

**Unanswered Questions Letter - Full Council
Meeting - 15 November 2023**

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Date: 27th November 2023

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL MEETING – 15th NOVEMBER 2023

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 7 to 66 were unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

Q7 Councillor C Campbell – Given the former Civic Centre in Otley seems to be being allowed to fall into disrepair by the owner and as a result the Council have been obliged to do works to make the building safe could the Executive Member inform Council,

What costs the Council have incurred to make the building safe?

What steps the Council have/are taking to recover these costs?

A Executive Member for Resources

With respect to direct costs incurred to make the building safe, there has only been sundry expenditure incurred for the removal of glass and boarding up with all the major costs, including road closures and scaffolding etc, being paid by the owners of the building.

Civic Centre, Cross Green, Otley, LS21 1HD

Our Case Ref 22/140/DS 1st June 2023

Immediate removal of the glazing to the three windows to first floor level about to fall into Garnett Street, and board them up. Scaffolding Required for access. **£1,662.17**

Our Case Ref 22/140/DS 3rd August 2023



Remove broken high level glazing about to fall to front and western side. Highways van with hydraulic platform used. **£451.90**

Giving a total cost of £2,114.07

The Council will be recovering these costs and have instigated the process.

Q8 Councillor E Thomson – Please can the Executive Member update Council on Leeds' partnership with Kharkiv?

A Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

Council Members will recall that we considered a request from Kharkiv on the 20th July 2022, following a meeting between myself and the first Deputy Mayor of Kharkiv, to develop a comprehensive cooperation between our cities in spheres of common interest. Indeed, following the Council's resolution to request officers to explore closer ties of friendship confirming the City's commitment to show support and solidarity with Ukraine, I am pleased to say that positive progress has been made. The Lord Mayor of Leeds will sign the Friendship Oath in the presence of the Mayor of Kharkiv City Council on 2nd December 2023 in the city of Prague.

Executive Board have also approved the start of negotiations with the city of Kharkiv on terms of a Friendship Agreement with a May 2024 deadline. The detail of any Friendship Agreement will be subject to securing external funds to support partnership activity.

The trip to Prague is being fully funded by the British Embassy in Prague to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of our partnership with Brno.

Please refer to the Executive Board report (published on 14 November 2023) for more details.

Q9 Councillor R Finnigan – Can the Leader of the Council confirm the total figure from the 85% share of the CIL payments paid or to be paid to Leeds City Council from the Laneside Farm development off Victoria Road in Churwell near Morley?

A Executive Member for Resources

85% of the total CIL for this scheme is **£1,473,500.86**. Of this £736,750.44 (50%) has been received so far.

Q10 Councillor J Heselwood – Please can the Executive Member for Housing provide an update on affordable housing growth in the city?

A Executive Member for Housing

In the last five years just over 2,800 new affordable homes have been completed in the city, through the Council's own direct development and acquisitions, the activities of Registered Providers and third sector partners and through the implementation of planning policy provision of affordable homes through s106 agreements. 14.5% of all new homes delivered in that period were of an affordable tenure, higher than the average for all Core Cities, with only Birmingham delivering more in the same period. In 2022/23 633 new affordable homes were completed, which is a 10 year high for the city. Our projections suggest continued strong



growth, with around 1,000 new affordable homes expected to be delivered by the end of the current financial year and around 875 for the year after, 2024/25. The Council is continuing to work proactively with partners across the housing sector to enable and support this high level of growth and delivery.

For its own part, the Council recently completed its 300th newly built council home since 2020 and has also acquired 268 homes, the majority of which are ex-right to buy properties, in that time as part of its contribution to new affordable housing in the city. We recently completed an extra care housing scheme to meet the needs of residents requiring on-site care and support along with completing 80 other homes at Middleton and have 905 homes in development, completed or acquired with a total projected deliver of over 1,200 homes in the next few years.

Q11 Councillor A Lamb – Given the 6-month pilot scheme on hiding public comments on the planning portal is almost up, has the Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure had enough time to make up the success criteria for the pilot scheme, or is more time required?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The impact of the pilot is described through several lenses: impact on citizen participation in the planning process, impact on financial matters, impact on organisational growth and capacity and finally impact on compliance with legislation.⁴²

Q12 Councillor C Campbell – Can the Executive Member give Council an actual start date for the refurbishment works on Mercury Row, Otley.

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

As communicated to local ward members in an email on 18th October, the works on Mercury Row will now start on Wednesday 3rd January.

We had originally envisaged starting the works in September.

Following the checking of the contractor's programme, method of working, road closures, working hours and cost breakdown for the scheme, however, a revised date in mid-November was suggested by the contractor. Bearing in mind the expected duration of the works, being circa 8 weeks, and to avoid disruption to the adjacent businesses/premises on the lead up to the important Christmas trading period, a recommendation was made to not start the works until the New Year.

Q13 Councillor A Scopes – Please can the Executive Member provide an update on the challenges around the provision of residential care placements for children in Leeds?

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

As Corporate Parents, this issue is of the utmost importance to us all. We are facing huge pressure in Leeds, like all local authorities, due to the rise in the number of children entering care.

Whilst local authority budgets have endured sustained cuts, the provision of additional capacity to care for these most vulnerable children has fallen to the private sector.



Private children's homes are more expensive. There is no link to suggest that higher cost brings higher quality or better meets children's needs, and these placements often result in children having to be placed away from Leeds. This causes additional challenges in children remaining connected with their families and the services that know them well. Children and young people can struggle with this when they return to Leeds.

There have been increasing warnings from the sector around profiteering by private children's residential providers. This provision has been increasingly concentrated amongst smaller numbers of providers, and often they have private equity backing. The Competition and Market's Authority has found that the placements market is 'dysfunctional', whilst the landmark Independent Review of Children's Social Care described the market as 'broken.'

We are expanding our own residential provision to address this, with eight new small group living children's homes that will provide care on a family scale. Each home will have two children resident and be supported by two members of staff unless urgent issues require higher staffing levels.

This strategy will reduce our exposure to the private sector market. Our own places keep children here in Leeds, are significantly cheaper to run, and crucially, can stick with children through longer periods of difficult behaviour, offering greater placement stability than our private sector competitors.

Our duty is to safeguard the future and potential of every child, ensuring they benefit from a caring, supportive, and nurturing environment. We continue to do what we can in Leeds.

Q14 Councillor W Dixon – QUESTION WITHDRAWN

Q15 Councillor P Wray– Please can the Executive Member provide an update on the Waste Carriers Accreditation Scheme?

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

As part of its strategy to reduce flytipping, the Council will shortly be launching an innovative scheme to make it easier for Leeds residents to find a local waste clearance company that has the required licences and is disposing of waste legally.

Although local residents have a duty of care to ensure any waste they pay for removing is done so by a legally registered waste carrier and that their waste has been responsibly disposed of, many are not aware of this requirement. This has contributed to social media becoming a marketplace for unregistered waste carriers finding work and potentially flytipping to keep their disposal costs low and profit margins high.

We want to support residents by providing access to a list of locally accredited waste carriers through an interactive and informative website. This will help to shrink the current unregulated market place on social media for 'man-with-a-van' operations, promote resident's duty of care to dispose of their waste legally and make it easier to do the right thing.

The Leeds Accredited Waste Carrier Scheme is designed to provide reassurance to the public whilst providing waste removal organisations with the benefits of promotion as a local authority trusted provider. The accreditation involves suitability checks including whether the applicants are Environment Agency registered and have outstanding fines or prosecutions. Waste transfer notes will be spot-checked and compliance visits made by enforcement staff to ensure the waste is being legally and responsibly disposed of by the waste carrier.



We are currently working to waste carriers to explain the benefits to them in joining the scheme and to build up the database of accredited companies prior to a citywide launch. Accredited waste removal companies will be able to advertise with the scheme's distinctive kitemark and will be provided with an "I'm Accredited" pack with kitemark logo stickers for vehicles, access to regulatory advice and an enhanced digital promotion via a series of campaigns throughout the year.

