes un-economical and use whole life costing as investment appraisal and management tool. This assesses the total cost of an asset over potential life considering maintenance and repair. Patching remains a cost effective and essential choice to highway engineers.

Q42 Councillor P Alderson – Please can the Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education provide Council with a breakdown of Leeds 2023 Year of Culture events that took place in my ward of Guiseley and Rawdon.

A Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

The LEEDS 2023 programme featured at least 1,100 events. This figure is expected to increase once final data from partners has been collated as part of the evaluation.

A total number of 10 LEEDS 2023 events took place within the Guiseley and Rawdon ward and they are as follows:



- The Awakening Ballot Facilitated Session – St Oswalds C of E Primary – 17 Nov 2022
- My Leeds Grant Info Session – Guiseley Theatre - 16 Feb 2023
- My Leeds Summer Guiseley and Rawdon Feast – 2 July 2023
- Authors Abroad Session – Benton Park School – 7 March 2023
- Authors Abroad Session – Guiseley School – 7 March 2023
- Smeaton 300 Crest Award Discovery Level – St Oswald’s C of E Primary School (Autumn Term)
- Smeaton 300 Crest Award Discovery Level – St Mary’s Menston Catholic (Autumn Term)
- Stephen Spender – Creative Translation Day – Guiseley School – 20 November 2023
- Northern Dreaming Storytime – Yeadon Westfield Infant School – 6 November 2023
- Leeds Artist Show – schools workshop with Leeds Art Gallery – Rawdon St Peter’s C of E School – 7 November 2022

In addition, schools from Guiseley and Rawdon wards were involved in the following event which took place at the First Direct Arena as part of the extensive LEEDS 2023 creative learning programme:

- Leeds Youth Music Festival Celebration Concert, led by Leeds Music Education Partnership - Hawksworth C of E, St Mary’s Menston Catholic, Tranmere Park Primary – 21 June

Q43 Councillor R Finnigan – Would the Leader of Council agree with me that we should explore every option to keep open Knowle Manor in Morley?

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

Budget proposals from the Adults and Health Directorate have been put forward following a significant amount of analysis and consideration. The budget for Adults and Health is largely allocated to meeting the council's statutory duties under the Care Act 2014. This requires a balance between preventive services - to avoid, reduce or delay the delivery of formal care services - and those services intended to meet assessed needs such as residential care. The council values all of the services that it provides and commissions and again seeks to deliver a balance between strategically appropriate in-house services and those commissioned externally with a view to ensuring good quality services and value for money.

A number of factors have led to the decision being made to put forward the closure of this service as an option.

- The condition of the building at Knowle Manor remains a concern. Recent changes to the cost of building materials and renovation costs have been an external factor outside of the control of the council. There was a funded plan in 2020/21 to improve the physical environment of the three remaining in house care homes. However due to increased building and other costs, the capital pot was only sufficient to renovate 2 of the homes. The total anticipated cost of renovation for Knowle Manor, as of August 2023, would have been £612,000. However, it is worth noting that the cost would now likely be higher. Knowle Manor remains in a condition that means it will be unattractive to future residents.
- This also means that the option to consider developing Knowle Manor as an Intermediate Care unit, as is being considered with another of the Council’s in-house care homes, was not a viable option.
- Knowle Manor is a residential care home - there is an evidenced reduction in demand across the city for residential care which has resulted in under occupancy in the Council's in-



house care homes. This has been a sustained position over the last three years. For example, occupancy levels for permanent residents at Knowle Manor in 2023 was only 44%.

Maintaining this service at a level of underoccupancy and as a result, with a budget deficit due to lack of income, is not considered a viable option given the current budget pressures. The budget position of the Council has led to a number of very difficult decisions and this is one of those.

Knowle Manor is a valued service, and we are completely mindful of the potential impact of a closure, hence the extensive consultation that is currently underway to ensure we give due regard to the impact on the residents and their families/carers. If the decision is confirmed by Executive Board in June 2024, the closure programme will be handled with care and sensitivity.

Q44 Councillor P Alderson – Can the Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space confirm the Administration will be changing its mind about charging for car parking at the Otley Chevin Forest Park following the appraisal of the costs of implementing such a scheme and realising it is a false economy?

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

The proposal to introduce car park charges at Otley Chevin will enable a capital programme for improvements to be implemented whilst also funding the year one set up costs and ongoing maintenance. This includes much needed improvements to the car parks at Upper and Lower Shawfield. There are plans to move to the next stage of the process whereby the relevant legal requirements and key considerations to implement all necessary arrangements will be set out in order to introduce and enforce a modest charge for car parking in line with the budget agreed at Council in February.

Q45 Councillor M Robinson – Will the Executive Member for Sustainable Development & Infrastructure commit to review locations in my ward, including Heather Vale, where 20mph signage is causing an obstruction to pedestrians and limited benefit to road users, and will she commit to having such signage removed where it is found to be unnecessary and inappropriate?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

It is the Executive Member's understanding that a colleague from the Traffic Engineering section has recently met you on site to discuss concerns relating to the placement/ position of some 20mph signs within your ward and has agreed to make some alterations.

I will ensure that the same consideration is given to Heather Vale and a colleague will be in touch in the near future to discuss this location and any other one which may be causing concerns.

It is however, important to note that all speed limits (other than 30mph speed limits within a system of street lighting) do need repeater signs to be placed on roads and at the correct intervals and spacing to ensure that the speed limit is compliant with the Department for Transport's statutory requirements to allow enforcement by the Police. A speed limit not signed accordingly could lead to Police enforcement not taking place.

Yours sincerely



Kevin Tomkinson
Deputy Head of Democratic Services

