

**Legal and Democratic Services**

Governance Services

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Date: 30th January 2023

To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor

**COUNCIL MEETING – 18th JANUARY 2023**

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 6 to 35 were unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

**Q6** Councillor L Richards - Could the Executive Member confirm the total number of all Council housing properties that are empty where no rent is currently being collected, the average number of weeks properties take to turn round when they are void and what is the longest outstanding void property in the city, in weeks?

**A** Executive Member for Environment and Housing

The total number of voids awaiting occupation is 989 as of last week, throughout the year it has taken an average of 20 weeks to allocate properties whilst we work through the covid backlog and deal with issues around the supply of materials and labour shortages seen nationally, however as this is a yearly average the service expects this to reduce considerably during the new financial year.

The longest void in housing has been empty since November 2020, this is due to significant repeated vandalism. The service is working with partners to ensure the property is safe for the next tenant to move into before re allocating.

**Q7** Councillor D Chapman - With significant financial and climate (CO2) benefits delivered from changing traffic lights to LEDs from Halogen bulbs does the Executive Member with responsibility for Highways think the current 4 year timetable to replace just half of the remaining 12000 bulbs is ambitious enough?

## **A** Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

Leeds has 676 traffic signal installations across the city (approximately 50% junctions and 50% standalone crossings).

Many of the sites in the city centre are complex and very expensive to upgrade.

We have a rolling programme of upgrades which includes replacing halogen with LED as traffic signal installations are refurbished. To date, approximately 60% have been upgraded leaving approximately 280 to be undertaken. We seek to upgrade whenever there is an opportunity through development in the area or our programmes of work.

When upgrading, it is not simply a matter of replacing halogen with LED. Older signal controller stock is not capable of operating extra low voltage equipment (i.e. LED bulbs) and cabling is often in need of replacement. Consequently, it is often necessary to refurbish all equipment at a site in order to convert from halogen to LED.

A strategic asset management approach is taken when upgrading equipment to ensure most effective use of finite resources. The maintenance of traffic signal equipment takes into consideration the safety issues associated with the physical condition of the poles and heads, efficiency of operation associated with ageing control equipment as well as the conversion of halogen traffic signal equipment to LED.

Major investment schemes such as £173.5m Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme, a successful bid for £250k DfT Traffic Signal Maintenance funding and the five-year City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement secured from 2022 have significantly increased the pace that traffic signal equipment is being converted from halogen to LED across Leeds.

However, despite increases in funding, industry resource remains a constraint as there are a limited number of specialist contractors capable of undertaking the work. It is possible that, as a result of the certainty provided by a longer-term funding settlement, industry is able to respond by increasing resource which would subsequently enable delivery to be accelerated.

**Q8** Councillor D Jenkins – Would the Executive Member for Adult and Children’s Social Care & Health Partnerships like to comment on the Government’s decision to postpone their reforms to Adult Social Care?

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

The Autumn Statement saw the Chancellor postpone the reforms to Adult Social Care for at least 2 years and in doing so broke the Tory Government’s 2019 manifesto promise to ‘fix social care’.

Unlike the NHS, social care is not a free, universal service. Service users are sometimes exposed to potentially very high and unpredictable care costs and face the prospect of losing the majority of their income and assets.

Whilst we were disappointed that the Government has failed to make progress on this, their current reform proposals have a number of issues so need to be looked at again.

Research by the County Councils Network found that the reforms would cost a minimum of £10bn more than estimated by the Department of Health & Social Care.



They would also create a further workforce crisis, with over 5,000 extra staff projected to be required to carry out extra care and financial assessments for those seeking to benefit from the reforms. This is unrealistic given the current challenges in recruitment and retention of social care staff.

The reforms themselves are not proportionate in terms of effects on people's assets. Homeowners with more valuable homes, typically in the South of England will pay less proportionately than homeowners with less valuable homes, typically in the North.

Ministers promised that nobody would have to sell their home to pay for care, yet this is not true. More of our less affluent residents could be forced to sell their homes whilst the homes of the wealthiest are protected.

There are also concerns about how well the reforms are understood by residents, particularly how the £86,000 cap will be applied, and the understanding that only 'eligible care costs' will be counted. If not made clearer, this could result in a significant increase in the number of complaints received by local authorities, as well as anxiety and confusion for the individuals affected.

Overall, the changes pass the cost from the individual to local authorities, who already have concerns about attracting and retaining their social care workforce.

The reforms need to go further and faster. There needs to be more scrutiny of the detail as it needs to be a fair system for all of those using it, where people pay costs proportionate to their income and wealth.

Greater resources are required for workforce recruitment, communications with residents and in the implementation of the reforms to ensure they are workable.

**Q9** Councillor A Hutchison – Would the Executive Member for Adult and Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships inform Council of the arrangements that are in place to ensure organisations hold a 'body of persons licence' whenever organisations are holding events where children under 16 are performing?

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

The Child Employment and Entertainment team, which sits within Children and Families Directorate ensure all young people under the age of 16 who are working or performing are safeguarded with the appropriate licence. This maybe a work permit, a performance licence or a Body of Persons licence.

A body of persons licence is when an organisation is holding an event where children are performing but are not being paid for the event or taking time off school.