When launched, residents will be able to use the brilliant and easy to use online Leeds Directory to search for an accredited local waste removal company; safe in the knowledge that Leeds City Council will be making sure that the waste is being legally and responsibly disposed of and not flytipped.

We will be announcing the launch date of the scheme shortly.

Q16 Councillor C Anderson – Will the Executive Member responsible for the changes to the road system in Leeds City Centre please apologise to all the residents who have been fined for going into a bus gate or bus lane given that she is the one that has caused absolute chaos and mayhem not to mention stress and worry because the signs are not at all clear?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The changes in the City Centre over the last 5-10 years are a consequence of the feedback received from the City Conferences in 2008 and 2010 and subsequent public consultations, most notably the city-wide Transport Conversation in 2016 and those associated with the development of the latest Transport Strategy in 2021. Feedback has been consistent throughout in terms of the need to promote public transport, walking, cycling and improving the environment and public realm. Added to this, the Council has had to take action to improve air quality, particularly in areas that exceeded the legal limit such as Neville Street.

There have been extensive communications over the proposals and changes in recent years and the restrictions are clearly signed; in many instances, multiple additional signs have been deployed. Further information and maps are available online.

The network of city centre bus gates and bus lanes aims to improve bus journey time reliability and speed up bus journeys by reducing or removing general traffic levels from bus routes. On parts of the network that are not still affected by construction work, the new bus gates are helping to achieve this outcome. This helps to make buses a more attractive and viable mode of transport for Leeds residents and visitors, which in turn, helps the Council to deliver on its commitments to tackling the climate emergency, achieving inclusive growth and promoting health and wellbeing. The introduction of bus gates in the city centre has enabled the closure of City Square to general traffic. In-turn, this has allowed the creation of a large public pedestrianised space, which helps to make Leeds a more attractive place to live, work and visit. Similarly, bus gates on the southern, eastern and northern sides of the city centre core helped to enable the creation of new public realm areas at New Briggate, Cookridge Street and the Corn Exchange, as well as wider footways and more pedestrian-friendly junctions.

Between 2016 and 2021, the council consulted extensively on the schemes that delivered the bus gates and the strategies that underpinned those schemes. The public and stakeholders told us that they wanted to see faster and more reliable bus services. They also told us they supported reduced levels of general traffic in the city centre. When the Council consulted on specific scheme proposals, the bus gates and bus lanes were included on the plans. Certain



key bus gates, such as the City Square bus gate, featured prominently in the consultation efforts. This consultation comprised both in-person events and online forms. All of these consultations indicated there was support for the proposed bus gates and bus lanes.

During and after the delivery of the schemes that delivered the bus gates, the Council has delivered a major public communications campaign to inform road users about the new bus gate. This has taken the form of press releases, social media posts, letters delivered to local residents and businesses and face-to-face meetings with stakeholders. The Council recognises that recent schemes have brought about a major change to the city centre highway network and there will inevitably be a period of adjustment. For this reason, warning notices were issued to road users for a period of time after the introduction of new bus gates, prior to the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices. A plan illustrating the location of the bus gates and bus lanes, which shows how road users can access key destinations without passing through the bus gates, has been prepared and disseminated through various media. A second plan has been prepared setting out how road users can access blue badge parking areas.

All existing bus gates in the city centre have been provided with clear signage (a) on the approaches to the bus gates and (b) at the point of restriction. This signage advises road users of the nature of the restriction and the routes that can be taken to avoid the restriction. For every bus gate, a signed “escape route” has been provided at the point of restriction, so that road users are not forced to pass through the bus gate. An “escape route” is an unrestricted road that road users can use to avoid passing through the bus gate. Road users therefore always have an option to avoid passing through the bus gate. Furthermore, for certain major bus gates (such as City Square and East Parade) additional advisory signage has been provided around the city at key decision points on the network, advising road users that these routes are not open to through traffic.

Although digital navigation platforms such as Waze and Google Maps are only tools and cannot be relied upon exclusively, to our knowledge the most commonly utilised platforms accurately route road users away from the new bus gates. Since the closure of City Square, the Council has deployed a large number of temporary direction and information signs to supplement the permanent signage changes, which direct traffic away from City Square and East Parade.

Q17 Councillor C Campbell – Despite numerous e-mails to officers, the Executive member along with questions in Council all of which produced assurances to residents, Cleansing are still failing to undertake a regular bin collection on Rufford Crescent in Yeadon.

Officers have informed members that they are aware of the reason for this failure but seem unable or unwilling to address the issue.

In the past the Executive Member has assured Council that action would be taken, can he now inform Council when this will happen?

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

The issue of collection problems on Rufford Close was raised at Council in September. It was reported that the black and green bin collections have been moved to the route of smaller sized wagon and work is ongoing to also move the brown bin collections to a smaller sized wagon at this location. The work was completed in October 2023 to move the garden waste collections on Rufford Close to a smaller non-standard collection vehicle.



The service is currently finalising the redesign to all collection routes across the city and plans to implement the changes in early 2024.

Ward Members have been fully involved in the consultation relating to the above route review, including the opportunity to feed in to where a smaller wagon may help.

As part of that route review, due to continued accessibility problems, it is proposed to move streets to the north side of Rufford Avenue (Rufford Close, Ridge, Bank and Crescent) to the same, smaller sized vehicle for black and green bin collections.

Q18 Councillor D Jenkins – Please can the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Active Lifestyles give an update on the work of Active Leeds?

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

Here is a summary of some of the brilliant work our Active Leeds team have been up to recently:

Membership Numbers:

Active Leeds Membership numbers continue to do well with 2,244 new members in September. This has positively impacted membership growth by achieving 650 net gain, bringing the city wide club membership to an amazing 27,393 – the highest Active Leeds membership for over a decade.

Some highlights of this include:

- The centre with the highest net gain goes to Morley who have produced some phenomenal numbers with 353 new joiners to achieve a 131 net gain. The team are pushing towards the 4,000 member mark and are driven to achieve this. The investment in the gym as well as the group has had an instant impact on club life – the online health and fitness offer.
- a fantastic atmosphere at Armley with the team and customers delighted with the refurbished gym. Bringing the very best products and services to the local community. The team have a centre to be proud of and are making the most of demonstrating what is on offer. Armley hit some huge numbers in September, over 200 new joiners achieved, resulting in a net gain of 99, bringing them to 2,293 as well as achieving a below 5% attrition rate.
- Wetherby achieved a net gain of 84. Since the investment in July 2023 there has been a net gain of 243 members bringing the numbers to 1,012 and attrition rate of below 5% which is excellent.
- Aireborough is now at 2,800 members which is superb for the size of gym. Achieved 73 net gain in September.
- Holt Park moving back towards the 3,000 member mark, achieving net gain of 67.

Swim Classes

All swim classes are now at 94% capacity – which whilst a success, it is acknowledged that there is also a challenge around managing bookings and progression into the next development state. The team are working hard to address this.



Facilities

5 Gym refurbishments have been completed this quarter; with 3 full refurbishments across Wetherby, Armley and Morley Leisure Centres; and new functional gym spaces created at Rothwell and Holt Park Active. These investments ensure we continue to give customers access to the very best cardio, strength, and functional equipment to really supercharge customer experience and stay ahead of the game!

George Street Hotel Development – Planning application submitted for a new gym set within the proposed hotel at Kirkgate Market. Due for determination post-Christmas.

Vision for Leisure

We are bringing forward a new Vision for Wellbeing Strategy to identify a programme of Wellbeing Centre improvements to Executive Board that will be delivered through grant funding, capital programme funding and invest to save business cases.

Health and Fitness Memberships now stand at 20% higher than pre covid, and likewise 20% increase or an extra 2,000 children on swimming lessons than pre covid.

Activity Levels:

Activity levels are continuing to recover following the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Our latest Active Lives Adult Survey report shows that Leeds inactivity rate has significantly fallen. The Inactive rate has fallen from Nov 2019 to Nov 2020 (25.6%) to 24.3% for the period Nov 2021 to Nov 2022. This inactivity rate is lower than the National (25.8%), regional (27.2%) and core cities (25%) average. Showing Leeds is leading the way in activity levels.

