

**COUNCIL**

**27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2019**

**UNANSWERED QUESTIONS LETTER**

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**Democratic & Central Services**

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Date: 11 April 2019

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor

**COUNCIL MEETING – 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2019**

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 10 to 22 unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

**Q10** Councillor R Downes - Could the exec member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning confirm the planned opening date for the refurbished Aireborough Leisure Centre?

**A** Councillor M Rafique (Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles) – The development at Aireborough Leisure centre includes significant improvement works:

- New entrance, with easy access from the car park and an improved façade
- Improved reception area to provide a light and airy space that is both welcoming and accessible to users
- New tiles to both pools and surrounds
- New Community Hub providing access to a range of council services
- Guiseley Library – relocated from its current location
- New 'village' style changing facilities comprising:

- Changing cubicles of varying sizes to allow single or family changing
- Group changing rooms for schools / clubs – which can also be used as male and female changing rooms when required
- ‘Changing places’ facility for people with profound or multiple disabilities which is fitted with specialist equipment including a hoist and changing bench
- Open and single shower areas to allow access by families, but privacy for those who need it
- Vanity area with hairdryers / mirrors

As you will know, the centre was built in the late 1960’s and, as the works have been undertaken, a number of issues have been identified that only became apparent once detailed investigative works were underway.

A number of issues did not appear on the initial condition surveys and could not have been reasonably identified until parts of the building were opened up. The construction contract is now expected to complete at the end of July 2019, and it is intended that there will then a period for client fit-out works and familiarisation. A final opening date will be published as soon as possible.

The delays have been due to the age of the building, with a It was considered prudent to take the opportunity to address these issues whilst the contractor is on site. The main issues were;

- Asbestos – initial surveys had identified asbestos in various areas of the building and this was removed before the main contract commenced. However, as demolition work commenced previously sealed areas of the building were exposed, and further asbestos was identified, which needed to be removed in accordance with Health and Safety regulations.
- Roofs – leaks were identified from flat roofs over two areas, these roofs have been repaired as part of the contract works

We will continue to press the contractor to ensure that the works are completed as soon as possible so that we can reopen this important community asset in a refurbished and much improved state.

**Q11** Councillor A Khan - Can the Executive Member please comment on the government’s delayed social care green paper and its implications for Leeds?

**A** Councillor R Charlwood (Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults) - The government announced that it would publish a green paper on adult social care in March 2017. It was originally to be published in the summer of that year. During this time we’ve had one general election, three new managers of Leeds United, 39 resignations from government ministers and no published proposals from the government on the future of social care.



The Queen's Speech in June 2017 stated that the government would "work to improve social care and bring forward proposals for consultation". In July 2017, the Government said, regarding reform of social care: "we cannot wait any longer—we need to get on with this". Nearly two years later, we're still waiting.

At one point, the green paper was to be published alongside the NHS Long Term Plan, which was published earlier this year. But instead, we've been given a five year plan for the NHS and no national plan for social care.

In March 2018, the then Health and Social Care Secretary Jeremy Hunt, outlined 'key principles' he said would guide the government's thinking ahead of the green paper, one of which was whole-person, integrated care with the NHS and social care systems operating as one. The NHS Long Term Plan also recognised the need for collaborative approaches and more integration locally within health and social care. We now know the national plan for the NHS, so why are we still waiting to hear the government's plans for social care?

In Leeds, we will continue to work towards our ambition for Leeds to be the best city for health and wellbeing regardless of what this government eventually publishes, if it ever gets round to publishing anything. But we could do so much more to make sure people get the best care in the right place at the right time if this government published fair and comprehensive proposals to make our social care services sustainable.

**Q12** Councillor D Ragan - Please can the Executive Member please comment on the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy for England provide an update on the ongoing consultation?

**A** Councillor M Rafique (Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles) - We welcome the Government consultations on these important waste reduction and recycling related issues, and are in the process of formulating our responses.

Reducing the environmental impacts of waste and getting the most out of our resources are key priorities for the Council and the City.