The team works to promote the legislation and guidance with organisations such as school, theatres, dance school, local festivals and events and offers briefing to all known dance schools, amateur dramatics' societies etc regarding their responsibilities. They work with several organisations such as Screen Yorkshire, opera north, the playhouse and with big productions such as Waterloo Road and Gentleman Jack.

They also work closely with other council departments to share their awareness such as the safety advisory groups and education safeguarding. The team undertake inspections to



promote best practice and work with organisations to ensure they are aware and support them to follow the legislation and guidance.

**Q10** Councillor S Burke – Please could the Executive Member for Public Health & Active Lifestyles provide an update on the Council’s work to reduce mental health inequalities through the Synergi approach?

**A** Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles

The Synergi-Leeds Partnership seeks to address racial injustice in mental health and is instrumental in supporting the delivery of Priority 2 within the Leeds all-age Mental Health Strategy.

Its aim is to reduce the over-representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds who are detained under the Mental Health Act compared to white people.

As a city we are committed to tackling this inequality but realise addressing such a ‘wicked problem’ requires innovation and an acceptance that *how* we address mental health inequalities experienced by minority ethnic groups is just as important as *what* we do.

Five years ago senior leaders across different agencies within Leeds, with our public health team, began working with the National Synergi Collaborative Centre, who used their knowledge to help ‘frame’ the problem and build an approach.

This helped partners understand that there had been failures to affect change in the past because:

- service user voices were marginalised;
- difficult views or opinions were ignored;
- and people in positions of power were afraid to raise the issue for fear of ‘getting it wrong’.

The formulation of the ‘problem’ in this way gave the framework for an approach, which has proved to be truly transformational, and uncomfortable at times, as it means there are more honest conversations in the city about racism, discrimination and mental health.

The work is a whole system approach, working across the life course. It involves activity, outside of services, to reduce the risk of severe mental illness along with work inside services to reduce the way services can add to existing inequality.

The Synergi Leeds Partnership consists of a growing network of statutory and third sector agencies. It is a developing community of practice, which provides a space where assumptions about service delivery for groups from diverse communities can be talked about, in the context of the operation of systemic racism and discrimination.

The Network is a catalyst for ideas, that energises and supports people to be leaders across the system and to make changes within their own services. A small core team supports the network functioning and development; influences wider work programmes across the city and supports delivery of three key areas:

- the national Synergi Pledge
- the Creative Spaces Programme
- and a small community grants programme.



In August 2021, partners in Leeds signed up to the National Synergi Pledge. The pledge was developed at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protests. It is focused on initiating fundamental service level change to reduce ethnic inequalities access, experience and outcomes.

The pledge has seven commitments which allow individual organisations and partnerships to develop action in these key areas. It has the potential to enable the system to go further, faster, in addressing ethnic inequalities in mental health; focus efforts on the areas that will have the most impact and stimulate and support shared cross-sector work.

Creative Spaces Events are an important 'engine' for the Synergi-Leeds programme. They bring together people with lived experience, carers, community members, practitioners and senior strategic leaders. The focus is on bringing the voices of people with experience directly into the room and to using creative approaches to engage attendees in a way that challenges their individual prejudice and galvanises them to act.

The all-age Synergi-Leeds grants programme has been designed to support very local activity that addresses:

- the wider determinants of serious mental illness, including racism and discrimination
- increases trust
- improves access to services
- bolsters existing community mental health support.

In 2021, this grants programme funded 15 community organisations - for two years - to address the psychological wellbeing and mental health needs within children, young people, adults and families across the city, with a further opportunity to receive funding in 2023. All grant holders are supported by Leeds Community Foundation, the core Synergi team and have the opportunity to be mentored by larger 3rd sector organisations.

The ambition is that those projects which demonstrate impact will be supported through continuation funding or supported to seek relevant alternative funding streams. The ambition is to provide culturally appropriate alternatives for our minoritised communities within the mental health system.

Examples of funded projects and initiatives include:

- **Calm & Centred** is a Black Led community interest company that delivers well-being services, therapy and self-help strategies to address health inequalities. The organisation provides support and sessions focused on bereavement and mental health. Sessions include journaling, active listening, a monthly peer to peer support group, community drop-ins, therapy sessions, workshops, counselling and distribution of wellness packs. Their outcomes are to increase access to bereavement support, reduce social isolation, reduce anxiety and improve mental health and wellbeing. The project is supporting over 40 BME adults over 2 years. It is delivered city-wide, and supports people from some of the 20% and 10% most deprived areas in the country
- **Black Health Initiative** had a one-year project that used music and social media as a tool to support good emotional/mental health and wellbeing, collaborating with community influencers to address stigma and cultural barriers. It also provided 1-2-1 talking therapy.



- **Chapelton Youth Development Centre** provides a range of sport and wider activities in the Chapelton area of the city. The grant funding has enabled the organisation to fund a mental health worker. This post delivers counselling and workshops to young people from diverse backgrounds and provides 1-1 support for young people and families - as well as taking referrals from other organisations. The workshops reduce the stigma of mental health conditions and create open conversations about mental health.

Part of Synergi-Leeds' success is due to public health, the wider council, mental health services and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations all working collaboratively on this agenda, e.g. public health host one of the posts and the funding for the adult work, which is funded by the Leeds office of the ICB (formerly the CCG).