Other work of note:

Children and Young People: 2 key workstreams at the moment are:

- Young Minds Get Active – priority work focusing on young people and mental health. The ‘Make your move’ campaign co-designed with young people producing 20 videos showcasing how movement and activity has a positive effect on their mental health.
 - Play Sufficiency is an ongoing process of research and action to assess, improve and protect children’s opportunities for play. The play sufficiency assessment allows an understanding of the city-wide landscape for play, with a focus on the most deprived communities.
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- **Ageing Well:** Strength & balance campaign focusing on strength for people aged 40 years upwards and/or living with frailty or a long-term condition being delivered in centres and in homes.
 - **Get Set Leeds Local:** Working currently in four of the priority localities Seacroft, New Wortley and Beeston and Holbeck developing co-production networks and an asset-based approach – funding has been extended by Sport England for a further 2 years to carry on the work and expanding in to Gipton and Harehills ward.
 - **Department for Transport Active Travel Social Prescribing Project:** Active Travel Social Prescribing project in the Burmantofts, Harehills and Richmond Hill (Primary Care Network) area of the city. £1.3m of Department for Transport funding secured and project underway to increase access to walking, cycling networks and provide GP referrals.



- **Leeds Encouraging Activity in People:** Pilot launched with referrals outstripping the capacity of the team. Other referral health programme also seeing larger volumes with the heart and lung programme receiving 143 referrals this quarter from LCH cardiac, 68 in from LCH respiratory, and 8 from other sources.

Q19 Councillor P Stables – What provision is being made for EV charging for those households with no off-street parking? There currently appears to be no policy, advice or help for them.

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

There is the EV infrastructure charging strategy as a policy statement that details the role of LCC in facilitating EV charging published as part of our annual climate emergency report to executive board in January 2022

[Climate Emergency Report Appendix 2 310122.pdf \(leeds.gov.uk\)](#)

The Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy has decarbonisation as one of its central pillars, in line with the council's Climate Emergency priorities. Within the Transport Strategy there are key steps identified to deliver the changes needed in transport to meet the 2030 target, one of these is the need to encourage and lead in the uptake of zero emission vehicles in freight, public and private transport.

To ensure a smooth and effective transition there is a need for infrastructure to be in place in line with the projected increase in demand for plug-in vehicles. It is important to note that electric charging infrastructure will be delivered largely by the owners of the vehicles themselves. Most households will be able to install their own charge point, with c.70% of Leeds households having off street parking and therefore able to charge at home. Alternatively, many will be able to charge at their place or work, with grants available from government to support the cost of such charging having been available for some time.

It is also important to note that the frequency of charging may be lower than widely assumed. A mid-market EV commonly provides a range in excess of 200miles. The typical household vehicle mileage (less than 7000 miles annually) could be provided by charging just once a week or even slightly less. Therefore, it is critical that the scale of public charging infrastructure needed is not overstated, that resource is carefully targeted to meet the needs of those who may not be able to utilise home or workplace charging, and that any infrastructure is designed to be utilised by multiple users.

We are focussed on delivering publicly available rapid charger hubs at convenient locations such as district centres and supermarkets where they can be used within part of people's normal routines. We work with leading providers in the industry and use government grants (On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) and Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI)) targeting those areas where residential off-street charging is not widely available. Currently Leeds has 13.7 rapid chargers per 100,000 people and this is above the national figure of 12.6.

We know residents with only on street parking would like to slow charge from their own electrical supply, however the logistics of this are very difficult. Cables, even with covers, cause trip hazards, there are risk and liability issues with such unregulated cables and parking is not reserved for frontages outside individual resident's properties. We are aware of



products that can be built into the footway and some are being trailed in other local authorities. We will continue to monitor these trails and press for national guidance from the Department for Transport.

Q20 Councillor B Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible for the decision to consider charging for car parking at Golden Acre Park please advise why they ignored the previous feedback last year when this was first considered and did not resolve or mitigate the issues that were raised before starting this year’s consultation?

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

The proposal last year was much broader and was never formally consulted on. Much of the informal feedback that was received was more focused on community parks than specifically on Golden Acre, which is a City Park. By consulting on an individual park at a time, it allows users to highlight issues and for us to work through those if a scheme is brought forward.

Q21 Councillor S Golton– Does Cllr Rafique consider the current vacancy factor in the Council’s Tree Management section, which means we have only 3 inspection officers for the city, is safe and sustainable given that almost 100% of 571 booked treeworks with timescales of 12 months or more remain uncompleted?

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

The authority presently has a number of vacancies across its arboriculture team. These have been released and are out for recruitment via national and trade specific recruitment sources. It is not anticipated that any work presently identified and categorised as being either category 1, 2 or 3a will be undertaken outside of agreed timescales. Work in other lower risk categories will be monitored, reviewed and undertaken as required.

Q22 Councillor E Carlisle – Parcel theft is a growing issue, and especially rife in city centre communities. Local members, officers, West Yorkshire Police, and other stakeholders are all keen on finding systemic solutions to this problem. So, would you support the proposal that any future planning applications for high-rise blocks are obliged to feature publicly-accessible automated parcel lockers?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Opportunities to install parcel lockers can be explored and setting a new policy for this will be considered as part of the Leeds Local Plan 2040

Q23 Councillor C Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible please advise how much income they expect to make from car park charges at Golden Acre?

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

Any income raised via car park charges would contribute to costs association with delivering surface improvements, bay marking, signage and ongoing maintenance. Income raised would be dependent on the level of charges and these, along with a detailed assessment of improvement works required would be considered in the light of relevant factors to inform a decision in due course.



Q24 Councillor S Golton – Can Cllr Pryor please tell us if Leeds 2023 is set to hit its target of attracting at least 70% of the Leeds population to attend at least one bespoke Leeds 2023 event during the year?

A Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

The evaluation of the Year of Culture is being undertaken by external organisations, namely the Audience Agency and the Centre for Cultural Value at the University of Leeds. It is expected that the final evaluation will be completed in August 2024 and this report will be taken to Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in autumn 2024. This committee receives regular updates on Leeds 2023 as it has responsibility for the oversight of how the grant to Leeds 2023 is used and how well the organisation is performing against the outcomes set out in the grant agreement. Up to date data at ward level can be seen on the Leeds 2023 data dashboard [Welcome – LEEDS 2023 Data](#)

Q25 Councillor E Carlisle– Hull City Council last month voted for ‘right to grow’ legislation, committing to pro-actively support residents to identify unused or underused Council land, and use it to grow food. Is Leeds going to follow suit, in partnership with the ever-expanding Incredible Edible movement and other great local groups and networks?

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

Leeds City Council is keen to explore opportunities which encourage and support residents to grow food. The ‘Sustainability and Resilience’ mission within the Leeds Food Strategy ensures the way Leeds produces, consumes, and disposes of food is fit for the future and supports our net zero ambition.

One of the objectives within this is ‘*Encourage and embrace new ways of producing, selling and serving food within local communities*’ where we are committed to promoting ‘grow your own’, community, and urban growing. Proposed local planning policies also identify the commitment to working with new developments to maximise community growing opportunities.

The Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC) welcomed Incredible Edible to their Main Committee earlier this year where they informed the committee of their work within communities throughout Leeds and the wider region. They, along with other groups, do a fantastic job working with our residents and our Biodiversity, Food and Waste CEAC Working Group will continue to explore ways in which they can further support these networks.

We will monitor developments at Hull City Council following their commitment to the ‘Right to Grow’ legislation and are open to working with a small number of community groups across Leeds to better understand, and demonstrate, what this would mean in practice before we commit to a citywide policy.

Q26 Councillor B Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible advise which estates and areas of the city are the Council planning to submit applications for in Round 2.2 of the social housing decarbonisation fund which opens in November 2023?

