

Public Document Pack

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS LETTER

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Your ref:

Our Ref:

Date: 1 August 2022

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL MEETING – 20th JULY 2022

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 7 to 42 were unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

Q7 Councillor R Downes – Many hosts on the Homes for the Ukraine scheme are having difficulty obtaining the £350 monthly 'Thank you' payments. Can you outline the reasons for this?

A Executive Member for Communities

We are working as quickly as we can to complete the necessary steps to be able to make the £350 'thank you' payments. 137 payments have been made or are in the process of being made after all relevant safeguarding and property checks have been completed. Like other local authorities we have been working with DLUHC to ensure that policy and guidance is reflective of the situation we are dealing with. As a council, we are only permitted to make payments to sponsors where a number of necessary background checks have been completed successfully. These checks include:

- a property check to ensure the sponsor house is fit for purpose
- a DBS check for all household members (aged 16+)
- an in-person welfare check for all guests
- welfare and police background checks in line with existing safeguarding practice. These checks are carried out in line with the government's guidance for councils. We have received several enquiries from sponsors on the background checks undertaken in addition to the DBS and in-person welfare checks as they are not mentioned in the sponsor guidance and FAQs.



These checks can take several weeks due to the demand on services and number of households where checks are required. We have deployed extra staff from across the council to assist with the necessary checks required and the administrative processes and we are now increasing the pace at which we are processing payments to sponsors but recognise there may still be a short delay for some.

Some sponsors may be under the impression that payments are automatic and will commence as soon as their guests arrive but DLUHC and wider Government guidance does not authorise any payments until all background checks have been completed. In addition, sponsors must complete a self-declaration form to signal their intent to claim the £350 payment before payment can be made.

Once all checks are complete and payments made, they are backdated to the day the guest first arrived.

I very much appreciate the fact that whatever the challenges we have there is a direct impact on some sponsors who quite rightly expect these payments to be made without undue delay. However, I am confident that the partnership is working as quickly as it can to make all the necessary checks to further expedite payments to sponsors.

Q8 Councillor E Flint – As the Executive Member knows, when the then Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition Government cancelled the Building Schools for the Future Programme in 2010, it was replaced with something called the Priority Schools Building Programme. As the latest round of funding from this programme has now been released, could the Executive Member update Council on how much money the Government will be giving Leeds?

A Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

As you may be aware the DfE has committed to rebuild or refurbish 50 schools a year for the next ten years.

There are currently 161 schools confirmed in the programme with the first 50 announced in February 2021 – no Leeds schools were included.

The second set of 50 were announced in July 2021 – two Leeds schools were included and the third set were announced just last week – no Leeds schools were included.

For this third set of schools all responsible bodies were given the opportunity to put forward nominations for consideration, under incredibly strict criteria.

Leeds nominated five schools:

East SILC – a 2-19 generic specialist setting for pupils with severe, profound, complex needs including hearing and visual impairments and autism spectrum disorder.

Parklands Primary School – Constructed in 1950 and 1970

South SILC – Another specialist provision for some of our most vulnerable pupils.

West SILC and Wetherby High School



While these schools have not been included in the latest round we have been told that they have not yet been ruled out and will be subject to independent surveyors appointed by the DfE to complete site surveys.

However, I cannot emphasise enough just how disappointed I am that none of the schools listed above have been included in the latest list.

Q9 Councillor M Dobson – Can the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Resources update Council on the Administration’s massive council tax overpayment, inform us how the recovery is progressing and give assurances that no shortfall will be made up from the core budget?

A Executive Member for Resources

The Council has apologised for the duplicate payments which were made to 25,000 residents. The Council, however, has moved quickly to ensure that the overpayment has been recovered, offering a way in which people can pay back in full or the sum can be recovered in instalments via direct debit. To date nearly 10,000 people have paid in full, and just over 14,000 are having an adjustment to their monthly payment. In total, £1.5m has been fully repaid and £2.1m is set up to be recovered. Approximately a 1000 overpayments are being reviewed for a variety of reasons, representing an outstanding sum of £142k. We will pursue a number of routes to ensure the money is repaid. In the event that we are unable to recover the sum, we will be reimbursed by the third party which made the duplicate payment. We are also being reimbursed for officer time.

To place the error in context, the council has successfully paid £150 to over 300k residents, with staff working exceptionally hard to ensure this happened quickly. The duplicate payment has been swiftly addressed to ensure that inconvenience has been minimised to those paid it but at no cost to the general council tax payer.

Q10 Councillor S Hamilton – Please could the Executive Member for Environment & Housing comment on the latest Right to Buy announcement by Government and how this will impact on Leeds?

A Executive Member for Environment and Housing

Whilst this could be seen as a positive for those new tenants given the ability to purchase their properties at a discount rate, it could further reduce the numbers of homes available to those in urgent Housing need. In Leeds we already lose around 600 properties a year due to RTB and have in excesses of 6000 applicants already with an identified urgent housing need.

It is our intention to lobby government further on these proposals.

Q11 Councillor N Harrington – Can the Executive Member for Adult and Children’s Social Care and Health Partnerships confirm the local authority’s target caseload for each children’s social worker, and the current average caseload per children’s social worker, excluding advanced practitioners?

