



Democratic & Central Services

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To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL MEETING – 13TH JANUARY 2016

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 9 to 19 unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

Q9 Councillor A Blackburn - Can the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport & Planning assure me that Highways have enough barriers and other equipment to close roads when necessary?

A The exceptionally wet weather over the last few months, as we are all aware, has produced some significant flooding events across the district.

During these flood events the Highway Maintenance team received a large number of calls, both from the Police and members of the public, to advise them that particular roads had been flooded and that warning signs need to be erected for the sake of public safety.

During the flooding that took place on the 12th of December one of the three Highways Depots did run out of signs, but signs were available at the other two depots, and could have been used if needed.

In the unprecedented flooding that took place over the Christmas period, Highways received 81 calls in 16 hours on Boxing Day. Of these 28 were requests to close roads, the remainder were requests for sandbags. At no point did Highways run out of Road Closed signs and barriers.

However, in light of the unprecedented flooding that took place, additional signs have been ordered to increase stocks and replace those signs that were damaged.

Q10 Councillor F Venner - Can the Executive Member with responsibility for waste management please update Council on work to drive up efficiency?

A The waste management services aim to provide an efficient, high quality waste and recycling collection service has resulted in the delivery of key infrastructure and service improvements.

All black bin waste is now being delivered to the RERF at Cross Green to allow the full commissioning of the facility. Once commissioned, this facility will deliver savings of around £4m per annum from next year compared to this year's budgeted levels, and around £6.8m per annum in total compared to the projected costs of a continued reliance on landfill.

The introduction of alternate weekly collections, is having the desired effect of reducing waste and increasing recycling through reducing black bin capacity and balancing this with an increase in green bin capacity.

There are further significant savings to be realised here by maximising the use of all available recycling capacity, either by getting recyclables out of the black bins and into the green, or through reducing contamination in the green bins.

A programme of co-ordinated communications, marketing, engagement, including and a stronger line on the enforcement of agreed bin policies will be delivered during 2016.

However, there are still parts of the City where different, tailored collection arrangements need to be considered. Further analysis is ongoing to assess these options and the scope for releasing any spare operational capacity. A costed and prioritised plan, in consultation with Members, will be developed during 2016 to deliver alternative collection solutions in priority areas.

In addition, it is worth noting that with approx. 6k more Households in the City between 2013/14 to 2015/16, kerbside collections have been provided without any further increase in the number of refuse routes.

Q11 Councillor M Robinson - Can the Executive Board member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning confirm that funding to reopen Linton Bridge will be prioritised?

A We are prioritising our investigation into the mechanism of what has happened, and the detail of the structural fault, in order to inform the repairs we need to do to restore full use of the bridge. Until this work is complete we won't be able to establish a firm cost for the works. However we have submitted an initial estimate of £1m - £2m which we expect to come from the £40m promised by central government to local authorities affected by Storm Eva.

Q12 Councillor B Cleasby - Was the executive board member for regeneration, transport and planning aware that developers plunder the land adjacent to any new roads for housing development when he authorised the consultation on Leeds Bradford Airport surface access?

A A good, well connected regional airport is a vital element of the city region's transport and economic infrastructure; improving access and connectivity to the city region's airport is therefore a priority for the city. Proposals for improving connectivity to Leeds Bradford Airport are longstanding having

previously been included both within the Local Transport Plan and within the airport's own masterplan and surface access strategy. The establishment of the West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund and its prioritisation of proposals for a new access road has provided the opportunity for the Council to begin work with the support of the Combined Authority on the preparatory work needed to establish the outline business case for investing in a new road.

I am of course well aware of the current LDF site allocation proposals and how these may or may not relate to the development of the link road proposals which are being developed in the full knowledge of the decisions Members have taken on this important spatial and transport planning issue and the previous decisions of the Executive Board and Council. The initial consultation process on the potential options for improving road connectivity has been agreed and is being undertaken to give the local communities and all those with an interest in the matter an early input to the process of beginning the selection of a preferred scheme. Developers and landowners will no doubt have their own views and ambitions, but the Council's position has been very clearly laid out in terms of our present planning policies and the consultation on the development site allocation proposals after exhaustive work by members of the Development Plans Panel.

Q13 Councillor S Hamilton - Can the Executive Member for Communities comment on the impact of the recent decision to abolish succession rights for council tenants in Leeds?