A Executive Member for Housing

Unfortunately, we are ineligible to apply. Government has set new criteria for SHDF 2.2, which means that any recipient of SHDF 2.1 is automatically ineligible to bid. We believe this



is an unfair policy decision and have raised this with officials but frustratingly do not expect the criteria to change.

We are instead focusing efforts on shaping SHDF 3 which is due to open for bidding in 2024 to ensure that we can create a package that better supports all homes in a community to benefit from retrofit, rather than the current approach of just funding specific tenures.

Q27 Councillor S Golton – Does the Executive Member with responsibility for housing think that paying a Housing Association £2.8 million to change 14 houses from shared ownership affordable rented properties to standard affordable rented properties represents good value for money?

A Executive Member for Housing

The redevelopment of the Sugar Hill estate in Oulton by Leeds Federated Housing Association follows 6 years of uncertainty and disruption to a long-established community of 70 households, many of whom had been resident for decades. In 2017 the previous private owner of the site made clear its intentions to demolish and rebuild the estate and in 2021 initiated a process of ‘no fault’ s21 evictions, which had a terrible impact on residents causing real risks of homelessness. We have worked closely with former residents, their supporters and advisors and with Leeds Federated to ensure their housing needs would be met and to find a way in which this community could be re-established in the re-developed site, in high quality, energy efficient new homes. The use of Commuted Sums grant to support this development and achieve the most affordable housing possible is considered to be the best value for money and appropriate way to achieve these aims. By way of comparison, the option of the Council acquiring the site and developing a scheme itself is estimated to have cost £20m to £25m and would have also exposed the Council to a significant amount of developer risk.

Like many new affordable housing schemes in the city, particularly those on previously developed land, Leeds Federated’s redevelopment of Sugar Hill has been hit by significant costs through site conditions and very high inflationary impacts in construction. Much of this cost would have been covered in a Shared Ownership development as the Housing Association would receive significant income from that part of the housing it would sell. To change tenure to affordable rent does have a significant cost implication and requires a substantial subsidy accordingly. The grant proposed will be subject to Executive Board approval on the use of Commuted Sums – the funds that we receive from planning obligations on private developments across the city, which have not delivered affordable housing directly on site and make a payment in lieu. Deploying these funds on schemes like Sugar Hill means we can get significant leverage and support far more new affordable homes than would otherwise have been secured through use of the funds in isolation.

Q28 Councillor P Stables – Given that this Council has declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and that food production accounts for a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions, and of these more than half are produced from meat and other animal products, would Council agree that we should move to serve only plant-based products for all Council meetings?

A Executive Member for Resources

As set out in the Leeds City Council Food Strategy we are committed to raising awareness of the environmental impacts of different food choices. In response to the public consultation on this strategy we found that residents supported our overall policies but felt it was important that we did not restrict the types of food people were able to choose from. We believe it is



important to reflect the public feedback received, and as a result have no plans to introduce restrictions or bans on types of food that meeting and event organisers are able to purchase. Given the significant progress that we have already made to reduce emissions from the food we serve since 2019, we are confident that this commitment to choice and ensuring that a range of diet preferences are catered for will not prevent the council from achieving its carbon reduction target for food.

Q29 Councillor C Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible please advise what the proposed car parking charges at Golden Acre park are and what is the cost of the proposed season ticket?

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

The charges will be determined on the back of the consultation responses - this only closed on 5th November and is still being analysed.

Q30 Councillor S Golton – Can Executive Member for Childrens Services please explain, given that Leeds overspends on young people’s care placements by several £millions every year through contracting private accommodation (that costs over twice as much as Council provided care), why has the current administration allowed the number of Council run residential care places in the city to fall below the level at which they took over responsibility for children’s care 13 years ago?

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

Leeds Children’s Services has been on an improvement journey since the Labour administration won control of the council in 2010. Local authorities had a legacy of large children’s residential homes which, our learning shows, do not produce as good quality outcomes for children and young people.

In a context of sustained cuts to local government funding, all local authorities reduced their directly provided residential capacity. However, Leeds has kept a larger number of beds provided by our own children’s homes, retaining more than Birmingham or Sheffield for example. We currently operate seven 4 bed children’s homes and a 5 bed children’s home for children with complex needs. Leeds also runs Adel Beck secure unit which is the only one in West Yorkshire and one of only two in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Private care beds are more expensive, often without providing better quality or meeting need, and I have outlined the pressure created by profiteering by private providers in my response to question 13.

We are undertaking work to increase our in-house provision by creating a further 25 places to enable Leeds children and young people to live in Leeds. Overall this will mean that Leeds is able to provide 53 beds, reducing our exposure to the private sector market.

Our plan is underway and is being accelerated, to open eight small group living homes. Each will accommodate two children, offering care on a family scale. We want our children to feel part of the community they will be living in and recognise the need to build relationships with immediate neighbours. I look forward to working with Councillor Golton, his ward colleagues and members around the city to support this important work.



Q31 Councillor B Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible outline the steps the Council have taken to publicise the Government’s £1 billion fund through the Great British Insulation Scheme to households in this city and what success has been achieved?

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

The Great British Insulation Scheme was announced by government in September 2023 and aims to help 300,000 low energy efficiency homes improve their insulation and reduce energy bills between now and March 2026.

The scheme is available to both homeowners and tenants, including tenants of housing associations. Unfortunately, the scheme isn’t open to tenants of local authorities. Housing teams are working with colleagues both inside and outside the council to ensure any comparable or alternative schemes for council tenants to access. We remain absolutely committed to ensuring council homes are invested in to improve energy efficiency. Since 2000, over £75m of energy efficiency works has been invested into council housing in the city.

We are planning to use the new WYCA energy efficiency carbon reduction framework to procure on or more contractors to help promote, deliver and quality assure the Great British Insulation Scheme, alongside ECO and ECO Flex, to eligible households. In the meantime, we are updating our website to provide details and eligibility checkers for this and other grants and support available to Leeds residents.

Q32 Councillor S Golton – Can the Executive Members responsible for planning and parks please commit to ensuring that all future planning permissions that deliver public green spaces are obliged to have those green spaces provided directly by Leeds City Council, with the commuted sums used to employ more parks staff?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure and Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space

Planning Policies Adopted by Leeds City Council, expects all residential development (of over 10 units in Leeds (Outside the City Centre) and all residential development greater than 0.5 Ha in Leeds (inside the City centre)) to provide On-Site Green Space. This is a calculated figure and its area varies depending on whether it is inside/outside the City Centre and on the type/mix of the housing.

In exceptional circumstances, where it cannot be provided on-site (either in whole or in part) a residual financial figure (a commuted sum) will be accepted. As set out in national Planning legislation, the City Council cannot insist on green space being delivered, adopted and maintained by the Council. If a developer delivers on-site green space the responsibility for delivering and maintenance lies with them, through an approved management plan. S106 commuted sums legally are to be used deliver infrastructure and therefore cannot be used to fund addition posts.

Supplementary information

Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner as part of the granting of planning permission. The obligation is termed a “Section 106 Agreement”. These agreements are a way of delivering or addressing matters that are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. Simply put, if a proposal is deficient in delivering key policy requirements, e.g. affordable housing, green space, education provision/school



places etc. as part of the application, a s106 can be used to secure these elements to make it acceptable.

A s106 can only be used where there is a policy 'ask' and it's not otherwise being delivered. The details of how an obligation is to be implemented is laid down in National Policy (NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework) paragraph 57.

57. Planning obligations **must only** be sought where they meet all of the following tests:

- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- b) directly related to the development; and
- c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Q33 Councillor M Robinson – When residents face multiple simultaneous planning applications from homes being redeveloped all at the same time in a small area, does the Executive Member agree that officers should be insisting on stronger conditions and timetabling to ease implementation difficulties, aid existing residents and guide construction workers more in the process?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Paragraph 55 of the Government 's National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum, and only used where they satisfy the following tests:

1. necessary;
2. relevant to planning;
3. relevant to the development to be permitted;
4. enforceable;
5. precise; and
6. reasonable in all other respects.