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

Ideally, we would want to aim for caseloads between 18-20. The following is the average caseloads during the inspection (February 2022) and made known to Ofsted;



Excluding advanced practitioners				
Area	Caseload	FTE of Workers	No. of workers	Average Caseload
South	1158	53.0	67	21.8
West	1183	54.4	72	21.7
ENE	1317	54.7	71	24.1
CHAD	244	19.9	25	12.3
CLA	967	53.4	72	18.1
Other	9	1.0	5	9.0
Grand Total	4878	236.5	312	20.6

Our self-assessment stated the following:

Help and protection

Caseloads

*Caseloads have risen over the past 12 months due to the significant covid-related rise in open cases and some covid related reduction in capacity within area-based social work teams. In January 2021 the average caseload for social work teams was under 17, but in **January 2022 it had risen to just over 21.***

Where caseloads are higher than we would want, managers and Advanced Practitioners ensure that there is robust oversight and support provided through formal reflective outcome focused supervision to ensure that the workload is manageable, is proceeding well and children are being kept safe. Additional supportive action such as team discussions, peer support, city wide redistribution of work and duty has been taken as necessary. Workers wellbeing has been a priority throughout the pandemic and is discussed informally and formally through supervision, appraisal and review. Externally commissioned wellbeing sessions have been offered to staff and a range of tools and resources to support wellbeing have been developed and embedded in day-to-day practice. In addition there is a rich corporate wellbeing offer including counselling and advice – this is open to all staff and foster carers. The Leadership Team are fully aware of the caseload pressures and have been proactive in their response The Covid-19 Transition Plan addresses workload pressures a revised recruitment and retention strategy has been implemented and additional investment secured for Social Work Assistants, Advanced Practitioners and social workers in key areas such as the Front Door. We have already seen some improvements, with social workers returning to Leeds and the recruitment of Social Work Assistants. This has been regularly monitored at the highest level through the Recovery Board, chaired by the Lead Member.

Q12 Councillor S Golton – Can the Portfolio Holder responsible for Environment and Housing please confirm how many Council properties fitted with solar panels are currently not receiving cheaper energy due to faults, and what the current waiting time is for repair?

A Executive Member for Environment and Housing

Repairs to solar panels raised by customers are responded within a target timescale of 28 days. There are currently no repairs to panels logged. However, on review of monitoring data made available, there are currently 156 properties fitted with solar panels that are currently identified as ‘off line’. This could be for a number of reasons, including signal failure (in which case the customer will still be benefiting from the output of the panels, but the data is not being transmitted back for monitoring), system failure or the system being unintentionally disabled.

The electrical team is developing a programme to visit all these properties and to ensure any remedial works are completed at the earliest opportunity. Orders have been raised for inspection of all these installations and the programme is likely to be completed within 8



weeks. In addition, the monitoring arrangements associated with properties fitted with solar panels is being reviewed to ensure properties showing as 'off line' are identified efficiently and appropriate interventions actioned.

Q13 Councillor H Bithell – Please could the Executive Member for Public Health & Active Lifestyles update the council on steps being taken to help our citizens obtain a healthy weight?

A Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles

Thank you Cllr Bithell. As a Council we are firmly committed to promoting healthy weight across all ages.

Leeds was the first local authority in the Yorkshire and Humber region to adopt the Local Authority Healthy Weight Declaration in 2018. This is a strategic commitment across all council departments as we know we always have to look at the wider determinants of health.

As part of this we have:

- Rolled out the Leeds School Streets scheme to restrict traffic around schools at drop off and pick up time, encouraging a safer environment for active travel;
- All Leisure Centre vending machines now have food and drink options which meet government buying standards for food;
- All Council buildings support the Refill initiative to enable access to drinking water; and
- Implemented supplementary planning documents to limit hot food takeaways.

Leeds has had a child healthy weight plan for over 12 years which recognises that multiple co-ordinated approaches are required to foster healthy weight at every stage of life, from pregnancy through childhood to the oldest age. Some of the actions in the plan include:

- Continuing to work with schools to help them provide healthy food and offer physical activity for their children to help achieve the healthy school award. A range of training sessions are offered to school staff to help improve their skills and understanding in health;
- The My Health, My School survey is completed by school pupils each year to gain an insight into the health of children;
- Uptake of free school meals is monitored and there is a free school meal toolkit to support schools;
- Schools are supported to promote active travel to school such as walking, cycling and scooting and to take part in related campaigns such as walk to school week;
- More Play streets schemes to reduce traffic congestion and promote physical activity;
- Leeds has achieved the international Baby Friendly Initiative Gold accreditation for the maternity hospital and the public health nursing service which ensures health professionals have the skills and approaches to support mums to breastfeed;
- The national child measurement programme is completed each year where children in reception and Year 6 are measured, and families are supported and signposted to programmes if there are issues around weight;
- HENRY parent programmes are offered to parents of children from 0-12 years old. This is an 8-week course that focuses on building parents' confidence and strengths. The courses cover emotional well-being, whole family lifestyle habits, mealtimes, TV, sleep, parenting and physical activity; and



- Several providers are commissioned who offer a range of physical activities, food and cooking sessions to families with overweight children: delivering 4,500 activities each year to 5,000 children.

We have been actively working with partners to understand the impact of weight stigma and to develop action to address it including:

- a Health Professional's Guide to support primary care staff to have a conversation about weight sensitively;
- Raising awareness of the impact of stigma and the complexity of obesity's root causes. For example, we led a campaign on World Obesity Day which engaged a high number of partners across Leeds; and
- Embedding person first language across policy and guidance.

