



Democratic & Central Services

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To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL MEETING – 16th JANUARY 2013

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 9 to 25 unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

Q09 Councillor Nagle to the Executive Member (Health and Wellbeing) - Please can the Executive Member for Adult Social Care please update Council on proposals for Rothwell Fulfilling Lives Centre?

A Executive Board in December approved a proposal to demolish Rothwell Fulfilling Lives Centre and build a new bespoke facility on the same site. The original intention was to re-furbish the existing facility. However, we think it would be better value to re-build it as it will be able to meet the needs of people with the most complex conditions, it will have lower maintenance costs and it will be more energy efficient.

The number of people with more complex learning disabilities is increasing as more young people with severe and complex needs now survive into adulthood, for example in Leeds in 2005, 35 people with moderate to severe learning disabilities left school at 19. This figure had increased to 89 in 2009.

The number of people with complex learning disabilities who are living longer is also increasing. In the over 50s age group, the estimate is for a 48% increase in the numbers in this age group between 2001 and 2021.

The new facility will incorporate the following specialist facilities:- A rebound therapy room; A sensory room; A dedicated medical room to support the work of NHS staff based there; A dedicated discreet space for enteral tube feeding; Charging stations and areas for electric wheelchairs; A purpose built physiotherapy and postural management room; A changing Place toilet and changing facilities; It will have racking hoists in many areas.

Q10 Councillor Anderson to the Executive Member (Development and the Economy) - Does the Executive Member with responsibility for Highways feel he is getting value for money from the Contractors the Council are employing for Highway Maintenance work?

A Contractors for use by Highway Maintenance are procured in accordance with the Council's corporate rules and procedures.

Contractors tender for work on a competitive basis, and all tenders include a formal specification for the work to be undertaken. This ensures that we obtain contractors of suitable experience and quality to carry out work at competitive rates.

When work is awarded to contractors, performance against specification and other contractual constraints such as timescales, hours of working and adherence to health and safety procedures is closely monitored.

All work is measured on completion and any defects which fall outside the specification are brought to the contractors attention so that they can be rectified at no cost to the Council.

This approach does provide the Council with contractors who give value for money for the services they provide.

Q11 Councillor Golton to the Executive Member (Children's Services) - Can the Executive Member for Children's Services provide an update on progress in implementing a fairer payment structure for foster carers?

A Our foster carers play a vital and highly valued role for Leeds. They support many of our most vulnerable children and young people. We want to ensure that the payments they receive to support them are fair, competitive and considered.

We regularly review payments to ensure this is the case and we are undertaking a review at the current time. We've already surveyed and consulted with our carers, looked at the national picture and analysed the issues regarding the current payment structure. We're now modelling the financial implications of different options and entering into a formal period of consultation with carers, with sessions arranged for January and February.

We will report to Executive Board in the spring on the proposals.

This process takes time because we want to get it right and ensure full and meaningful consultation. Equally however, foster carer recruitment remains a priority and an imperative for the city. As such, we have made interim increase in the fees we pay to level 2 carers, from January 1st this raised from £52 for the first child and £26 for the second child to £80 for the first child and £40 for the second child. From 1st April this will rise again to £100 for the first child and £50 for the second child.

So we are taking the urgent action we need now alongside a thorough review. We are complementing this with work within the Child Friendly Leeds agenda to create other incentives to become a foster carer with Leeds City Council and I look forward to reporting more details of that to Executive Board very soon.

Q12 Councillor C Gruen to the Executive Member (Health and Wellbeing) - Would the Executive Member for Health and Well-Being update Council on the Government's recent public health grant settlement?

- A The Public Health settlement represents an increase over the baseline spend position of 10% in 2013/14 and a further 10% in 2014/15.

Public Health has been historically under-funded in Leeds and the increase is therefore building on a very low base.

The national baseline figure for 2012/13 was £2.5bn, which is now increased to £2.7bn in 2013/14 and £2.9bn in 2014/15. The figures for Leeds are £36.8m for 2013/14 and £40.5m in 2014/15.