The planning authority will seek to impose conditions requiring construction management plans to be agreed, to minimise the impact of a development during the works. However, whilst a condition requiring development to commence within a set period (usually 3 years) is imposed, a planning authority cannot control the date upon which a particular development commences or seek to control the start dates of several adjacent sites if they are separate schemes.

Q34 Councillor D Chapman – If the Council is so short of money could the Exec Member for Communities explain why the Council is turning down the booking of venues with less than 3 weeks notice?

A Executive Member for Communities

The Lettings Team are not declining all bookings with less than 3 weeks' notice.

A significant number are being processed within 2 weeks such as those involving existing hirers and booking involving internal staff which is the standard turnaround time.

At the moment, it is taking 3 weeks to process;

- large events that require caretakers, stewards or additional checks such as TENS



- new long term / weekly bookings at any centre
- new bookings that have applied for a Councillor discount on hire fees (where we need to build in an additional 2 weeks in to the standard 2 week period to accommodate the process)

The other reasons for the delay include;

- time for the collation of relevant documents such as H&S, insurance and safeguarding checks.
- for Facilities Management colleagues to allocate / arrange caretaker cover, or stewards for large events.
- waiting for responses from the hirer as they rarely arrive with the application form.
- for large / one off events where the costs can be higher, where the invoices have to be raised to the customer and paid in advance of the event taking place, so that LCC are mitigating the risks of bad debt.

In terms of a general approach officers are always keen to maximise the use of community facilities to support local people and this includes the hiring of venues by external groups and agencies, that brings income into the council to offset the running costs of the venues.

We endeavour to process applications for events as quickly as possible and seek to identify any opportunities where we can streamline the process, whilst also ensuring all necessary checks and balances are in place, and this inevitably requires additional time for processing bookings where additional activity is required to be undertaken.

Q35 Councillor C Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible please advise that if they intend bringing in a season ticket option for car parking at Golden Acre Park, whether this will also cover all the other Council-owned car parks across the city including Temple Newsam etc.?

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

This will be determined on the back of the consultation responses, which only closed on 5th November and is still being analysed.

Q36 Councillor D Chapman – Could Exec Member for Resources provide a list of all community asset transfers started in the last 10 years, the outcome and date of completion or sale?

A Executive Member for Resources

Below is a schedule of all properties which have been agreed by Executive Board to be progressed as Community Asset Transfers. In addition to the below, Asset Management receive a large number of enquiries seeking to progress Community Asset Transfers of surplus properties, but this is not specifically recorded. Notably however, Gildersome Meeting Hall, Beckett Park Community Centre, Ebor Gardens Community Centre and Henry Barren Community Centre have all been subject to discussions about Community Asset Transfers which have not progressed. In addition to Community Asset Transfers the Council has also entered into other less than best lease arrangements where there is a case to do so.

Asset	Date of Decision
Bramley Baths	16 May 2012



Bramley Community Centre	8 February 2017
Bramley Lawn Day Centre	18 July 2012
Drighlington Meeting Hall	15 July 2015
Kentmere Community Centre	19 September 2018
Meanwood Community Centre	19 September 2018
Old Cockburn Sports Hall	10 February 2016
Rawdon Library	16 May 2012
Shadwell Library	16 May 2012
Yeadon Town Hall	21 November 2018

Q37 Councillor B Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible please advise how much grant funding has the Council applied for to the Government in respect of financial support for Neighbourhood Planning in 2023/24?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The Council applied for a £45,000 grant which has been used for a Neighbourhood Planning Pilot Project and £20,000 for the Garforth examination and Referendum.

Q38 Councillor D Chapman – Could the Leader of Council explain why this Council won't undertake a comprehensive review of the potential positive impact on attraction, retention, engagement, well-being and absence of a 4 day week as currently being trialled in South Cambridgeshire?

A Leader of Council

The council is undertaking a broad range of activities and initiatives that positively support the attraction, recruitment, engagement, well-being of its staff, as set out in its Organisational Plan and People Strategy. For example, we have carefully developed hybrid working principles that provide flexibility in the way we work, offer a comprehensive staff support and wellbeing service, and continue to make positive progress with growing a diverse talent pool to support the recruitment of our essential staff vacancies.

We are aware that South Cambridgeshire District Council are currently trialling the 4-day working week until March 2024. Leeds City Council will be monitoring the outcome of their trial and the response to the Best Value Notice recently issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

We remain mindful of the growing demand for a range of essential services, across all directorates given the challenges the public are facing, and especially in social care. We do not consider that it would be possible to meet these demands by a 20% reduction in the working time of our staff. We continue to support staff towards delivering services most effectively within the budget available and to provide the best outcomes for the citizens of Leeds.



Q39 Councillor C Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible please advise whether they have advised the business operating the café at Golden Acre Park that their business may be affected by proposed car parking charges?

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

The council operates the café at Golden Acre Park.

Q40 Councillor D Chapman – Bradford 2025 is sharing £3m to community / cultural venues across the district to enable them to function as performance venues during the year of culture and beyond. Does the Executive Member responsible for culture regret not ensuring that a small part of the £15m LCC has given to Leeds 2023 Year of Culture wasn't invested in cultural venues outside of Leeds City Centre in the same way thereby creating a lasting legacy for the communities of Leeds.?

A Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education

Core Council Funding for Leeds 2023 was £5.8m, not £15m.

Leeds 2023 has had a strong focus on ensuring that the Year of Culture has an impact across all 33 wards, not just the city centre.

The project with the strongest focus on co-creation and the widest geographical reach throughout the city is My Leeds 2023. The project used a **co-creation approach** through the appointment of 33 Neighbourhood Hosts, one for each ward and each attached to a local “anchor” organisation already well embedded in the community to create a supportive and collaborative approach to the My LEEDS project. The programme of events the hosts co-created – **My LEEDS Summer** – included 36 events which took place between June and September, within each ward of the city, attracting a total audience of 31,183.

To enable participation in My LEEDS Summer, the Hosts were provided with £99,000 to allocate as grants. A total of 295 grants were made across all 33 wards, with an average of 9 grants awarded per ward.

Examples of My Leeds Summer events include:

- Roundhay's World Food and World Music Festival on Soldiers' Field on 17 June which involved a live programme of musical artists from Leeds which ran alongside food traders and fairground attractions. It attracted a mixed audience of 2,500 people including families during the day and more adults in the evening.
- The Beeston & Holbeck Neighbourhood host programmed several acts as part of the Beeston Festival on 24 June, which attracted 3,500 participants including families and young children.
- Wetherby's Drovers Day attracted 2,350 participants across 3 sites on 1 July. The Town Hall and marketplace saw musical performances, craft stalls and history talks, Crossley Primary school held a summer fair and Wetherby hosted its first marching band competition with 15 bands competing.

The independent evaluation of LEEDS 2023 is being carried out by The Audience Agency together with the University of Leeds' Centre for Cultural Value. The final report is expected



to be available in August / September 2024 and will be shared with the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board in the autumn.

Q41 Councillor M Robinson – Under the City Council’s scheme to provide a discount on composting bins when purchased by Leeds residents, will the Executive Member please update Council on how many bins have been bought across Leeds?

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

Since the council agreed a discounted offer with a local company in 2020, they have sold 803 discounted composting bins to Leeds residents.

Q42 Councillor C Hart-Brooke – Many residents have raised concerns about the ease of getting confused and inadvertently getting a bus gate ticket in Leeds, especially recently on King Street while attempting to get to the LGI. Can the member advise how many bus gate tickets have been issued in all locations across Leeds in past 6 months, and number of appeals by location and how many of these appeals have been successful.

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Parking Services oversee the day-to-day management of such restrictions. The information requested has been collated and shown below.