In addition to work developed under the Healthy Weight Declaration, there are several services commissioned by Leeds City Council that support healthy eating, cooking and physical activity. Some examples include:

- Better Together community health development services who promote healthy living that includes physical activity and healthy eating support such as weekly recipe stations, family cooking sessions and food clubs;
- Provision of around 80 lunch clubs for older people; and
- A Fuel Poverty project which supports access to food and fuel.

Alongside Food Wise Leeds, we are developing a local Food Strategy which will contribute to reducing the risk of diet related ill health including excess weight.

And linking in with my responsibilities for Active Leeds, we are seeking to increase physical activity via the new Physical Activity Ambition for the city.

These examples demonstrate that Leeds City Council is committed to promoting healthy weight across all ages. Given the major challenge of reducing obesity and supporting people to maintain a healthy weight as we come through the pandemic, we are keen to continue to work positively with all our partners to support the work they do, working with communities.

We are proud of this work, especially given the challenging financial situation we are doing this in, following 12 years of Conservative Party Austerity which has seen the Council receive well over £2 billion less in funding, including a Public Health Grant which has been cut every year since 2013. We continue to think creatively and get the best from the resources we have.

Q14 Councillor M Dobson - Will the Executive Member with responsibility for Economy, Culture and Education tell Council what form of cost benefit/analysis was undertaken regarding the viability of Leeds 2023 before the Administration's 10.8 million investment and does it represent a good investment for the city? If so, how?

A Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

Work undertaken by BOP Consulting for LEEDS 2023 in January 2021 modelled on a £20M budget suggests that our year of culture will deliver a 6 to 1 return on investment for Leeds (as well as 8 to 1 investment for West Yorkshire and a £49m annual boost to the regional visitor economy).

Other defined benefits include:

- 1,310 new jobs in the visitor economy, rising to 1,620 by 2030.



- 10% growth in the Leeds visitor economy in 2023 and 4% growth thereafter
- 1,000 freelance opportunities and 2,000 trained volunteers
- 150 internships/work placements for students and young people
- 100 apprenticeships/accredited training opportunities
- 50 entry-level opportunities for young people via education programmes and partnerships

To date, LEEDS 2023 has been able to use Leeds City Council's investment to leverage a further £5.14M of investment from Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, The British Council and Trusts and Foundations. Further support has been secured from the principal education partners totalling £360K and from the private sector, totalling over £280K.

All Members will receive a briefing pack shortly setting out how they can get involved with what will be an inspiring and exciting year.

Q15 Councillor P Carlill – Would the Executive Member like to comment on the Big Bus conversation happening across West Yorkshire?

A Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

Thank you, Cllr Carlill, for giving me the opportunity to comment on this fantastic scheme. I would also like to thank Cllr Carlill for his work in driving this project forward and being a great voice for the people of Leeds and West Yorkshire in his role at the combined Authority. This project is a real passion project for you and I'm sure the people of Leeds will get behind you on it.

Having worked in partnership with WYCA in the development of the Bus Service Improvement

Plan, the Council is fully supportive of this planned public engagement. The consultation will provide a better understanding of how these plans and ideas reflect the changes the public want to see in our region's buses and current views about buses.

The Council's Comms team is working alongside WYCA to promote the survey through key messaging and materials which we are sharing with our networks and across our channels, particularly via Connecting Leeds social media.

I'm sure that the findings of the conversation will lead to positive change for the bus users of Leeds for years to come.

Q16 Councillor C Anderson– Can the Executive Member for Adult and Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships inform Council how many social workers were recruited in 2019, 2020, 2021 and so far in 2022?

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

The number of Children's Social Workers recruited for each year is detailed below. Please note these represent headcount rather than FTE.

2019 - 60

2020 - 54

2021 - 33

2022 – 15 (an additional 21 going through employment checks)



Q17 Councillor S Golton – Can the Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate please confirm if a Levelling Up Fund bid submitted without an endorsement from the local MP will automatically be rejected by the Government?

A Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

The government guidance for Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund states that “Formal priority support will be recognised and reflected in the assessment although applicants should note that formal priority support is not a condition or requirement for a bid to be successful”. It is therefore our understanding that a bid submitted without endorsement from the local MP would not be automatically rejected, although the support of the MP would help to strengthen the submission.

Q18 Councillor A Scopes – Can the Executive Member update Council on progress against the Council Tax rebate?

A Executive Member for Resources

The Council has apologised for the duplicate payments which were made to 25,000 residents. The Council, however, has moved quickly to ensure that the overpayment has been recovered, offering a way in which people can pay back in full or the sum can be recovered in instalments via direct debit. To date nearly 10,000 people have paid in full, and just over 14,000 are having an adjustment to their monthly payment. In total, £1.5m has been fully repaid and £2.1m is set up to be recovered. Approximately a 1000 overpayments are being reviewed for a variety of reasons, representing an outstanding sum of £142k. We will pursue a number of routes to ensure the money is repaid. In the event that we are unable to recover the sum, we will be reimbursed by the third party which made the duplicate payment. We are also being reimbursed for officer time.

To place the error in context, the council has successfully paid £150 to over 300k residents, with staff working exceptionally hard to ensure this happened quickly. The duplicate payment has been swiftly addressed to ensure that inconvenience has been minimised to those paid it but at no cost to the general council tax payer.

Q19 Councillor M Dobson – In light of a significant spike in antisocial behaviour does the Executive Board Member with responsibility for community safety believe that community policing is working?