It is a relief that Public Health is not being hit as hard as other local authority functions through government spending cuts. However, the allocation for Leeds still falls short of the Government's own calculations of what the city requires in order to deal with the substantial health needs of a major city with significant health inequalities and levels of deprivation.

- Q13 Councillor Hanley to the Executive Member (Children's Services) - Can the Executive Member for Children's Services please update Council on progress around foster carer recruitment?

- A One carer has been approved from Independent Fostering Agency, seven are in the process of being assessed and two more are just starting the assessment process. In addition we are visiting five more carers who have expressed an interest in becoming Leeds carers. These carers come from four different IFAs.

There has been a net gain of 7 foster carers in addition to these coming across from IFAs in the past six months.

There have been various campaigns running with 'Foster a Banner' over the summer, Fostering Fortnight and improved social media presence.

- Q14 Councillor Anderson to the Executive Member (Environment) - Would the Executive Member with responsibility for the development of a food waste collection in the city advise me who he holds responsible for the Council not being successful in securing the necessary funding from the Government fund, particularly in the light of the Councils that were successful in securing the funding?

- A The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is responsible for the council not being successful in securing the necessary funding to extend food waste collections across the city.

- Q15 Councillor S Bentley to the Executive Member (Environment) - Will the Executive Member for Environment and Licensing guarantee that the application to protect West Park playing fields under the Queen Elizabeth II playing fields scheme will include the westernmost corner of the site that was apparently excluded in the proposal tabled at Executive Board in December?

- A I am very pleased that we are progressing with the registration of West Park Playing Fields as a QE II playing field in Trust. Executive Board also requested that officers undertook to look into the matter as to whether the boundaries could be extended to incorporate the green space immediately next to the centre.

This matter is currently being looked at in the round as part of the work on the options for West Park and importantly I want local ward members to be consulted prior to the Council confirming the exact boundary line to Fields in Trust for registration as a QE II site.

Q16 Councillor Renshaw to the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services) - Can the Chair of Safer Leeds update Council on the work being done to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour across the city?

A Recorded crime is at a 10 year low and is 13% lower than the same period (April-November) during the previous year.

Between April and November 2012 there was a 29% reduction in robbery compared to the same period in 2011. There has also been a 15% reduction in disorder, a 15% reduction in violence against the person and a 10% reduction in criminal damage over the same period.

Theft from shops increased by 17% between April and November 2012 and theft from person increased by 7% in the same period. These increases are thought to be influenced by economic circumstances but work will continue to reduce these in the next year.

On a ward level, Hyde Park and Woodhouse has seen a 22.6% decrease in recorded crime in the years from November 2011 to November 2012. Over the same period recorded crime in Beeston and Holbeck reduced by 14.4%, Armley by 12.7% and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill by 12.2%.

Safer Leeds has made burglary a key priority and has seen significant progress being made to reduce this. The period between April and November 2012 saw a 35% reduction in burglary from dwellings and a 13% reduction in burglary elsewhere.

This achievement has been through a number of partnership endeavours. Aire Valley Homes Leeds have run "Crime Awareness Days" in partnership with the Neighbourhood Policing Teams. Student volunteers have been recruited to provide a week of action in Hyde Park. Promotional campaigns have attempted to reduce the seasonal increase in burglary by reminding people to lock their houses after dark. Burglary impact statements have been included in prosecution files to ensure sentences reflect the severity of crimes committed.

Safer Leeds aims to maintain momentum with regard to burglary in 2013. It will also redouble its efforts to combat the perpetrators of domestic abuse across the city.

Q17 Councillor Cohen to the Executive Member (Children's Services) - Was the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing aware that only 1 paediatrician was on duty in the whole of Leeds on 31 December 2012?