	May-23	PCN issued	PCN Appeals	Accepted
BUS GATE, BRIDGE END JNC CALL LANE		1191	180	15
BUS GATE, BRIDGE END JNC DOCK ST		30	3	1
BUS GATE, HEADROW JNC VICAR LANE WEST		1242	158	16
BUS LANE, CALL LANE		1	0	0
BUS LANE, CANAL STREET		73	12	7
BUS LANE, COMMERCIAL ROAD (NR BEECROFT ST)		57	13	4
BUS LANE, DEWSBURY ROAD (M621)		1	0	0
Bus Lane, Headrow JNC Butts Court		603	114	10
BUS LANE, VICAR LANE		1	0	0
BUS LANE, WESTGATE (MAG COURTS) LEEDS		7	1	0
BUS LANE, YORK RD SERVICE RD		1	0	0
BUS LANE, YORK ROAD JUNC SKELTON TERRACE		52	6	1
	Jun-23	PCN issued	PCN Appeals	Accepted
BUS GATE, BISHOPGATE ST JNC CITY SQ		2	0	0
BUS GATE, BRIDGE END JNC CALL LANE		870	148	7
BUS GATE, BRIDGE END JNC DOCK ST		995	182	15
BUS GATE, HEADROW JNC DORTMUND SQUARE		93	15	1
BUS GATE, HEADROW JNC VICAR LANE		1291	181	15



WEST			
BUS LANE, CANAL STREET	95	21	12
BUS LANE, COMMERCIAL ROAD (NR BEECROFT ST)	57	12	6
Bus Lane, Headrow JNC Butts Court	495	83	12
BUS LANE, VICAR LANE	4	0	0
BUS LANE, WESTGATE (MAG COURTS) LEEDS	2	0	0
BUS LANE, YORK ROAD JUNC SKELTON TERRACE	63	17	4
	Jul-23	PCN issued	PCN Appeals
			Accepted
BUS GATE, BISHOPGATE ST JNC CITY SQ	2	0	0
BUS GATE, BRIDGE END JNC CALL LANE	883	134	12
BUS GATE, BRIDGE END JNC DOCK ST	3085	476	40
BUS GATE, DUNCAN STREET JNC BRIGGATE	46	5	1
BUS GATE, EAST PARADE JNC HEADROW NORTHBOUND	1379	366	19
BUS GATE, HEADROW JNC DORTMUND SQUARE	59	7	0
BUS GATE, HEADROW JNC VICAR LANE WEST	850	121	18
BUS GATE, PARK ROW JNC HEADROW	2	1	0
BUS LANE, BURLEY ROAD	47	4	2
BUS LANE, CANAL STREET	221	39	21
BUS LANE, COMMERCIAL ROAD (NR BEECROFT ST)	42	9	3
Bus Lane, Headrow JNC Butts Court	1087	165	24
BUS LANE, OTLEY ROAD HEADINGLEY	10	2	2
BUS LANE, WESTGATE (MAG COURTS) LEEDS	29	4	0
BUS LANE, YORK ROAD JUNC SKELTON TERRACE	74	27	6
	Aug-23	PCN issued	PCN Appeals
			Accepted
BUS GATE, BRIDGE END JNC CALL LANE	40	3	2
BUS GATE, BRIDGE END JNC DOCK ST	1158	142	7
BUS GATE, DUNCAN STREET JNC BRIGGATE	209	43	12
BUS GATE, EAST PARADE JNC HEADROW NORTHBOUND	4430	1198	67
BUS GATE, HEADROW JNC DORTMUND SQUARE	70	3	0
BUS GATE, HEADROW JNC VICAR LANE WEST	541	83	5
BUS GATE, VICAR LANE JNC HARRISON ST	349	34	2



BUS LANE, BURLEY ROAD	25	5	3
BUS LANE, CANAL STREET	189	35	19
BUS LANE, COMMERCIAL ROAD (NR BEECROFT ST)	36	7	4
Bus Lane, Headrow JNC Butts Court	810	135	21
BUS LANE, WESTGATE (MAG COURTS) LEEDS	29	3	2
BUS LANE, YORK ROAD JUNC SKELTON TERRACE	59	5	1
	Sep-23	PCN issued	PCN Appeals
			Accepted
BUS GATE, BRIDGE END JNC CALL LANE	268	37	3
BUS GATE, BRIDGE END JNC DOCK ST	2575	246	10
BUS GATE, DUNCAN STREET JNC BRIGGATE	208	26	1
BUS GATE, EAST PARADE JNC HEADROW NORTHBOUND	5278	1123	34
BUS GATE, HEADROW JNC DORTMUND SQUARE	182	24	1
BUS GATE, HEADROW JNC VICAR LANE WEST	135	11	0
BUS GATE, VICAR LANE JNC HARRISON ST	640	59	4
BUS LANE, CANAL STREET	228	36	17
BUS LANE, COMMERCIAL ROAD (NR BEECROFT ST)	42	10	4
Bus Lane, Headrow JNC Butts Court	791	83	7
BUS LANE, OTLEY ROAD HEADINGLEY	8	3	3
BUS LANE, WESTGATE (MAG COURTS) LEEDS	17	3	0
BUS LANE, YORK ROAD JUNC SKELTON TERRACE	66	14	2
	Oct-23	PCN issued	PCN Appeals
			Accepted
BUS GATE, BRIDGE END JNC DOCK ST	1166	105	0
BUS GATE, DUNCAN STREET JNC BRIGGATE	120	11	0
BUS GATE, EAST PARADE JNC HEADROW NORTHBOUND	4285	447	7
BUS GATE, HEADROW JNC DORTMUND SQUARE	169	7	0
BUS GATE, HEADROW JNC VICAR LANE WEST	170	14	0
BUS GATE, VICAR LANE JNC HARRISON ST	861	25	0
BUS LANE, CANAL STREET	207	18	0
Bus Lane, Headrow JNC Butts Court	579	49	1
BUS LANE, OTLEY ROAD HEADINGLEY	2	1	0



BUS LANE, WESTGATE (MAG COURTS) LEEDS	23	1	0
BUS LANE, YORK ROAD JUNC SKELTON TERRACE	60	7	0

Q43 Councillor C Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible please advise whether they have advised the business operating the Ice Cream Van at Golden Acre Park that their business may be affected by proposed car parking charges?

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

The ice cream concession at Golden Acre is due for retender imminently, with the successful applicant starting in the new financial year. Any potential bidders will be made aware of the proposal.

Q44 Councillor C Hart-Brooke – Leeds Council is currently selling assets dear to the heart of many local communities. One asset it holds is the private registration number "U1" on the Lord Mayor's council funded limo. Similar exclusive number plates have fetched between two to three hundred thousand pounds at auction. Would the Executive Member for Resources agree that in a city that aims to be one where "you don't need a car", the justification for the car having a private registration plate is hard to explain?

A Executive Member for Resources

A local Leeds motoring pioneer and founder member of the Automobile Association acquired the registration number U1 in 1903; shortly after acquisition, the registration plate was passed into the ownership of the Council. Mr Winn, the original owner of the registration number was elected as Lord Mayor of Leeds in 1938-39 and in 1956, 3 years before he died, he was awarded the Freedom of the City in recognition of his contribution to the city's life and prosperity.

The scale of the pressures on the council's financial position, combined with the gap over the next three years and continued uncertainty concerning future central government funding, is unprecedented.

In common with local authorities throughout the country, to balance the council's budget difficult decisions are needing to be taken including assessing the potential for asset disposals. However, such disposals will not be sufficient on their own to meet the severity and seriousness of the financial challenge facing the council – particularly the need to reduce recurring revenue expenditure.

Q45 Councillor B Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible advise Council if they have made any submissions for funding through the "Pathways to Planning" Graduate Scheme which is part of a DLUC fund of £1.59m which has been given to the LGA to set up and deliver a Graduate programme?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The Authority did investigate the Pathways to Planning scheme when it was launched. It is noted that the scheme provides a £5,000 graduate educational bursary which Councils can use for costs associated with an RTPi-accredited Level 7 apprenticeship or as a contribution towards an RTPi-accredited Master's degree.



However, the additional posts must be created and salaries paid by the Council. The Planning Authority does in fact already provide the opportunity for its Planners to undertake an RTPI-accredited part-time Master's degree in Planning at Leeds Beckett University, via the Apprenticeship Levy. This provides better value for money for the service and has seen a number of staff successfully complete this formal qualification in Planning in recent years, enhancing the skillset and professional resource into the future.