A Executive Member for Resources

The pandemic saw an increase in ASB calls for Leeds City Council, however this year has seen a return to community normality with levels of anti-social behaviour and associated crime for both the council and the police.

Community Policing is at the heart of the WYP local policing strategy, and this is supported by the neighbourhood policing teams working in defined neighbourhoods across the city. They are supported with a range of statutory and non-statutory partners as well as the local community. The local authority has a range of services working across all directorates in support of community safety and local communities as well as the Safer Leeds strategic support to community policing and safeguarding.



Working in partnership continues to see some successful outcomes benefitting communities across Leeds. For example, in recent week increases in crime and ASB in specific areas of the city have been subject to intensive police, Safer Leeds and partnership early intervention/problem solving approaches which has proved very effective and reduced incidents and calls for service.

Due to the pressures on resources on WYP and the need to prioritise other areas of policing including the key role undertaken in Safeguarding teams, the Neighbourhood Policing Teams in Leeds police are operating with a number of vacancies across some of their teams. The influx of new Student Officers arriving (national Police Uplift Programme) should see WYP being able to strengthen the NPT numbers from Autumn onwards considering training and other pressures.

The relationship between the police and their partners at both a strategic level and with regards local operational partnership teams continues to be strong and partnership working on the community safety agenda remains effective.

Q20 Councillor D Seary – Can the Executive Member for Adult and Children’s Social Care and Health Partnerships confirm how much protected time for training is offered to newly qualified social workers, and what supervision support is provided?

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

Children’s social workers undertaking their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) receive 10% protected development time.

A full time worker has 22 days protected development time in their first year
The protected development time is for the following

- Completion of training on the NQSW pathway – totals 14.5 days
- Completion of additional study / reading
- Completion of academic assignments
- Review and completion of ASYE paperwork

We recommend that managers and ASYEs plan in development time at the start of the year and record this in the initial learning agreement.

The remaining 7.5 days can be used in agreement with line manager and it is recommended that this is detailed on Part A of the Progressive Assessment report (Learning Agreement) and reviewed regularly in supervision and reviews.

Supervision

regular supervision – up to 1 ½ hours duration of uninterrupted time, weekly for the first 6 weeks; fortnightly up to the 6 month review and at least monthly thereafter

Q21 Councillor S Golton – Can the Executive Member Resources confirm whether any consultation took place with the Lord Mayors Office or with the Executive Member for Children’s Services before her department proposed establishing a “Social Value Fund” to ensure that it would not undermine the fundraising capacity of their respective established charities?

A Executive Member for Resources

Consultation on the Social Value Fund Proposal was undertaken with officers from Children and Families, its Director via CLT, and its Executive Member via Cabinet Clearance. No consultation was undertaken with the Lord Mayors Office. The majority of the organisations

with which the Council contracts currently make no contribution to existing charities or to social value outcomes. This initiative seeks to ensure that we meet our obligation to deliver social value through all of our contracts in a way which is simple to administer and it enables organisations to discharge their duties without a heavy overhead. The initiative is designed to deliver additional funds, rather than displace existing donations nor does it preclude allocating any funds raised to the Council's existing charitable efforts.

Q22 Councillor M Dobson – Does the Leader of the Council agree with me that the Council's levelling up proposals for Elmet and Rothwell are unambitious, do not take advantage of the Government's offer and have missed a golden opportunity for significant investment in areas such as Garforth, Swillington and Great & Little Preston?

A Leader of Council

Whilst we welcome the opportunity for investment in the city through Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund, as with Round 1 Local Authorities had very little advance notice of what the government offer would be and a very short amount of time in which to develop bids. We are also advised that it is unlikely there will be a Round 3 of the fund and therefore have chosen to bid for funds across the 6 constituencies that have yet to benefit significantly from the government's levelling up investments, having already secured a total of £44.3m from LUF Rd 1 for the Connecting West Leeds project and the Morley Town Deal. The government requires 'shovel ready' proposals that will make visible impacts with clear economic benefits – in some parts of the city to meet this requirement we have been able to bring forward projects that have had long-standing commitment, with a significant level of feasibility and planning work already undertaken.

In Elmet and Rothwell we have no such 'shovel ready' projects. The MP and members from across the constituency have put forward a range of proposals including replacement leisure centres, new community hubs and the reopening of Methley Station. These are all proposals that I would support in principle should we have received unrestricted funding but they simply could not be developed as bids to the detail required in the time available as per the government's timescales and criteria. The proposals the Council has brought forward have been developed in the time available and focus on investment in the assets of the area around the canal and river corridor, where we have control and influence through our ownership of assets and our partnerships, to ensure delivery. The Active Aire project will have very visible and tangible benefits for residents across a wide area within and beyond the constituency and offer good economic benefits, as well as creating a platform for greater investment over a longer term in the local visitor economy.

Q23 Councillor M Robinson – With some buses on strike and others struggling to maintain connectivity on some routes residents of Leeds are looking to transport alternatives to ensure they can get to work, school, doctor's appointments or the shops. Will the Executive Member commit to helping people with the cost of living and transport challenges by freezing or reducing car parking charges across the City?

A Executive Member for Environment and Housing

Our parking charges are reviewed regularly to make sure that they are appropriate given levels of demand. The Council only provides about a quarter of the parking spaces in the City and our charges are already considerably lower than the other providers. When we have applied price reductions in the past they did not have an appreciable impact on demand and



there are considerable administrative costs in administering and promoting a scheme successfully. In addition we need to be conscious of the Council's financial position and any further decision to suspend car parking charges would cause further budgetary challenges for the local authority.