I am proud to tell you that the Synergi-Leeds Partnership has recently won an award for its ground-breaking approach to addressing mental health inequalities and is being recognised nationally as an example of innovative practice.

In conclusion, Leeds has a long history of championing good mental health in the city through the delivery of preventative programmes. Integral to this is the Synergi-Leeds approach and I hope you will agree with me that this crucial work is beginning to make a real difference to the lives of people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds in Leeds.

**Q11** Councillor T Smith – Given the amount of anti-social quad-bike activity, and the lack of enforcement success across the city, will the Executive Member commit to reinstating the Park Ranger service to help West Yorkshire Police to combat this menace?

**A** Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles

The Leeds City Council Mobile Park Ranger Service, consisting of 4 officers with responsibility for providing a patrol capability for all parks and green spaces in Leeds, was disbanded over 10 years ago due to it being ineffective and inefficient in terms of delivering its remit of patrolling parks and opening and securing crematoria across the city. The Park Rangers did not have any delegated powers or the means to tackle issues associated with the anti-social use of quad bikes.

Safer Leeds and the LASBT service has, for many years now, assumed responsibility for coordinating a partnership response to the issues associated with anti-social use of motor vehicles in parks (and other public spaces).

There are a number of interventions already in place across the city to support work to address this type of anti-social behaviour, principally in partnership with Leeds District Neighbourhood Policing Teams. This includes partnership operations such as 'Operation Dieselcrest' focusing on the thefts of Quad Bikes and motor cycles, as well as engaging with individuals known or suspected of being involved in the ASB, as well as developing intelligence around where the quads and motor cycles are being stored.

In addition to the ongoing work, and in response to heightened public concern, officers in Safer Leeds are seeking authority for the introduction of additional powers through the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, to tackle such behaviour on roads and open spaces to which the general public have access to, including parks. Specifically, the Safer Leeds Executive has recently endorsed recommendations to introduce a city wide Public



Space Protection Order (PSPO) to add to the existing suite of powers aimed at addressing those behaviours which have been identified using intelligence and evidence secured through the analysis of both reported incidents and from public space CCTV camera coverage, enabling the terms of the PSPO to be framed around prevention and supporting a more effective response.

Statutory consultation with the public and other groups is currently ongoing prior to the introduction of the PSPO, but it is envisaged that the order will be enacted within a matter of a few months. Any person who breaches the order commits the criminal offence of 'Breach of PSPO', the consequences of which will result in a reduction in instances of such behaviour thereby positively impacting on the detrimental impact such activity causes in local communities.

In addition to the developments relating to the proposed new PSPO, Safer Leeds is working in partnership with WYP and a third sector community based organisation using 'Safer Streets' funding to support additional uplifted enforcement activity and prevention work, including enhanced youth outreach and diversionary activities. Work is also being progressed on a Leeds wide public awareness media campaign aimed at reducing the prevalence of such anti-social behaviour and building confidence of people in the community to report issues wherever they are being experienced.

**Q12** Councillor S Golton – Can the Executive Member responsible for Parks and Leisure please confirm how much has been spent annually since 2012 on car park maintenance within the city's parks?

**A** Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles

There is an annual £140k budget for 'roads, paths, seats and shelters' mainly for cemeteries and crematoria along with a small amount of dedicated maintenance funding for Lotherton Hall. Repairs to car parks in other parks and green spaces are embedded in general park maintenance budgets and as a result amounts spent on specific car park repairs are not recorded. These are minor repairs either funded via the materials budget utilising gardening staff or in some instances via specialist contractors. In general car parking improvements are included as part of wider capital schemes for park improvements. For example, the car park extension at Lotherton Hall was supported by prudential borrowing and many sites have benefitted from allocated s106 funding.

**Q13** Councillor A Marshall-Katung – Please can the Executive Member provide an update on the launch of Leeds 2023?

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

The launch event for LEEDS 2023 was held at Headingley Stadium on 7<sup>th</sup> January - a tremendous celebration of the diverse cultural talent in our city.

During 2023, Leeds will become the beacon for UK culture, it's a brilliant opportunity to boost the creative industries and promote UK creativity to regional, national and international businesses and audiences. Comprising 12 major events across the city, and a raft of partnership work with local, regional and international partners, including skills development, creative education and volunteering programmes, LEEDS 2023 can expect to have a substantial economic impact in the city itself, and across the wider West Yorkshire region.



Independent economic research has shown that, based on a £20m programme of work, LEEDS 2023 can generate:

- **An 8:1 return on investment across West Yorkshire; a 6:1 return on investment in Leeds itself**
- **2300 new jobs in the creative industries**
- **10% increase in visitor numbers to Leeds during 2023**
- **£114m extra direct and indirect revenue to the Leeds Visitor Economy, rising to just over £140m by 2030**
- **£49m annual boost to the West Yorkshire Visitor Economy**
- **1310 new jobs in 2023, rising to 1620 by 2030**

Over the last 30 days alone, the profile of the city has been raised through the huge reach of print, broadcast and social media covering the start of the Year of Culture and The Awakening launch event:

Total number of print and broadcast articles - 586

- National/Trade: 143
- International: 69
- Regional: 303
- Local: 191

Total Reach of print and broadcast: 61,681,020

Total UPVM (Unique Visitors Per Month) of digital coverage: 896,769,869

The Awakening content has also been viewed 850,000 times on social media.