We are leading by example with the steps we are already taking to eliminate the unnecessary use of single use plastics from our activities and supply chain.

We are also working on the development of the new Waste Strategy for Leeds which will be presented to the Executive Board in the Summer. Ahead of this, we are engaging the City in a 'conversation' around waste to enable us to listen and respond to what the City is saying, and to set out our priorities and ambitions in the strategy accordingly.

The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy for England, whilst ambitious in its broad aims, has nevertheless left a lot of uncertainty on a range of key issues.

Clearly the Government's resolve to make difficult choices and implement bold measures to address things like ensuring that producers bear the full costs of dealing with plastic packaging will be key to delivering major environmental change.



Perhaps most significant, however, are the cost implications for local authorities of the Government's potential proposals, especially where these impact on kerbside recycling collections. Although the Government's strategy implies that net and ongoing costs arising from the policies on which they are consulting will be met in full, it remains to be seen what this means in practice.

*Notes for information:*

*The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy for England was released in December. This covered a number of key areas which are to be subject to consultation. Therefore, in February, four consultations were launched by Government, with deadlines of 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 for responses. They cover:*

1. *Consistency in household and business recycling collections in England: main proposals concerning requirements for the collection of the same core set of dry recyclable materials from households nationally, and potentially mandating separate weekly food waste collections from households.*

*This would enable greater ease and understanding of recycling for residents. It could also enable new services to be rolled out to residents, subject to the Government making good on its commitment on funding, which would improve both our service offer at the kerbside and the city's recycling rate.*

2. *Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers (plastic, glass and cans): consulting on which materials should be included, whether all containers or just 'on-the-go' items, and how the system will work in practice.*

*This would hopefully lead to behaviour change and greater levels of recycling as well as a reduction in litter, although there are some concerns about the impact that this would have on the costs of the kerbside service that we already provides to practically all households in Leeds for recycling of these materials.*

3. *Reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system: this seeks views on measures to reduce the amount of unnecessary and difficult to recycle packaging, and increase the amount of packaging that can be and is recycled through reforms to the packaging producer responsibility regulations.*

4. *Plastic packaging tax: seeks views on a proposed new tax to all plastic packaging manufactured in the UK and unfilled plastic packaging imported into the UK with less than 30% recycled content.*

*These measures are both vital in ensuring producers and retailers bear the responsibility for the costs of recycling or disposing of their products, rather than local authorities. These measures should lead to unnecessary and non-recyclable packaging being designed out, leaving a consistent set of materials for collection and recycling, though this will also require viable and sustainable outlets and markets to be in place.*



*Officers in Waste Management are currently pulling together the responses for the consultations, and views and comments can be emailed to [leeds.waste@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:leeds.waste@leeds.gov.uk).*

**Q13** Councillor C Anderson - Could the Executive Member for Adults and Health please comment on a recent article in the YEP that stated blind people feel they are being shut out of society in Leeds, with more than 50% of blind or partially sighted people saying they feel “left out” and 64% feeling socially isolated?

**A** Councillor R Charlwood (Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults) - The article Councillor Anderson refers to is worrying for anyone concerned about how we as a country treat disabled people. Blind and partially sighted people are valued members of society and it is tragic that they feel left out and isolated.

It is important to stress that this concerning problem is not solely confined to Leeds. It was reported in the Yorkshire Post that 69 per cent of blind and partially sighted people in Yorkshire feel socially isolated, for example. This is something all local authorities as well as our government should be addressing.

Leeds City Council is firmly committed to tackling social isolation and has been for some years. We spent the most of any local authority in Yorkshire last year on tackling loneliness and social isolation, and continue to increase the amount we spend on this – we estimate that we’ll spend £3.4m in 2019/20, a half a million pound increase on the £2.9m we spent in 2014/15.

Specifically for people living with sensory impairment, Leeds Adults and Health currently commissions Leeds Hearing and Sight Loss Service which is provided by a provider called BID. They were awarded a five year which commenced in April 2017.