Q24 Councillor S Golton – Can the Executive Member Adults and Childrens Social Care and Health Partnerships please clarify what has been progressed in procuring access to dental services for Ukrainian refugees, currently being told there is a five year waiting list for NHS registrations, since I brought the matter to her attention in May?

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

Dental provision is currently commissioned by NHS England and it remains a national and local concern. Discussions continue to be held at the regional Integrated Care System and NHS England levels in relation to dental access for everyone, and the particular issues with inclusion health groups including migrants. This is an issue that has been raised at the Leeds Migrant Health Board.

The commissioning arrangements for dental services are set nationally but do not provide an incentive for dentists to support those with additional needs/dental care. NHS England are committed to progressing this in our region, so locally there are some bespoke sessions to support migrants.

In Leeds, we have the dental hospital and they are assisting with emergency appointments for Ukrainian and other migrants including Afghan refugees residing in the city. Bevan Healthcare provision is an option for some refugees (for their registered patients not those registered with other practices). They also work with Dental care for refugees - Dentaid to try and address the gap for asylum seekers and refugees. Dentaid is provided by dental trainees.

Neither of these options are a long-term solution yet we are in a slightly better position than other cities in the region having the above resources in Leeds. These conversations are very much live and ongoing with a full commitment to providing good dental care for all, and particularly our most vulnerable communities in the city.

It should also be noted that the commissioning of dentistry will transfer from NHS England to the regional Integrated Care Systems from 1st April 2023.

Q25 Councillor M Dobson– Will the Executive Member with responsibility for children and young people comment on claims of a cover-up to mask the number of grievances submitted by social workers within the Department who claim they are unable to ensure the safeguarding of children in Leeds due to high caseloads?

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

Any claim of a cover up is entirely false and, as our recent Ofsted inspection showed, children are properly safeguarded in Leeds.

Q26 Councillor P Wadsworth – Could the Executive Member for Environment and Housing please update Council on the current performance statistics of the refuse service?



A Executive Member for Environment and Housing

Despite the continued pressures on the service and increase in waste presented since the COVID-19 pandemic started, the cumulative end of year 2021/22 average for bins successfully collected on their scheduled day was 99.87%. This is a 0.03% decrease when compared to the cumulative end of year position for 2020/21, which was 99.90%.

As similar pressures on the service continue in the 2022/23 financial year, the cumulative year to date position (to week 16) for 2022/23 of bins collected on their scheduled date is 99.88%. This is a slight improvement on last year's equivalent cumulative year to date position of 99.85%.

The data provided is based on the number of occasions that bins were reported to the Council online or via the contact centre that were not emptied on their scheduled day of collection. Our policy and service commitment is we will do all we can to return to complete any late collections within 48 hours and in the vast majority of cases that is achieved. However, the data now shows ALL reports of a missed bin and so includes those bins not collected on the scheduled day but still emptied within the 48 hours recovery time.

Q27 Councillor S Golton – Given that the Council has a policy to encourage people to leave their car at home, and many are choosing to do so thanks to rising fuel costs, can the Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate clarify what the Council is planning to do to create more parking capacity on residential streets to avoid the phenomenon of pavement parking and it's negative consequences for the elderly, disabled and toddlers?

A Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

The function of a highway is for the passage and repassage of vehicles and parking is only permitted on street if it's safe to do so and the parking does not physically obstruct the passage of other vehicles. Due to the historical road layout of many of the streets within Leeds, it is often extremely difficult to create any additional parking spaces. In some housing estates, other services, subject to funding availability, have converted available areas to meet increasing parking demands but the scale of the problem is significant and therefore costly to address. There is also the environmental concern about converting green spaces to parking areas and whether this is a long term sustainable solution.

Through the Transport Strategy, the aim is to start to remove the reliance of private cars and encourage walking, cycling, use of public transport and alternative car ownership models such as car clubs, with the ambition, over time, that parking demand in these streets will decline. Effective parking management within residential areas is seen as key in reducing the car dependency across the city.

Q28 Councillor M Robinson – Could the Executive Member update Council on the progress made to deliver a mass transit system in the region and when residents can expect to be using this new service?

A Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

West Yorkshire Combined Authority is the lead promoter of the Mass Transit scheme and as such ultimate responsibility for delivery lies with them.

We are aware WYCA has appointed consultants to develop a series of routes through to Outline Business Case and an Interim Director for Mass Transit Programme (Kevin Murray) is



in place. Funding to the value of £200m has been awarded via CRSTS for initial development work and there is a stated ambition to have the first line operational in the next Mayoral term of office.

The Highways and Transportation Service has identified a team to support WYCA and is keen to support, in its role as Highway Authority.

Q29 Councillor S Golton – Can the Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate please confirm that she would be happy to see installed on-street electric vehicle charging if this could be achieved at no cost to the Council?

A Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

In February an electric vehicle charging strategy and action plan was taken to executive board for approval as part of the annual climate emergency update. The link to the document is here:

[Microsoft Word - Appendix 2- Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy and Action Plan.docx \(leeds.gov.uk\)](#)

The council has committed to facilitate the development of on-street charging hub facilities to widen access to EV charging. This would be in appropriate locations that facilitate and support high utilisation, shared use of charging facilities in public bays, rather than directly located outside domestic properties.