A Across the Children's Hospital the following specialities had Consultants and their teams available:-

- General Paediatrics.
- General Surgery.
- Paediatric Renal.
- Paediatric Livers.
- Paediatric Intensive Care.
- Neonatal Services.
- Paediatric Neurology.
- Paediatric Oncology.
- Paediatric Cardiology.

- Paediatric Cardiac Surgery.
- Paediatric Medicine.

I hope this provides you with the assurance you are seeking that there was more than one paediatrician available for the hospital on the 31st December.

Q18 Councillor Cleasby to the Leader of Council - Given the financial pressures facing the Council, does the Leader of Council have any plans to change the level of support provided by the Council for trade unions?

A The Leader's budget speech for 2012/13 included the securing of £40k savings on the facilities accorded to trade unions. This saving is being delivered through joint working with the trade unions.

On a broader front it is worthy of note that our partnership working with the trade unions has enabled the Council to achieve positive outcomes with regard to safeguarding jobs whilst delivering necessary budget savings and staffing reductions.

Q19 Councillor Buckley to the Executive Member (Health and Wellbeing) - Can the Executive Member for Health & Wellbeing provide an update on progress with plans for the Alwoodley Medical Centre?

A NHS Airedale, Bradford and Leeds Cluster will consider in early February a proposal to purchase land from the Council. NHS Airedale, Bradford and Leeds Cluster have an expectation that new premises can be built by March 2014.

Q20 Councillor Anderson to the Executive Member (Development and the Economy) - Does the Executive Member with responsibility for implementing NGT in the city agree with me that the answers to questions being raised by elected members are taking too long to be answered and explained by the project team particularly if we are meant to be keeping the public fully informed and advised as to the business case and the benefits this scheme will bring to the city?

A The NGT team has arranged and attended a large number of public meetings in recent months. This has generated a large volume of comments. Given the later responses are being collated into a "FAQ" format which will be posted on the website. Letters will then be sent to individuals redirecting them to the website.

Q21 Councillor Anderson to the Executive Member (Development and the Economy) - Does the Executive Member with responsibility for flooding issues agree that the level of funding aimed at addressing this issue needs to be reviewed, particularly in the light of the increased volumes of new housing set to be constructed in the city?

A The principles of flood risk management as applied to new development date back to at least Planning Policy Circular 30/92 Development and Flood Risk. They may go back further. The latest requirements are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Technical Guidance. These require all new development to have a flood risk assessment which demonstrates that the development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and where possible will reduce it overall. (Para. 102).

In order to demonstrate that new development meets this standard, developers usually collect all the surface water run-off from the site and store it in the form of above ground ponds, or below ground tanks. It is then released from site in a controlled manner, via a flow control device (Hydrobrake, for example).

In relation to brown-field development sites the discharge rate will be at the same rate as prior to the new development as an absolute minimum. In fact, since 2007, Leeds City Council, in common with the other West Yorkshire Councils require developers to reduce the rate of discharge from the site, post development, to no more than 70% of the pre-development situation. This approach has been endorsed by the Environment Agency, as it also demonstrates a reduction in flood risk.

However, for green-field sites, limiting the rate of discharge in itself is sometimes not enough to ensure that there will no increase in flood risk, off-site. The reason for this is that there will be an increase in the volume of run-off from the site. Therefore, for green-field sites the Council usually requires the rate of discharge from the site to capped at a nominal flow rate (usually the 1 in 2 year rate, for all storms). In addition to this, where there are known flooding problems downstream of the green-field site, the Council may also ask for a Section 106 contribution from the developer to pay for works to help alleviate these.

Looking ahead, the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 provides for the creation of SuDs Approval Bodies (SABs) and Leeds City Council will need to create one of these, (expected commencement date April 2014). These will be responsible for approving and in many cases adopting the surface water drainage infrastructure for all new developments. The idea is that this will encourage developers to provide SuDs (Sustainable Drainage systems) such as infiltration basins, detention basins and balancing ponds, rather than below ground tanks, which are currently the norm. One of the main benefits of SuDs is that they mimic the run-off characteristics of the site prior to development and therefore help to reduce flood risk more effectively. They also achieve improvements in water quality, which at present, are largely ignored.