**Q14** Councillor E Carlisle - Has the executive considered installing a giant iconic Climate Clock ([www.climateclock.world/clocks](http://www.climateclock.world/clocks)) in Leeds, alongside cities like Berlin and New York, to highlight the urgency of the climate emergency, and to stir up public awareness and action?

**A** Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

We understand and appreciate the importance of public art in influencing and engaging people on the climate emergency. As part of the 2023 year of culture there are a number of events and installations highlighting this in a unique way to the city.

World renowned visual artist Michael Pinsky and award-winning environmental architects Studio Bark are co-creating a bold public artwork Making a Stand in Leeds City Square inspired by the Forest of Leodis. The artwork will be animated by a series of events by Leeds Beckett University's Leeds School of Arts students in 2023. East Street Arts are inviting street artists from around the world to Leeds in A City Less Grey - aiming to bring new and unique artwork to the streets and neighbourhoods of Leeds, starting in Burmantofts with a mural by Portuguese visual artist Add Fuel (April 2023).

Leeds 2023 is keen to influence audiences about the climate crisis and there will be future climate related events taking place throughout the year

**Q15** Councillor A Khan – Can the Executive Member please update on the sponsor payment uplift for Ukrainian refugees?

**A** Executive Member for Communities



In March last year, the United Kingdom took the historic decision to welcome people from Ukraine who were fleeing the invasion of their homeland. Since then, and thanks to the generosity of the people of Leeds, over 650 Ukrainian guests are now safe in the city having arrived under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The Homes for Ukraine Scheme supports sponsors by offering a 'thank you' payment of £350 per month to those who can offer space within their home to those escaping the war in Ukraine. The 'thank you' payment is limited to one payment per residential address and has recently been extended from 12 months to a maximum duration of two years. This means that guests who may not yet be ready to move into independent accommodation, will be able to stay in sponsorship for longer.

All sponsors will be impacted by the current cost-of-living increase. An uplift in thank you payments will support sponsors with the increased costs associated with energy and food prices. The Homes for Ukraine scheme has demonstrated that sponsors are going "above and beyond" to provide considerable amounts of support to the refugees that are living with them in a variety of ways, often at considerable effort and financial expenditure to themselves.

To this end, I am pleased to say we have increased the current thank you payment of £350 per calendar month to sponsors, including new sponsors, hosting Ukrainian refugees to an additional one-off payment of £600 which will be split between four equal payments of £150 between December 2022 and March 2023. The Government has also followed suit and increased the minimum 'thank you' payments for hosts from £350 per month to £500 per month, once a guest has been here in the UK for 12 months.

The additional financial support we are providing will also help existing sponsors to continue with their sponsorship, as well as new sponsors who come forward to offer a home to a Ukrainian individual or family, including those re-matching with guests already in the country.

Providing Ukrainians accommodation can be very challenging for sponsors. The refugees are, in most cases, unknown to the sponsors and can have different cultures, speak a different language and are traumatised by the war in their homeland and having had to flee their homes in the very worst circumstances imaginable. This new package shows our strong desire to recognise the contribution made by sponsors, to help them with the rising cost of living and incentivise further sponsorships and rematching. I'd like to thank the citizens of Leeds who have opened their homes to our Ukrainian guests, and have demonstrated their commitment to our values and ambition of being a welcoming and compassionate city.

**Q16** Councillor N Buckley – Could the Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles confirm how many trees have been planted by this Council over the last three years, and how many have subsequently died?

**A** Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles

The woodland creation initiative started in 2020 to address the climate emergency and Parks and Countryside are committed to delivering and creating 50 hectares of woodland every year for 25 years to capture carbon and help improve biodiversity. In January 2020 the initiative was approved at Executive Board and doubled to 50 hectares each year following an announcement by the Leader at council in February 2020, with planting commencing later that year in the winter of 2020/21.



Creating woodlands in urban environments requires significant establishment due to the appropriate protection measures that need to be put in place. Woodlands are therefore developed and designed to Forestry standards in collaboration with the White Rose Forest - a partnership for the community forest in North and West Yorkshire. Woodland creation therefore includes a three-year establishment period and where there is a loss of higher than 10 to 15% replanting is undertaken during this establishment period.

Since 2020, we have planted over 400,000 saplings and over 1,500 standard trees. Calculating how many trees have subsequently died is difficult to determine and, if less than the loss threshold identified, is not relevant as it is not necessary for all trees to reach maturity in order to achieve the desired woodland coverage and subsequent climate benefits. We anticipate around half of the sites identified for whip planting may well require some further replanting next season as they have exceeded the threshold of more than 10 to 15% loss, so on those sites there will be at least this level of loss requiring intervention. Identification of those sites will not be possible until this year's growing season.

**Q17** Councillor D Chapman – Does the Executive Member for Adult and Children's Social Care have confidence in the commitment from other Council Departments responsible for delivering the building and refurbishment of care accommodation given the chronic delays in commencement and completion of these urgent projects?