Installation of on-street charging has to be balanced against the potential adverse impact on those walking and cycling and as a Council we need to ensure that any installations do not create additional barriers for those with mobility issues.

The Council is working to ensure that we attract investment from the private sector, and recent grant opportunities are in fact predicated on finding private match funding. Leeds has previously maximised private investment to enhance budgets when a grant has been made available for charge points to ensure that as many charge points are installed as possible with that additional investment and that they are dispersed across the city rather than concentrated in the areas that would provide the greatest financial return, this has been the case with the work with WYCA and Equans on a rapid charge network.

Q30 Councillor P Wadsworth – Would the Leader of Council confirm the average percentage increase in charges for Council services in 2022/23?

A Leader of Council

The Council's budget assumes a 3% increase in fees and charges in 2022/23 where this can be borne by the market.

Q31 Councillor S Golton – Can the Executive Member for Adults and Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships explain why recent Government funding to support local authorities and social care providers to maintain safe staffing levels has resulted in a £500 payment to care staff in Wakefield, but only £260 being paid out to directly employed Leeds staff, and nothing to those not directly employed?

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



In answering the query I think it is key to first clarify that the payment of £260 was payable to **all** registered care staff in Leeds irrespective of their employer. It was for all care staff -those directly employed by LCC and those employed by commissioned providers.

Background:

The council received £6.3m of the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund; this was received in two tranches, Round 1 £2.2m and Round 2 £4.1m.

The funding was designed to:

- support providers to maintain the provision of safe care and bolstering capacity within providers to deliver more hours of care
- support timely and safe discharge from hospital to where ongoing care and support is needed
- support providers to prevent admission to hospital
- enable timely new care provision in the community
- support and boost retention of staff within social care

In explaining the different approaches by Wakefield and Leeds it is key to note these wider target areas that the funding was trying to address.

Our actions:

In Leeds we looked at that wider ask and allocated funding as follows:

- £2.5m to the independent sector to bring forward the National Living Wage increase from April '22 to December '21
- £1.0m to the independent sector for them to determine their own recruitment and retention activities (but within the constraints of the grant conditions)
- £0.1m to provide temporary social work to support hospital discharge
- £0.1m to support recruitment initiatives led by the Council and partners

It was determined that the residual sum of £2.6m, should be allocated to registered care staff (per Government data) within the city. This was widened to include ancillary staff and equated to £260 per person.

For completeness it should be noted that commissioned providers were required to claim the funding. £0.9m of this sum was **not** claimed by the independent sector and as the spend was time limited this was used to meet some of the additional inhouse staffing costs incurred through this process to facilitate hospital discharge e.g. within social work and Equipment Services

Q32 Councillor M Robinson – Does the Leader of Council agree with The Rt Hon. Sir Keir Starmer, PC, KCB, QC, MP, who said on 9 March 2022, that the United Kingdom needs to improve its long-term energy security, and this starts with supporting new nuclear?

A Leader of Council

On 9th March at Prime Ministers Questions The Rt Hon. Sir Keir Starmer, PC, KCB, QC, MP made the point that energy price inflation is contributing to the cost of living crisis and is a result of Conservative government policies that have made us more dependent on Russian



gas. If Cllr Robinson supports new nuclear and has a site in Harewood ward in mind he should pass it on to the relevant government department.

Q33 Councillor C Campbell – Could the Executive Member inform Council why it is not possible to collect brown bins from Burras Avenue in Otley but is possible to collect black ones.

A Executive Member for Environment and Housing

The safe collection of bins at this street is currently being investigated by the service following advice from Health and Safety Officers. The street is an unadopted, private road and its deteriorating condition presents safety concerns for staff having to wheel bins over uneven surfaces. We are working with crews and health and safety advisor to decide what the longer term position will be regarding collections at this location and are in the meantime making sure we meet our statutory requirement to collect the black and green bin waste.

Q34 Councillor M Robinson – Will the Executive Member please update Council on the number of instances where an animal has become trapped inside the bird protection netting on Council buildings, and will they commit to removing such devices as Leeds University has done?

A Executive Member for Environment and Housing

We do not have any recorded instances of animals being trapped within netting on buildings within our property management systems.

Netting is only used on larger buildings e.g. Leeds Civic Hall, Leeds Town Hall, Municipal Buildings and Morley Town Hall. It has been used to prevent the damage that bird faeces can have on the fabric of the buildings, which leads to structural damage and expensive repairs.

Following the University's initiative being brought to our attention, staff in Corporate Property Management have made contact with them. We will work with the University to share good practice and review our methods in the light of an assessment of the effectiveness of their approach, seeking to continue to protect our buildings from damage, whilst minimising any impact on the environment.

Q35 Councillor C Campbell – Could the Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles inform Council when the public toilets at Yeadon Tarn will reopen?

A Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles

National government guidance was issued during the Coronavirus pandemic entitled 'Safer Public Places - Managing Public Outdoor Settings'. This guidance required enhanced cleaning arrangements for which there was no identified resource to carry this out and therefore the decision was taken to close the public toilets at Yeadon Tarn. This guidance was withdrawn in April 2022 following which the toilets have been reopened.