The creation of SABs will require additional funding and resources from Council, not least because at present, the legislation does not allow SAB to charge developers for adopting and maintaining SuDs.

As well as new development, there is likely to be additional demands on Council for the funding of flood risk management going forwards. This is because the impacts of climate change are likely to increase the incidences of flooding across the city. Although there are likely to be funds / grants available from the Environment Agency towards these, the amounts available are unlikely to cover the full costs, and only available many years into the future. (ie within their capital programme). Officers will bring forward proposals for additional funding to alleviate the risk of flooding where solutions to specific flooding problems can be identified.

Q22 Councillor Anderson to the Executive Member (Environment) - Can the Executive Member for Environmental Services please confirm the rates, both in percentage terms and by volume, of the levels of contamination of the green recyclable waste that is collected in the city?

A The level of waste recycled in Leeds continues to increase. Year to date, 43.3% of the household waste collected either at kerbside, HWSS or through bring sites, has been diverted from landfill and reprocessed into new products. This is 3.2 percentage points higher than the same period last year.

Regarding the specific question of the kerbside recycling collected in the city, the amount of recycling achieved is dependent on what items are placed, by the public, into the wheeled bins provided. In 2011/12, 2.3% of waste collected (693 tonnes) was rejected at the gate of our recycling contractor, Martins.

In the sorting process, Martins rejected a further 3879 tonnes, or 12.7%, for which they did not have an end market. This type of wastage is normal for any Material Recycling Facility. This

has reduced to 12.2% during 2012/13. Leeds recycling rate is based on the amount of materials that have been truly recycled.

Q23 Councillor Anderson to the Executive Member (Environment) - Does the Executive Member with responsibility for street cleansing agree that one of the unintended consequences of both the removal of the bulky household waste collection service and the changes in respect of commercial waste could be increased levels of fly tipping throughout the city?

A In regard to bulky waste collections, I would like to make it clear to Members that there are no proposals to remove this service in the city. Concerning potential changes in respect of commercial waste, we are currently investigating a number of options, and evidence has shown us from other authorities who have already introduced similar measures, that it has not led to an increase in fly-tipping.

The Council has, and will continue to take robust action against anyone it can prosecute for fly tipping offences.

Q24 Councillor Anderson to the Executive Member (Development and the Economy) - Does the Executive Member with responsibility for Leeds Kirkgate Market agree with me that the need to find a solution to improve Leeds Kirkgate Market is becoming more imperative due to the number of empty stalls throughout the market?

A Yes, I agree that it is important that we set out the way forward for Kirkgate Market, providing clarity and certainty to enable the Council to plan its investment, and to enable market traders to make long term decisions about their businesses. It is also important that we ensure we get this work right. The future of Kirkgate Market involves several complex issues and potentially substantial investment of Council funds. This includes the future physical configuration and capital investment in the buildings, the inter-relationship with the Eastgate Quarters scheme, management options, and managing the impact of any works on the operation of traders' businesses. We will set out the proposals in the Spring of this year.

Q25 Councillor Marjoram to the Chair, West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority - What consideration has been given by the Integrated Transport Authority and the Council into the impact the delivery of the NGT route could have on existing cycle lanes in the city, particularly at junctions, and does the Chairman of the ITA believe that adequate consultation has been carried out especially given the fact that the Tour de France is coming to Leeds in 2014?

A Cycling has been raised as an issue at most of the consultation events recently held for NGT. The existing NGT design has been reviewed with regard to the level of cycling provision and the findings discussed with the Leeds Cycling Forum. A meeting has been arranged for the 15th January with a sub group of the Leeds cycling forum to discuss the details in more depth. The aim is to minimise and mitigate any downgrading of cycling provision and enhance cycling facilities wherever possible.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Tomkinson
Principal Governance Officer