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

Children's Social Care:

- We have a building programme underway at Field Terrace where a new children's home is being constructed. The works were delayed following the original contractor pulling out. This contractor was scheduled to finish in May. The schedule has slipped slightly with a handover date now scheduled in June. This is monitored on a weekly basis. We have a specific delay of 3w2d, but the contractors is hopeful that they will make this time up when the weather improves.
- We have an ongoing programme of refurbishment to our children's homes. We work with a dedicated team in LBS who have undertaken a number of these projects and will support us with those in the pipeline. The refurbishment at Easdale was delayed and we required some remedial works to be completed. The refurbishment at Lingfield was delivered on time. The refurbishment at Acorn has been delayed. This was due to some problems sourcing parts from within the EU Single Market and also due to the needs of the young people at Acorn restricting the working hours available to the contractor. The delay is 3 weeks.
- We have 2 further refurbs planned at Willows and Cherry Trees. These are at the planning stage. These will begin this year.
- Effective progress is now being made towards delivery of the 4 small group living hubs (2 x 2 bed homes per hub), with the work being driven by a cross-directorate steering group. The group has representation from all services who will have a role in delivery of the hubs, including Asset Management, Finance and HR. A revised delivery programme has been developed and agreed, with services committing to a condensed timeline which will see the 4 hubs delivered a year earlier (by end 2024/25) than originally proposed (2025/26).

Adult Social Care:



- We are making good progress with our Extra Care schemes:
  - o Windlesford Green is currently on site with completion expected January 2024.
  - o A consortium of Lovell Later Living (formerly known as Morgan Ashley) and Home Group were appointed in January 2019 as the preferred delivery partner to design, build and manage a package of four Extra Care schemes in a range of locations in the Leeds area including on the Windlesford Green site on Holmesley Lane in Rothwell.
  - o Windlesford Green is the third of four sites and will be a 62-unit scheme comprising of 43 one-bedroom units and 19-two bedroom units. Construction work started in July 2022, and is on track to complete in January 2024, with Leeds City Council obtaining 100% nominations rights for the first let, and 75% thereafter for a period of up to 60 years.
- With regards to the refurbishment of Dolphin Manor, a review of the current quote for works is taking place to ensure best value, and is expected back no later than w/c 23rd Jan 2023 with a works start date imminent once approved. The same contractor was appointed for the works underway at Spring Gardens and is making good headway so no further delays are expected once works begin.

**Q18** Councillor W Dixon – Can the Executive Member for Environment and Housing inform Council how the Administration intends to reduce the current housing waiting list from 26,981 applications (as of 7/11/22) and the length of time people have to wait to be housed permanently.

**A** Executive Member for Environment and Housing

There are currently approximately 26000 applicants on the Housing Register in Leeds which changes daily, however the service has carried out significant work to reduce the numbers of those identified as having an Urgent housing need from just over 6000 to more recently around 5300.

The average waiting time for a council property varies significantly across the city and is dependent on the supply of accommodation and the type of properties coming available. Currently the average wait time for applicants with an urgent housing need ( Band A ) is approximately 2 and a half years.

Leeds City Council, has one of the most successful prevention programmes in the country. Between 70-80% of all cases threatened with homelessness are successfully prevented from becoming homeless, reducing the pressure on the housing register. This prevention approach continues to form a key part of our approach moving forward and is the subject of heavy investment on a 'spend to save' initiative.

Leeds has an excellent 'stay put' prevention outcome. This is where we enable customers who are threatened with homelessness and will lose their home within 56 days to successfully sustain their current accommodation for at least 6 months. This not only enables customers to remain in situ with all of the associated benefits, but also decreases the number needing urgent rehousing. The 'stay put' outcome for Leeds is 74% while the national average is 33%.

Leeds Housing Options also run a successful private rented scheme, working with private landlords to increase access to the private rented sector to those in housing need, again easing the pressure on the housing register. Alongside our bond scheme, we have also recently formed a dedicated procurement team who will increase the number of private rented



properties available via the scheme to those in housing need providing an alternative option to social housing.

The service has made a number of changes to its allocation policy more recently, suspending the Date of Registration quota to ensure those in the most urgent housing need have first access to any available council homes that come available for allocation.

**Q19** Councillor C Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible please tell Council what plans there are for resolving the ongoing problems with assisted-collection waste collections, as despite promises made in the past, this is still an issue as even one missed assisted-collection is one too many?

**A** Executive Member for Environment and Housing

The Council currently offers an assisted collection for 6,723 households citywide. Where these households meet the criteria for an assisted collection, the crews will fetch the bin from the property and return it once emptied.

Historically, most missed assisted collections have been down to an unfamiliar driver/crew covering a route when the usual crew are off work. This was a particular challenge during the pandemic for example.

Assisted collections are recorded on our case management system and identifiable on the crews in-cab technology.

The service has recently invested in and is in the process of installing upgraded in-cab technology, which includes a new feature that requires the crew to specifically confirm completion of each individual assisted collection before they can move on. Thereby improving recording and accountability for assisted collections. For the last two years we have also included a specific objective in operational staff's appraisals relating to assisted collections and supporting our most vulnerable customers.

Where an assisted collection has been reported as missed it is usually tasked back to the crew for collection the following working day.