Q36 Councillor S Firth – In response to my previous council question on 14th July 2021, "Can the Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles confirm the number of unauthorised encampments per ward and the spending per ward during the financial year,



2020/2021, for Gypsy & Traveller-related services in each of the 33 council wards of Leeds?”, the written response stated, “We will be happy to provide this information and are now in the process of gathering this however in order to provide a full response more time is needed to collate.” When will the full response be received and, in addition, can I ask for the same information for 2021/2022?

A Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles

I have attached the information requested for 2020/21 as requested, my sincere apologies for the delay which was caused by a breakdown in communication between officers. In order to obtain costs for 2021/22 again we will be happy to provide this information and are in the process of gathering this and again this will take some more time to provide a full response.



2020/21 Unauthorised Traveller Encampment Costs by Ward

Ward	Number of Encampments	Costs Incurred
Adel and Wharfedale	0	0
Alwoodley	0	0
Ardley and Robin Hood	0	0
Armley	2	£2,038.80
Beeston and Holbeck	8	£23,017.65
Bramley and Stanningley	0	0
Burmantofts and Richmond Hill	6	£18,673.55
Calverley and Farsley	0	0
Chapel Allerton	1	0
Cross Gates and Whinmoor	4	£3,541
Farnley and Wortley	0	0
Garforth and Swillington	1	£3,000
Gipton and Harehills	5	£20,055.05
Guiseley and Rawdon	0	0
Harewood	1	0
Headingley and Hyde Park	1	£2,641
Horsforth	0	0
Hunslet and Riverside	14	£25,150.05
Killingbeck and Seacroft	3	£11,026.32
Kippax and Methley	1	£878.5
Kirkstall	5	£25,278.50
Little London and Woodhouse	6	£23,686.49
Middleton Park	7	£15,898.25
Moortown	0	0
Morley North	0	0
Morley South	0	0
Otley and Yeadon	2	£22,526.06
Pudsey	0	0
Rothwell	3	£518
Roundhay	1	0
Temple Newsam	8	£35,166.50
Weetwood	1	£2,098.35
Wetherby	0	0
Totals	80	£235,194.87

Q37 Councillor R Stephenson – Can the Executive Member for Adult and Children’s Social Care and Health Partnerships explain why Leeds is not currently among the local authorities signed up to the National Youth Advocacy Service’s ‘My Things Matter’ pledge?

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



Thank you for making me aware of this campaign. We are very much in support of signing up as a local authority to the “My Things Matter” pledge.

The pledge aligns with our promise to looked after children and young people in Leeds and we worked with Have A Voice (HAV) council on the issue of belongings and placement moves in 2016 which led to a presentation at the deputy directors meeting and the development of a placement move leaflet.

Prior to signing up to the pledge we will ask the Have A Voice council and Care Leavers council if they are in support and then take this to the Corporate Parenting Operational group and then Corporate Parenting Board before contacting the National Youth Advocacy Service to commit to the pledge.

In response to each of the promises set out in the pledge, Leeds children’s services has the following in place:

1. Help you to keep your most precious belongings with you safely during your move and promise they will not be moved in binbags

There is a clear expectation for social workers to provide all children and young people with luggage and keep their personal belongings. If a child has lots of belongings they may need to use additional bags /storage containers, but all children and young people should have their own luggage. We recognise that bin bags are not appropriate and always want to avoid them being used.

2. Provide written guidance for you and anyone helping you to move, which we will publish on the website

The guidance can be found here:

[3.2.1 Placements in Foster Care \(proceduresonline.com\)](#)

“In all cases, the child should be accompanied to the placement by the social worker and helped to settle in. Suitable luggage should be used and a child's belongings should never be transported in bin-bags or other inappropriate containers.”

This is mirrored in the other parts of our procedures for residential placement moves and covered in our practice guidance notes.

The Have A Voice council also worked with our placements team to develop guidance on placement moves and a plan for children and young people to complete to ensure that they understand what will happen when they move home and they can share what is important to them when they move. [Placement move leaflet.pdf \(proceduresonline.com\)](#). This is an area we could further develop to provide written guidance for children and young people specifically about their belongings

3. Never move or throw away your belongings without your consent and will always respect your personal property

Staff and carers understand the importance of children and young people’s personal belongings. We would never knowingly dispose of children’s items without their agreement and do provide storage where appropriate. Over time young people gather more belongings our care leavers service have storage lockers for care leavers property.

4. Support you to make a complaint if any of your belongings have been lost or damaged during your move



If any belongings are lost or damaged we would support the child or young person and help replace them. We have not had any complaints through formal complaint process / tell us we care about personal belongings but all looked children and young people are advised by their social worker /PA how they can make a complaint and email/ phone / online form for tell us we care (the promise) if they feel one of the promises has not been met and they receive a response within 48 hours.

5. Communicate with you about your move and ask how your move went

Social workers and PAs will communicate with children and young people throughout the process of a move and check they understand what is happening and how the move went. We listen to what children and young people tell us. We don't want children and young people to move at short notice / unexpected but sometimes moves have to happen with not as much notice as we would like. The majority of children are in stable placements and haven't moved for at least 2 and half years – many have been in the same placements for much longer. Where young people do need to move, their social workers and PA's will always discuss why with them and reflect with them afterwards about the process of moving.

If we get agreement to sign up to the pledge we will then work with Independent Reviewing Officers to check if these questions are included as part of the their reviews and ensure children's rights (commissioned advocacy service) are aware of Leeds City Council signing up to and committing to the pledge. The Head of Looked After Children Young People will also work with staff teams and Have A Voice and Care Leavers council to develop mechanisms to enable to check back with children and young people that all aspects of this pledge are being met.