Q46 Councillor C Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible please set out the business case for car park charging at Golden Acre Park?

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

The consultation document outlined the Council financial position and the need to focus on statutory services. There is no statutory duty to provide parks and therefore introducing a modest parking charge would help fund car park surface improvements, bay marking, and ongoing maintenance.

Q47 Councillor M Robinson – If Leeds is a 21st century digital city that shows real-time information on bus travel or gritting routes, will the Executive Member please explain why can't the same happen and be shared with residents of Leeds for street sweeping routes and vehicles?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

A city-wide programme of mechanical sweeping exists for the main streets/roads with more regular sweeping scheduled for those locations that are more prone to flooding. Additional seasonal sweeping happens on paths and roads that are prone to leafing issues. Ad-hoc sweeps are done in response to service requests received from members of the public and ward councillors and in response to road traffic accidents and spillages.

The dates for when the above programmed sweeps take place will vary depending on a number of factors, mainly related to weather conditions but can also change daily due staffing levels (sickness and holidays), vacancies and vehicle breakdowns. Due to these (often unpredictable) variables, real time road sweeping updates would have little benefit to the customer experience and is different to needing to know if your bus is going to be on time or which streets have been gritted so you can plan your journey.

Sweeping frequencies are not published online as they are subject to changes due to the numerous factors as highlighted above. However, ward members and community committees can always influence and prioritise approaches to sweeping in their areas through requests to the local Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team or discussions at the community committee's environmental sub-groups which are attended by CNT staff.

Q48 Councillor C Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible please explain to residents why they should pay for car parking at Golden Acre Park when they already pay Council Tax?

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

Councils have a statutory obligation to balance their books whilst also delivering a number of vital frontline services. We have successfully done this every year—despite our costs and demand for services increasing, and core government funding having more than halved since



2010. Increases in council tax receipts do not cover this gap. Unless significant action is taken across the council, the local authority is on track to spend nearly £30 million more than our budget legally allows.

Senior councillors and officers have discussed a range of additional proposals to find further savings across the entire organisation which include staffing reductions of up to 750 posts, building closures, and sales of council assets. It is in this context that we are also consulting with residents to understand the public's views on proposals to introduce parking charges at Golden Acre and Otley Chevin Forest Park.

Many local authorities charge for parking at public parks. While the exact rates of charges is undecided and will be informed by responses to the consultation, we commit to keeping them reasonably priced. We're also proposing that blue badge holders would be exempt from charges and that regular users of the parks would be able to save money by purchasing an annual season ticket.

Our proposal would enable us to bring forward immediate improvements at the two sites including new bay markings, disabled parking, height restriction barriers, and improving the parking surface to address potholes. Any revenue from charges would be used to support the £10.2 million cost of maintaining and improving the city's valuable green spaces, ensuring that we can continue to do so whilst helping relieve the financial pressure on other council services.

Q49 Councillor B Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible advise Council how much funding Leeds City Council has applied for through the Planning Skills Delivery Fund and what they intend using it for?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The Authority has applied for £89,000 from the Fund (maximum bids £100,000) in the current round, which requires funding to be spent in the current financial year. The fund must be used to help clear backlogs of planning applications and address skills gaps. Our bid this year is to help clear a backlog of older applications in anticipation of the new performance measures being introduced by the Government, which will be stricter in requiring decisions to be made within statutory targets. The fund would be used to recruit additional staffing capacity to work upon and resolve older cases.

It should be noted that the Government invited bids by September and stated it would announce the outcome in October; however no announcement as to whether authorities have been successful has yet been made, and the timescale to undertake the work before the end of March is becoming increasingly short.

Q50 Councillor C Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible please explain to residents who want to go to Golden Acre Park how they can expect to get there by public transport given that there is only 1 bus route to Golden Acre and that service is unreliable, and anyone coming from a direction other than the A660 has no public transport option?

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

Leeds City Council has no responsibility or powers to determine bus routes, frequency, fares, or bus standards. These choices are currently determined by the private bus companies operating in West Yorkshire.



If Members have views on these issues, I would remind them that the Mayor of West Yorkshire and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority are currently seeking views on how best to reform the way that local buses are governed across our region, and would strongly encourage them to participate in this consultation before 7th January.

While there is only one bus service which serves the park, the bus network in Leeds in conjunction with day tickets allows people to interchange and use multiple buses to undertake their journey at a cost of £4.50 per day.

However, we expect that most visitors currently driving to Golden Acre Park will continue to do so, even after the potential introduction of parking charges, as doing so will continue to be cheaper for most people than the cost of a return fare or day ticket travelling by bus. Many local authorities across the country charge for parking at major parks and other attractions.

Q51 Councillor B Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible advise Council how much of the additional £8.3 billion that has been provided by the Government, to Councils, to help them maintain local roads, has been allocated to this Council and can they publish a list of the roads that will have additional maintenance work funded from this money?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

“Network North: Transforming British Transport” contained a wide range of announcements relating to further phases of HS2 and transport projects and funding commitments across the country.

One such included the statement ‘Record investment of £8.3 billion to fix the blight of potholes on roads up and down the country’.

We understand that DfT are currently working through the commitments presented within Network North and await further details around location and distribution of any new funding.

Once further details are received around the funding and spend requirements, a review of our current programme will take place and expand, as appropriate to target those assets where need is deemed greatest, in accordance with our strategic asset management approach.

Q52 Councillor P Alderson – Can the Executive Member responsible advise Council when the call for sites as part of the Local Plan Update 2 will be published?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

This information will be published on the Council’s website before end of December 2023.

Q53 Councillor B Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible advise Council if Leeds City Council made any requests for funding from the Traveller Site Fund?

A Executive Member for Housing

The Local Authority submitted a new Traveller site bid to DLHUC in 2022 for a share of the £10m capital fund available nationally. Unfortunately, this bid was not successful.

Q54 Councillor M Robinson – At the last Council meeting, the response to an unanswered question about sex offenders in council housing noted, “There is no single database that captures records relating specifically to registered sex offenders and council



accommodation". Following that revelation, can the Executive Member confirm how many sex offenders or those with a sex offending conviction are on the council house waiting list?

A Executive Member for Housing

Of the 26000 applicants on the Leeds Homes Register there are 89 applicants who have declared a sexual offence as part of their application. Additional checks take place at the point of allocating a property to identify if there are any former or new offences which haven't been included on someone's application.

All allocations to sex offenders are subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) where a risk assessment is undertaken, giving consideration to the suitability of a property, including the property type and its location, including proximity to schools and playgrounds.

Q55 Councillor S Firth – In seeking transparency for residents, will the Executive Member please clarify whether Crossgates Library will re-open as an important community facility as originally suggested, or is the plan to offer a second-tier service to the residents of east and north-east Leeds?

A Executive Member for Communities

The library service has been delivered from the Crossgates Shopping Centre location since April 22. Plans are being made to deliver the service from this location on a permanent basis, which will expand the support on offer to a full Community Hub and Library service (to include Customer Service support) increasing/enhancing the service accessible to residents.

Q56 Councillor S Firth – To clarify the Executive Member for Communities' response to my July question "as to when repairs to Crossgates Library on Farm Road will be completed and the building reopened", what, if any, works have been undertaken and money has been spent to refurbish the building since it closed on 2nd April 2022 and then the subsequent fire on 27th October?

A Executive Member for Communities

Since the closure of the Crossgate Library building on Farm Road, Crossgates in April 2022, no works have been undertaken to refurbish the building. Facilities Management have been managing the property whilst it has sat in void management and have undertaken works to re-secure the property only following anti-social behaviour, break-ins and fire damage.

Q57 Councillor S Firth– More than 1,000 residents from across east Leeds have already signed an online petition against the council's proposed sale of Crossgates Library. In seeking transparency, with the reduced space and services available in the new Crossgates Shopping Centre location, could the Executive Member for Communities explain why we are offering a second-tier service to residents?