As part of the route review that is redesigning all collection routes across the city, additional time will be factored into collection routes for assisted collections, with capacity built in for a 10% growth over the next few years.

**Q20** Councillor C Hart-Brooke – Can the Executive Member advise whether the Council will be seeking new partners for 2023 to bring back the much loved Christmas Market to Leeds this year?

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

Christmas last year saw the return of the Ice Cube@Christmas event where the ever popular 400 sqm ice rink was joined by a selection of local and international street food including Yorkshire Pudding wraps, Canadian style poutine, churros and waffles as well as drinks available from Alpine inspired chalet style huts and Christmas themed stalls including the beautifully crafted Christmas Tree Bar positioned between the owls of Leeds Civic Hall.

A new addition was the Ski Bar complete with gondolas, chairlifts, skis and a four metre-high illuminated Ski Bear. Thor's Tipi made a welcome return with its Viking inspired Christmas



experience with cosy fires and mulled wine.

The family funfair extended to Victoria Gardens and Cookridge Street and included the 30m high Star Flyer as well as the North Pole Funhouse and the spectacular Wheel of Light.

We are looking forward to expanding the Christmas offer this year.

**Q21** Councillor D Blackburn – Can the Executive Member for Environment and Housing tell me what percentage of Council houses have not had a home visit by their Housing Officer during the last 12 months?

**A** Executive Member for Environment and Housing

The service has carried out a home visit as part of our 'Annual and New Tenancy Check In Programme' to 28.3% of our tenants in the 9 months since April 2022.

We changed our annual visit programme for 2022/23 so that we carry out an annual visit to tenants where there are known issues with the property or tenant vulnerabilities and all other tenants will receive a visit once every 3 years. Our target is to visit 44% of our tenants by the end of March 2023.

In addition to this contact programme we are in regular contact with tenants for routine tenancy management and repairs enquiries which include frequent visits to tenants in their home. However, we do not record these visits for reporting purposes and so are not able to report how many have been completed in the last 12 months.

**Q22** Councillor B Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible update Council on the progress in implementing the SPD for HMOs since the last update in May 2022?

**A** Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

The HMO SPD is intended to clarify amenity standards for new development. The Planning Department currently negotiates with developers to improve standards on a case-by-case basis against Core Strategy Policy. An SPD would help with consistency. However, it has been paused due to staffing resources and a focus on projects with greater priorities.

**Q23** Councillor S Golton – Does the current administration regret not introducing licensing of private landlords on a citywide basis when urged to do so by the Liberal Democrat Group when the current administration introduced selective licensing in only two wards in the city?

**A** Executive Member for Environment and Housing

Selective licensing is a discretionary power available under the Housing Act 2004. To designate an area or city you need to be able to demonstrate a business case that shows it is required under one of 6 criteria:

- Low demand for housing
- High levels of ASB directly associated with the private sector
- High levels of deprivation
- High levels of migration
- High levels of crime associated with the private sector
- Poor housing standards



We remained focused on the delivery of the two schemes in Beeston and Harehills. It is imperative that we deliver, learn and evaluate the existing schemes over the next couple of years to ensure that selective licensing delivers the outcomes expected, particularly considering the considerable investment it requires to develop a business case, recruit officers as well the other resources and costs needed to deliver any scheme.

The Council will always keep its options open as part of its overall strategy for addressing standards in the private rented sector. In the future it may be that other areas of the city are considered for selective licensing, depending upon the legislation and requirements of creating a business case.

It is unlikely Leeds would be granted a city wide scheme as a number of locations in the city would not meet any of the requirements set out above.

**Q24** Councillor M Robinson – Would the Executive Board Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles join me in welcoming the selection of Bramley Grange Farm in Harewood Ward to be included as part of the Queen’s Green Canopy, and will she commit to formally re-naming the area in memory of Queen Elizabeth II?

**A** Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles

The Queen’s Green Canopy is a nationwide initiative created to mark the Platinum Jubilee and was originally due to conclude in December – the end of the Jubilee year. Following the wishes of the Patron, His Majesty the King, The Queen’s Green Canopy initiative has been extended to the end of March 2023 to give people the opportunity to plant trees in memoriam to honour Her Majesty. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and the then Prince of Wales planted the first tree in the grounds of Windsor Castle in March 2021, to mark the launch of the initiative, with over a million trees planted in Her Majesty’s name across the nation during the first planting season, October 2021 to March 2022.

Bramley Grange Farm is a new woodland creation site delivering part of the 50 hectares of woodland created each year. This site along the newly created East Leeds Orbital Road (ELOR) will create 8.2ha of new woodland which has been carefully designed to support and increase biodiversity and broadleaf native woodland including glades, swales and hedgerows. This will mean around 23,000 trees will be planted via 5 planned volunteer events commencing on 20th January. The woodland will have public access and will add to the public foot pathways already in place along ELOR.

The new woodland will be included as part of the Queen’s Green Canopy and will be named in memory of Queen Elizabeth II.

**Q25** Councillor S Golton – Can the Executive Member responsible clarify how many street trees have been planted on residential streets since the White Paper of September 2019?