Q38 Councillor S Firth– Local businesses in Thorner have reported how their day-to-day trading is being impacted by the extended delays and uncertainty surrounding the opening date for the new East Leeds Orbital Road (ELOR). Will the Executive Member for Infrastructure & Climate provide clarity on the intended opening date and support those businesses affected in the Harewood Ward?

A Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

The East Leeds Orbital scheme is not delayed. The Scheme is ahead of the original project timetable which showed November this year being the anticipated opening date.

The current programme for opening the route to public use, including cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians as well as all motorised vehicles, is the middle of August 2022, which is ahead of the original programme. It is worth noting that, given the national challenge to infrastructure posed by this week's temperatures, some operations at ELOR have been briefly postponed until next week.

At this stage It is not anticipated that this short delay will impact the opening date, which will afford all much greater access for every business in North East Leeds than ever before.

The contractual completion date for the project remains November 2022. Works will continue on site after the opening of the road; these works may require temporary traffic management and possibly road closures.

Q39 Councillor S Firth – Shadwell residents have expressed concerns about why the most recent unauthorised traveller encampment on Red Hall Playing Fields was permitted to remain for two weeks. Can the Executive Member clarify why this was the case, and did the



council seek to utilise or request West Yorkshire Police to use the new powers granted to them in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022?

A Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles

The encampment at Red Hall Playing Fields was visited by Travellers Services on 27th June to conduct our welfare assessments in line with government guidance. The decision was made to evict and legal services were instructed. There was some delay in the process in this instance as legal services had some difficulty obtaining the title deeds for the land. The group remained for 12 days and left on 8th July prior to the court hearing. During the 12 days the site was monitored regularly by Travellers Services, Police, LASBT and the environmental team. The new police powers under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 are a power that the police can use without request from the Local Authority. During the length of the encampment the police monitor their log which is set up and our service also monitors call from local residents. There were a low level of calls to service which did not meet the threshold for immediate police intervention.

Q40 Councillor S Firth – Will the Executive Member for Infrastructure & Climate confirm the overall budget and number of the ‘Pollinator Friendly Area’ and ‘Relaxed Mowing Area’ signs that are currently being installed across Leeds?

A Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles

There are a total of 186 ‘relaxed mowing’ signs, 187 ‘pollinator friendly’ signs and 57 ‘Leeds needs trees’ signs that have already been installed or planned for installation over the summer. The ‘relaxed mowing’ signs are located at suitable points along the highway primary network in areas where we have introduced relaxed mowing regimes, examples include the Leeds outer ring road, Dewsbury Road and the A63 Selby Road. The ‘pollinator friendly’ signs are going into locations where we have changed annual bedding displays to wildflower areas such as many of the roundabouts across the city. The ‘Leeds needs trees’ signs are going into areas where tree planting has occurred in the street scene environment.

The initial cost of the information panel is £150 funded from existing revenue budgets; however, these signs provide sponsorship opportunity for local businesses to get involved with supporting action for climate change and biodiversity. These partners provide ongoing revenue as part of a sponsorship agreement which will offset the initial cost and contribute to the parks service budget thus funding further climate change mitigation.

This work is in response to the declared climate emergency and the results of the Big Leeds Climate Conversation in December 2019 with ‘creating more wildlife-friendly spaces in our parks, verges and flower beds that better support wildlife and pollinating insects’ overwhelmingly the most popular proposal of the 11 offered. The initiatives detailed above provide significant climate and biodiversity benefits to those sites than the previous landscape regimes.

Q41 Councillor S Firth – Elected Members on the Outer North East Community Committee were officially consulted on “A new City Plan for Leeds” on 13th September 2021. Despite our recommendation, could the Leader of Council explain why Parish and Town Councils have not been included in the engagement process?

A Leader of Council



At its meeting in September 2021 the Outer North East Community Committee discussed the forthcoming Best City Ambition and recommended that town and parish councils in the area also be consulted. As such, officers followed up and attended the Outer North East Town and Parish Council Forum on 28 October 2021. The forum made a series of valuable contributions which influences the content of the Best City Ambition, including around:

- Access to good quality public services
- Ensuring lower income communities in typically more affluent parts of the city are not forgotten or left behind
- Importance of focusing on education and skills
- Transport and connectivity challenges which make reducing car dependency – part of the Ambition - more difficult

Due to the large number of town and parish councils across the whole of Leeds and the limited amount of staff resource and capacity available, it was not possible to pro-actively schedule items on every council agenda. However, information about the Best City Ambition consultation was widely shared and all requests for consultation / discussion events, workshops or presentations were responded to positively and undertaken. This applies to requests received from community committees and town and parish councils, as well as other local citizen forums, third sector organisations or forums, business groups and in some cases individual citizens.

Q42 Councillor S Firth – Can the Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education work with Leeds 2023 to directly engage our Parish and Town Councils to ensure we can use their local knowledge and networks to deliver a successful events programme and legacy for our entire city?

A Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

As Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education I have been working with LEEDS 2023 to develop an information pack which will shortly be shared with all elected members, Parish and Town Councils to ensure that they are fully briefed on LEEDS 2023. This will include information about how Councillors can get involved and key contact information.

I hope that the information packs are helpful and will be happy to pick up any queries that Parish and Town Councils may raise to ensure they are fully engaged and able to contribute.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Tomkinson
Deputy Head of Democratic Services



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