During 2017/18 the service was accessed by 3,271 individuals seeking support with their sensory loss. There are currently a number of social groups within the service that meet on a weekly basis and they have provide a social setting for people to meet and take part in social activities across the city that they would ordinarily not feel comfortable doing on their own. Some of these groups have been meeting for many years and they transferred across from the previous provider in April 2017.

The people who access these social groups report that they feel much less socially isolated and feel supported by their peers as they have a common understanding of living with sight loss.

The group include a men’s activities group, women’s group, Yoga Group, communications group for people with a learning disability, Otley and Morley groups, the SOS group and two BAME blind and partially sighted groups.

The service focuses on the principles of maximising and sustaining choice, involvement and inclusion by utilising approaches that strengthen Deaf, Blind and Dual Sensory Loss networks and supports individuals to access mainstream services and limits social isolation.



Leeds Adult Social Care also employs five qualified Rehabilitation Officers and one Senior Rehabilitation Officer, Visual Impairment, who work closely with Leeds Hearing and Sight Loss Service.

The Rehabilitation Officers provide person centred assessment and care planning around a strength based rehabilitation approach to visual impairment rehabilitation.

They teach specialist adaptive visual impairment skills, apply communication knowledge and techniques including braille. They also assess for adaptations and a range of equipment to support visually impaired people to achieve safer mobility and live independent lives.

Nobody living with any disability should feel lonely and socially isolated in Leeds and we as a Council are committed to doing all we can to make our communities and services accessible to them.

**Q14** Councillor K Dye - Can the Executive Member please update Council on the recent launch of £23m Clean Air Zone funding for businesses?

**A** Councillor J Lewis (Executive Member for Resources and Sustainability) - Since the announcement of being awarded funding from central Government to implement the Clean Air Zone, the CAZ project team have been working hard to deliver the financial support packages for affected sectors. The high level funding package is set out as follows:

- £13.8m HGVs
- £2m non-scheduled buses and coaches
- £7m\* taxi and private hire sector

\*The £7m funding for the taxi sector is complemented by £700k early measures funding, and a capital loan pot of c£20m.

The money for HGV and non-scheduled buses and coaches is being discharged via way of competitive process and is being given out as £16,000 grants – both grant competitions have been launched. Operators of non-scheduled buses and coaches can apply for up to 10 grants per company, HGV operators can apply for up to 5 grants per company. These limits are related to State Aid regulations and have been introduced to ensure funding is targeted at those organisations most affected by the CAZ proposals.

The non-scheduled bus and coach competition closed on 25 March – the results are still being worked on by the CAZ project team, however initial indications are that the funding in place is relative to the interest in the scheme.

The HGV competition closes on 15 April.

The taxi and private hire support scheme is due to launch on 1 April. Owner drivers, and drivers who lease vehicles can apply straight away. The scheme will be extended to Operators after two months. Applicants can opt for a £10,000 interest free loan or a £1500 transitional grant, subject to availability.



**Q15** Councillor N Dawson - Please could the Chair explain why passengers from Morley who travel to Leeds Station are fined by Northern Rail before they get to the ticket barrier, despite not being able to buy a ticket at Morley Station or due to the guard on the train not getting to them?

**A** Councillor K Groves (Chair of Transport Committee West Yorkshire Combined Authority) – Most of the railway now operates under a penalty fare system. Passengers must be in possession of a valid ticket or pass before they board any train. This can be bought in advance through apps or online services or at the vending machine on the station. A passenger who boards without a ticket is liable to a penalty fare on arrival at their destination.

Whilst staff on the train may be able to sell a ticket, passengers should not board a train in expectation that there will be an opportunity to buy a ticket whilst on the journey. A train stopping at Morley heading towards Leeds is likely to be full giving the conductor very little time or capacity to sell tickets.