A Executive Member for Communities

There are plans in place to permanently expand the range of provision in place to be delivered from the Crossgates Shopping Centre location. This will enhance the library offer to a Community Hub and Library service. The Shopping Centre location although originally



intended to be temporary, has proven to be successful. The number of joiners has increased from 650 (April 21/22) to 1548 (April 22/23), with PC usage increasing over the same period.

The library has also continued to offer significant levels of other support including: issue of food bank vouchers, signposting customers to partner and council services such as Money Buddies, C.A.B and Welfare Rights, applications such as Blue Badge, Council Tax support, Disabled bus pass, Leeds Homes and Housing benefit, digital drop ins (busiest in the city), Council Tax support and Leeds Homes online applications.

Other activities include Warm Spaces, Games/Jigsaws for children/families, Weekly Craft group, Weekly Story & Rhyme, Northern Dreaming gifting books, Ready Steady Readers scheme (under 5's), Summer Reading Challenge (more joiners 22/23 than ever before). Customers have also fed back that they find the Shopping centre location more accessible, with the library now sitting alongside other shops and services, supported by infrastructure such as car parking.

Making plans to deliver the library service from the shopping Centre does not make the provision of future services 2nd tier, they will enhance what was previously provided from the old library building.

Q58 Councillor S Firth – Would the Executive Member for Housing provide a breakdown of the total costs to the council related to unauthorised traveller camps, site cleansing and repairs in Cross Gates & Whinmoor and Harewood wards so far in 2023?

A Executive Member for Housing

Financial Year 2022/23

Harewood	1 Encampment	Legal	£1436
		Clean/Secure/Amenities	£169
Crossgates & Whinmoor	12 Encampments	Legal	£11496
		Clean/Secure/Amenities	£4326
TOTAL			£17427

Financial Year 2023/24 – to date

Harewood	Nil		
Crossgates & Whinmoor	10 Encampments	Legal	£4311
		Clean/Secure/Amenities	£2304
TOTAL			£6615

Q59 Councillor S Firth – New road markings for the intended 20mph zones in some Harewood Ward villages have been in place for more than a month. Could the Executive Member for Sustainable Development & Infrastructure confirm when the roadside signage will be changed to match?



A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

Due to the number of schemes requiring significant signing work from across the city there has been some delays to our annual works programme. The intention was that the signing works for the Harewood ward 20mph schemes would be completed around the same time as the road markings, but unfortunately the scale of the demands on the signing team has meant that this was unexpectedly delayed.

Additional contracting support has been called in to assist in the delivery of this work which includes the erection and replacement of 591 signs and 94 poles. All the speed limit signs and repeater signs have been manufactured and work is scheduled to start next week, in the village of Scholes. The contractors will then work around the villages within the Harewood ward to complete this programme of works with the intention that all remaining signage will be completed prior to the Christmas break.

Q60 Councillor S Firth– Will the Executive Member for Sustainable Development & Infrastructure clarify when the new speed limit signage for Leeds Road and Skeltons Lane will be installed, having previously stated it to be within six weeks on 25th July?

A Executive Member for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure

The speed limit signs for Leeds Road and Skeltons Lane are being installed as part of the East Leeds Orbital Road peripheral works. There are a large number of schemes across the city, including some major signing projects, and this has put pressure on the council's small non-illuminated sign team, which has resulted in some unexpected delays to the works programme. Some additional external contractors to support the team have been engaged to help clear the current backlog. The Leeds Road and Skeltons Lane projects will be delivered using this extra resource over the next 6 to 8 weeks.

Q61 Councillor S Firth – Can the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Active Lifestyles update council on the progress on repairs to Temple Newsam's Old Cow Byre following the fire on 11th May, the anticipated completion date and current projected cost for the Play Barn conversion?

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

Investigations, surveys and stripping out works have been undertaken in liaison with the Council's insurers, following the fire at Temple Newsam in May. Structural repairs scopes are now with the contractor to prepare their quotations. The projected cost and completion date will be known upon receipt and acceptance of the quotations.

Q62 Councillor N Harrington – Would the Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space please provide the protocol used by the refuse crews for placement of bins once they have been emptied?

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

The following Safe Working Instruction is provided to crews responsible for the collection of refuse bins:

“Once complete return the bin to its original collection point, taking care to minimise any obstruction to pedestrians, gates, driveways, or road users”.



In addition, the following objective was set for all collection staff in their 2022 appraisals:

“Safe and accessible streets – putting bins back neatly to a safe place:

As well as it being the right thing to do, we have a legal requirement not to block paths unnecessarily. You should be considering how residents in wheelchairs, with prams or with visual impairments may struggle to safely access a path. Emptied bins should be returned and left in a position that leaves as much pathway clear as possible, usually neatly against a wall”.

Q63 Councillor P Alderson – Does the Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space agree that it is unacceptable for Members in Guiseley & Rawdon to be first made aware of proposals to introduce parking charges at Otley Chevin Forest Park only four working days before the public consultation was launched?

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

Unfortunately, officers had not realised that the car parks on York Gate fell in the Guiseley and Rawdon ward until they met with the Otley and Yeadon Councillors. They contacted Guiseley and Rawdon ward councillors as soon as they realised their oversight.

Q64 Councillor P Alderson – Can the Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space please highlight the dates when both Guiseley & Rawdon and Otley & Yeadon Members were first made aware of the proposal to introduce parking charges at Otley Chevin Forest Park, and if different please can the executive member offer an explanation as to why?

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

Otley and Yeadon Councillors were briefed via teams on 4th October. At this meeting it was flagged that the car parks on York Gate fell in the Guiseley and Rawdon ward, which unfortunately officers had not realised. An email was sent on 5th October advising Guiseley and Rawdon members of the proposal and offering to meet all of them prior to the consultation launch on 11th October.

Q65 Councillor P Alderson – Can the Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space please explain to residents why they should pay for car parking at Otley Chevin Forest Park when they already pay Council Tax?

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

Councils have a statutory obligation to balance their books whilst also delivering a number of vital frontline services. We have successfully done this every year—despite our costs and demand for services increasing, and core government funding having more than halved since 2010. Increases in council tax receipts do not cover this gap. Unless significant action is taken across the council, the local authority is on track to spend nearly £30 million more than our budget legally allows.

Senior councillors and officers have discussed a range of additional proposals to find further savings across the entire organisation which include staffing reductions of up to 750 posts, building closures, and sales of council assets. It is in this context that we are also consulting with residents to understand the public’s views on proposals to introduce parking charges at Golden Acre and Otley Chevin Forest Park.



Many local authorities charge for parking at public parks. While the exact rates of charges is undecided and will be informed by responses to the consultation, we commit to keeping them reasonably priced. We're also proposing that blue badge holders would be exempt from charges and that regular users of the parks would be able to save money by purchasing an annual season ticket.

Our proposal would enable us to bring forward immediate improvements at the two sites including new bay markings, disabled parking, height restriction barriers, and improving the parking surface to address potholes. Any revenue from charges would be used to support the £10.2 million cost of maintaining and improving the city's valuable green spaces, ensuring that we can continue to do so whilst helping relieve the financial pressure on other council services.

Q66 Councillor P Alderson – Within LCC's Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening for the 2019 SAP and the 2021 SAP Remittal, the Chevin Country Park is identified as having a key role as a mitigation measure for deflecting recreational impact, as a potential adverse effect, on the South Pennine Moors Special Protection Area (SPA). Can the executive member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space explain how proposals to introduce parking charges will do anything other than deter regular visitors to the park, who may otherwise choose to visit the nearby South Pennine Special Protection Area for daily activities such as dog walking and exercise?

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

The charges will not be set at a level that would act as a deterrent, especially when you take into account fuel costs of travelling to alternative sites and the charges raised will help to improve the car parking at Otley Chevin, supporting the increase of their capacity by providing properly marked out spaces.

The proposals set out in the consultation document included the potential to develop a season ticket offer for those who regularly visit.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Tomkinson
Deputy Head of Democratic Services