**A** Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate?

The Council has delivered a number of street trees since 2019 across a range of schemes. This includes the Headrow , Corn Exchange Meadow Lane and where a total of 130 street trees have been planted, Clay Pit Lane, where a further 11 new trees have been planted, and 30 new trees at Playhouse Gardens. In addition to these schemes, the Council has facilitated Aire Park where some 500 new trees will be planted and is currently under construction.



Highway works in Armley/Holbeck will be in addition to this number, as are more than 400,000 trees planted as part of the Leeds Flood Alleviation scheme and a further 100,000 in the process of being planted this winter.

The total number of trees we intend to plant for Armley Gyratory is: **654**

To date, we have planted **117** trees at the following locations this planting season.

- **96** at Hunslet Moor Park and Cross Flatts Park.
- **21** at Brickfield Park
- 

As part of the Parks & Countryside Service woodland creation scheme we have planted several schemes on housing and highways sites often close to the highway.

- 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 planting seasons we planted over 57,000 saplings and over 150 standard trees on LCC highways and housing land.
- 2022/2023 planting season we are/have planted over 5400 saplings and 105 standard trees on LCC highways and housing land.
- These figures include working in partnership with other services to deliver compensatory planting schemes e.g. Armley Gyratory scheme.

We regularly receive requests from services and the public to plant on verges next to the highways and we carry out checks for viability and will support planting where viable.

**Q26** Councillor B Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible advise who or what she holds accountable for the poor performance in Planning Enforcement in the Council?

**A** Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

The Leeds Enforcement Service is part of the Council's Planning Service and sits with the City Development Directorate. It undertakes its duties and responsibilities in accordance with national planning legislation, guidance and the Leeds Local Enforcement Plan. It is a very busy service, with a high case load but provides a proportionate and timely response, in investigating alleged or found breaches of Planning control. In terms of performance, for the period ending September 2022, when compared to the other Core Cities, Leeds is a very strong performer in taking necessary Enforcement action, with the highest number of Enforcement Notices issued (46, compared to Birmingham 29, Manchester 21, Sheffield & Bristol 14, Newcastle 12, Liverpool 8 and Nottingham 0). In addition, Leeds (57) is second only to Liverpool (75), in the number of Planning Contravention Notices Served, way ahead of the other Core Cities (Manchester 31, Birmingham 17, Newcastle 14, Sheffield 12, Bristol & Nottingham 0).

**Q27** Councillor S Golton – Can the Leader of Council clarify what communication has taken place to Government and other outside partners to pursue the development of a UBI pilot in the city as agreed in the White Paper of September 2020?

**A** Leader of Council

In May 2020 Steve Walker was approached by Michael Sanders, the Chief Executive of the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (WWCCSC) to as whether Leeds would be interested in participating in a small scale pilot (500-1000 families) of Universal Basic Income. The pilot was dependent on the WWCCSC securing funding for the pilot.



Some initial internal discussions took place and permission was given to enter into further discussions with the WWCCSC regarding the pilot. However, in early 2021 before funding had been secured, Michael Sanders left the WWCCSC and the pilot was not progressed.

**Q28** Councillor T Smith – Can the Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education please update Council on the success or not, of the scheme providing differential pricing for Leeds residents versus visitors at some of the city's attractions?

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

Presuming the Councillor is referring to admission charges introduced for non-Leeds residents at Kirkstall Abbey in 2023 following the approval of the Council's budget for FY2022/23. From 10 May 2022 to 16 January 2023, Kirkstall Abbey has had 65,807 visitors. 5,822 of which have been non-residents and subject to an admission fee raising an additional £29,044.

**Q29** Councillor B Anderson – Can the Executive Member responsible outline the strategy for repairing the damage that has been done to Holt Park next to the tennis courts and the bowling green due to cars driving over the area severely damaging the grass and also demolishing some of the newly planted trees?

**A** Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles

With regards to the damage caused by illegal vehicular access to the Holt Park site, this will be reinstated once the weather allows for this to be undertaken without causing further damage. Any damaged trees will be replaced and to provide future protection, consideration will be given to the use of stock fencing around the areas of woodland development.

Officers from Parks and Countryside would be happy to discuss options with the Ward Councillors, such as allocating S106, to support works that would deter vehicular access to site including for example the use of ornamental perimeter fencing and barrier controls at formal access points.

**Q30** Councillor B Anderson – Does the Executive Member responsible have any strategy for clearing up the leaves that have fallen and have turned to mulch and are currently making the pavements across the city very dangerous to walk on which could get even worse if a frost arrives?

**A** Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

The Council's Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team (CNT) is currently completing the annual leaf cleansing programme – teams have been working from extensive leaf-fall maps and most areas will have been visited at least twice during the current programme which started mid-October 2022.

The programme of work and local maps have evolved over a number of years, with local ward member input and oversight through the relevant Community Committees.

The service prioritises leaf-fall collection during this period, where necessary sharing resources between local teams to make sure the programme of work can be completed.



Additional support continues to be provided through Continental Landscapes outside of the grass cutting season.

Local team Chargehands have been monitoring leaf-fall areas to inform resource deployment. Leaf clearance work should be completed by the end of January 2023 in all parts of the city. Regular local updates have been provided to local elected members since the start of the leaf cleansing programme which have included advice to local members on reporting any dangerous accumulations of leaves that need to be cleared urgently.