Northern has invested in platform ticket vending machines to enable passengers to purchase before they board and, when these are operational, has been strengthening its application of the penalty fare scheme. If there is no ticket machine available on the platform the passenger board or it was broken or there was another factor which could have prevented the passenger from buying a ticket before travel, Northern will waive the penalty fare and charge the standard fare.

**Q16** Councillor B Flynn - Would the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning like to comment on the proposal to withdraw the Mybus service?

**A** Councillor K Groves (Chair of Transport Committee West Yorkshire Combined Authority) – The Combined Authority is reviewing its guidelines for the provision of discretionary home to school transport. A public engagement exercise has recently closed and revised guidelines will be considered by the Combined Authority's Transport Committee in Spring ahead of implementation in the forthcoming financial year. These proposals are seeking to ensure provision of buses funded by the CA is focussed on travel to local schools for pupils where walking, cycling and use of regular bus services is not feasible for their journey.

Separately the Combined Authority is reviewing a number of current services which are failing to meet current value for money guidelines. The CA has extended its engagement with schools and pupils in these instances seeking to find solutions which will improve the value for money provision of these services. In both cases the Combined Authority is working closely with officers of the Council. These actions do not impact on pupils deemed by the Council to be statutorily eligible for free transport.

Finally, the current fleet of yellow "MyBus" vehicles owned by the Combined Authority is reaching the end of its working life and steps are being taken to withdraw these vehicles replacing them with buses owned and operated by bus companies. The process of replacing these buses is separate to the value for money review of current school buses.



**Q17** Councillor C Anderson - Would the Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles please advise me how many Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued for littering across the city 2018/19 (1st April 2018 to date), how many of these fines have been paid and how many have not been paid, and the value of both of these, separately?

**A** Councillor M Rafique (Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles) - Since 2008 Councils have had powers to tackle littering by the use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) which are issued to people who drop litter. FPN's are a quick and efficient punitive measure for people seen committing this offence. Many are issued on the spot which is a highly visible action and therefore acts as a deterrent to others. The imposition of an FPN is an alternative to court action and involves the resolution of the issue upon payment of a standard fee. A range of field based Council staff can issue FPN's city wide, whilst an external provider 3gs, have been issuing FPN's in the city centre. When the FPN was first introduced the fine was £75 reducing to £50 if paid early. However from July 2018 the fine increased to £100 reducing to £75 if paid early.

For the time period 1st April 2018 to 25th March 2019, a total of 2456 FPN's have been issued for littering across the City.

Out of the 2456 issued FPN's, 1729 have so far been paid with a total value of £132,075. There are currently 727 FPNs unpaid or awaiting payment with a value of £64,975.

Of the 727 currently unpaid FPNs, 373 cases have been referred for prosecution for non-payment. The remainder will also be referred as the relevant payment deadline expires.

**Q18** Councillor B Flynn - Would the Executive Member for Children and Families provide me with the numbers of Looked After Children from other districts being Looked After by Leeds residents in the city?

**A** Councillor L Mulherin (Executive Member for Children and Families) - As of 26 March 2019, the number of Looked After Children placed by other authorities in Leeds is 265. This number is made up of 219 children from the Yorkshire and Humber region, 166 of whom are from neighbouring authorities in West Yorkshire.

The number includes children placed with relatives approved as kinship foster carers, children placed with foster carers (approved by another agency) resident in Leeds. It does not include young people in secure accommodation or residential children's homes.

Children placed in Leeds by another authority remain the legal responsibility of that authority who are responsible for their welfare.

**Q19** Councillor J Shemilt - Would the Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles join me in welcoming the £137,582 of government funding for Leeds to help clean the city's high streets and town centres, and will he outline what the council is doing to encourage communities to take greater pride in their local area and support campaigns such as Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean Campaign running from 22 March to 23 April?