**Q31** Councillor R Stephenson – Can the Executive Member please disclose to Council, the median annual remuneration for a council employee (including employer pension contribution) and the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees who fall into the following pay brackets for the current (2022/23) and previous (2021/22) financial years:

Under £20,000  
£20,001 - £25,000  
£25,001 - £30,000  
£30,001 - £35,000  
£35,001 - £40,000  
£40,001 - £50,000  
£50,001 - £60,000  
£60,001 - £70,000  
Over £70,000

**A** Executive Member for Resources

The median annual remuneration based on total gross earnings and inclusive of the cost of the employer's pension contributions are as follows:

- 2021-22 £25,941.74
- 2022-23 £28,124.18\*

\*For 2022-23 this is based on the earning for Apr-Jan and pro-rated up to 12 months.

For the number of Full Time Equivalent within each pay bracket, this has been based on the employee's actual annual salary as recorded on their SAP record. Therefore staff that are part-time will show in the equivalent band for their earnings rather than the full-time salary banding for the role.

2021/22 – Financial Year

<b>Salary Range</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Under £20,000	3,327.59
£20,001 - £25,000	3,087.49
£25,001 - £30,000	1,327.01
£30,001 - £35,000	2,003.44
£35,001 - £40,000	1,018.68
£40,001 - £50,000	1,076.02
£50,001 - £60,000	175.58
£60,001 - £70,000	55.76
Over £70,000	100.56
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12,172.13</b>



<b>Salary Range</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Under £20,000	2,274.04
£20,001 - £25,000	3,165.32
£25,001 - £30,000	1,947.68
£30,001 - £35,000	1,831.33
£35,001 - £40,000	1,098.52
£40,001 - £50,000	1,531.48
£50,001 - £60,000	121.60
£60,001 - £70,000	112.81
Over £70,000	125.87
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12,208.65</b>

**Q32** Councillor S Firth – Residents are raising serious concerns about the irregular and short time intervals between traffic lights changing along the entire A6120 East Leeds Orbital Road, including reports of some road users now dangerously ignoring the warning signals altogether. Will the Executive Member for Infrastructure & Climate investigate the issue with haste to ensure this is rectified?

**A** Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

Our signal equipment supplier has confirmed a problem with push buttons. This is impacting their equipment across the country.

Our supplier has confirmed they will replace the equipment at their cost.

To date, equipment at all standalone crossings on the scheme have now been replaced. The remaining push buttons at junctions will be replaced as soon as stock becomes available but will have more limited impact on operation. In the meantime, any faults should be reported through the Council website.

The equipment supplier is aware of the impact of the issue and every effort is being made to accelerate the process.

**Q33** Councillor S Seary – Can the Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles please update Council when the physical signs advertising Active Leeds services will be corrected to match that being charged, and how much will it have cost to do so?

**A** Executive Member for Public Health and Active Lifestyles

By the end of the week (beginning 16/01/23) all the leisure centres will have vinyl stickers to overlay the price at a cost of £500 for the stickers.

**Q34** Councillor S Firth – Can the Executive Member for Economy, Culture & Education update Council on city preparations to celebrate the coronation of HM King Charles III?

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



Government guidance is expected about the Coronation of HM King Charles III in the next couple of weeks. Early fact finding is underway locally about feasibility and costs of possible events and about multi-faith events, but it is difficult to progress detailed plans without the national guidance and framework. Formal planning will begin once the national guidance is received through the former 'London Bridge group' which will be known as the Coronation Planning Group. The Coronation Planning Group will update Members further as proposals develop.

**Q35** Councillor D Seary – Would the Executive Member agree that Leeds residents deserve the greatest choice in the mode of transportation they use?

**A** Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate

Our ambitious Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy approved in Autumn 2021 and the huge investment in schemes we have delivered in the last few years are all about ensuring everyone has the greatest choice in how they travel, be it by car, bus, train, cycle or on foot.

It is important to recognise that 28.7%\* of households do not have access/ own a car in Leeds. Accordingly, we want to ensure everyone can access relevant services, travel to work, to education and for leisure. This needs to be the same as for those lucky enough by merit of their age, health and financial resources to have a driver's license and own a car.

Not only does this approach improve individuals transport options, reducing their cost of transport, but also improves health and wellbeing and reduces the city's carbon emissions.

We know there are challenges to this, especially in the provision of reliable public transport (rail and bus) services to all areas in the city. We are working hard with the Mayor, Combined Authority and the bus operators to maintain and improve services. The most notable recent major bus initiative being the £2 maximum single fare and £4.50 max day fare on buses pioneered ahead of the national scheme. We will continue to ask government to support public transport in the city through legislation and providing the necessary funding.

In collaboration with the Combined Authority, planning for a Mass Transit system for west Yorkshire is progressing well and we have secured over £100m to advance this essential piece of infrastructure which will drive growth and increase transport choice in the city. We continue to provide support to the Combined Authority to progress this vitally important area of work. The Council's response to a recent public consultation undertaken by the Combined Authority has been sent following consideration at the December Executive Board.

Work is also progressing on delivering an e-bike hire scheme in Leeds later this year and we are trialling innovative delivery arrangements in North Leeds – Starship robots – to aid deliveries from local shops to local residents.

\*2021 Census - number of cars or vans owned or available for use by household members

Yours sincerely

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