**A** Councillor M Rafique (Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles) - We are very proud of the impressive number of local people who give up many hours of their time to help clean up our city through removing litter and general rubbish from our streets and rivers. The one-off payment of £137k allows us to provide even more support to the groups and individuals who regularly do that and we've opened the dialogue on how to do that to best effect. However, the funding comes with a number of conditions which will significantly limit what we can do in reality. The Council was first notified of the windfall on 18<sup>th</sup> March and yet is being required to spend the full sum by end March 2019. We are also urged to support existing groups rather than support new start-ups and are to focus on high street areas, not all of which represent our most challenging locations across the city. Because we are so short of time, we have taken a pragmatic, if somewhat unimaginative process of purchasing a range of items such as gloves, litter pickers and high-vis clothing which we know community groups make good use of. Other suggestions are starting to come through, such as requests for additional bins, especially for use on high streets throughout the district. We will continue to respond to calls for support from community groups and want to maximise how groups can benefit from this new and unexpected funding stream this year.

In general, the Council has supported the annual event of the Great British Spring Clean since its inception, including at a national level through representing Local Authorities on the steering group for this initiative. Locally, we have promoted the event widely to encourage participation and will continue to provide the wrap-around practical support of providing the necessary equipment and removal of waste collected. We've been really pleased with the level of engagement in GBSC by the people of Leeds, which has continued to grow over the years, partly through the promotion and support we have offered.

**Q20** Councillor M Robinson - As we are in consultation on proposals to introduce 20mph zones in the Harewood ward, will the Executive Board Member for Regeneration Transport and Planning commit to revising his proposals and listen to communities if they reject what is currently on offer?

**A** Councillor R Lewis (Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning) - The formal consultation process on the proposals for 20mph limits in the Harewood area runs until 8th April 2019. Any representations received will be considered and reviewed in accordance with national guidance on setting speed limits, taking into account, for example, measured mean speeds of vehicles. Ultimately, a report will be prepared for consideration by myself and the Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation).

**Q21** Councillor P Wadsworth - Does the Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles share my concern that the Council is currently recycling just 39.1% of household waste and that unless urgent action is taken the Council looks likely to miss the Defra target of 50% recycling by 2020?

**A** Councillor M Rafique (Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles) – We are aware of where we stand in relation to the 2020 national target, but also of the fact that Leeds' performance is reflective of the national picture in relation to recycling performance, and that the majority of local authorities therefore find themselves in the same position.



The Council has managed to maintain the current level of performance over recent years in the face of progressive Government funding reductions, and we have continued, for example, to offer free kerbside garden waste collections throughout this time, whilst over two thirds of local authorities now charge for this service.

We are currently reviewing the Waste Strategy for Leeds, and will come to the Executive Board in the summer to set out the City's ambitions for reducing waste and maximising resources. However, the Government's recently published Resources and Waste Strategy for England, whilst ambitious in its broad aims, has nevertheless left a lot of uncertainty on a range of key issues.

The cost implications of providing new recycling services are significant, especially in the context of the further Government funding cuts now expected. Although the Government's Resources and Waste strategy implies that they will meet the net costs arising from the policies on which they are currently consulting, it remains to be seen what this means in practice, and this will be key in determining whether the long-term ambitions set out in the national strategy will be supported with the necessary resources.

**Q22** Councillor M Robinson - Could the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning confirm how many parking tickets were issued in each ward across Leeds in 2017/18?

**A** Councillor R Lewis (Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning) - In 2017/ 2018 the Council issued 99,386 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) for parking contraventions across the City. The Council currently has 65 Parking Civil Enforcement Officers who are deployed variously from 7am throughout each day until 10pm (and until 3am at the weekends) to enforce parking restrictions both on-street and in car-parks managed by the Council. The deployment of Civil Enforcement Officers is based on service needs which are determined mainly by local priorities and issues (including requests from schools and ward Members etc.) alongside the need to enforce Traffic Regulation Orders.

The numbers of Penalty Charge Notices are recorded by beat area and Traffic Regulation Order, some of which span wards. We therefore do not currently collate the information you have requested by ward. The attached document provides a breakdown of Penalty Charge Notices issued in 2107/ 2018 by enforcement beats / TRO areas.

Yours sincerely

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