A The Housing and Planning Bill includes provision that where a tenant (other than a spouse or civil partner) succeeds to a local authority tenancy, they will only be granted a 5 year fixed term tenancy, instead of a secure tenancy.

This will impact on other family members who may have had an expectation that they would succeed to a secure tenancy, including for example grown up children, brothers and sisters who have lived with the tenant for 12 months or more.

The extension of fixed term tenancies to cases of succession could lead to greater insecurity for tenants, in particular those with young children attending local schools, living in a property that has been adapted to meet their medical needs and those in areas of the city with little alternative affordable housing.

It will increase the administrative burden on the local authority through the requirement to review its tenancy policies and to hold regular reviews of the tenancy and consider whether to renew the tenancy at the end of its initial term. It may also lead to increased right to buy applications from tenants who can afford to purchase the property, and chose to do so to avoid having a fixed term tenancy.

Q14 Councillor A Hussain - Can the Executive Member please update Council on the recent re-accreditation process for the Equality Framework?

A I can inform members that the external peer assessment team visited the council over two days in November of last year to conclude their assessment and I am pleased to report to members of council that Leeds City Council as once again been assessed as meeting the 'Excellent' standard level of the Equality Framework for Local Government.

In their feedback they stated that they had no doubts that Leeds City Council is 'Excellent' and were particularly impressed with:

- the levels of commitment from politicians, senior officers and throughout the organisation
- the extent to which the council knows and understands its communities
- the council's culture of constructive challenge aimed to achieve the best possible outcomes for people who live and work in the city

The external peers made a number of observations which we welcome the opportunity to explore further, and these include:

- The need to review our communications processes to ensure that messages are shared consistently across the organisation
- Strengthening our equality performance management arrangements
- Reviewing our approach to appraisals for dispersed staff to ensure they are carried out effectively
- Making explicit how staff feedback, training and development needs and sickness records are used to plan future training and development programmes.

It is also pleasing to report that the team identified a number of areas of notable practice which included:

The Council's approach to Prevent;

Adult Social Care's neighbourhood networks;

the Member Champions Group and wider political leadership;

the ways in which LCC harnesses the capability of staff;

including service users in commission services;

and, influencing companies to take on the values of the council and to become inclusive employers.

Q15 Councillor B Flynn - Given the enormous problems for children's learning and great distress to staff caused by persistent leaks, could the Executive Member for Children's Services please advise me when the roofing work at Adel Primary school will be completed, particularly since it should have been finished by last September by the contractor?

A The difficulties faced by the staff at Adel Primary School over the last four months have been most regrettable, and officers of Children's Services (with support from PP&PU), our partners NPS Leeds, and the roofing system manufacturer, Britmet Tileform Ltd, have been working with the contractor, Mitie Tilley, to try to reach a resolution which would satisfactorily secure the

building, and protect the occupants from some very severe weather conditions. With the contractor restricted from accessing the building to only one day a week, when the School, and other users, are absent, the repair programme has unfortunately been elongated further.

I can advise that on return from the Christmas break, priority discussions have taken place between all of the parties involved in the scheme and it has been agreed that a Britmet recommended contractor, Regent Roofing, will be brought in to supervise the remedial work to be undertaken by Mitie, which we are advised is estimated to take two days to complete.

It has been agreed in principle with the school that the works will be undertaken on Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th next week (weather permitting) rather than works only being undertaken on Saturdays as per the current arrangements, with a view to practical completion being achieved and the warranty issued within three weeks. Internal redecoration utilising the Council's Internal Service Provider, Leeds Building Services, has been scheduled to be undertaken during the February half-term break.

Q16 Councillor J Bentley - Could the leader of council please provide details of any public consultation that was carried out before the decision was made to move Leeds Coroner's Court to Wakefield?

A Leeds and Wakefield Councils have a joint Coroner's service. It is jointly funded (pro rata to population) but administered by Wakefield MDC who are the Lead Authority for this Service. Until recently, there were Coroner's Courts in both Wakefield and Leeds.

Pressures for change

- Dual service facilities entailed unnecessary costs, duplication and service inefficiencies.
- Following a change in the law, there is an expectation that every inquest will be held within 12 months of death, but Leeds/Wakefield Coroner's Service had a backlog of cases which made achieving this unrealistic. Significant efficiencies needed to be made through smarter working and streamlined practice as further direct investment in an enhanced service was not feasible due to budgetary constraints.
- The Leeds Coroner's Court was located at Symons House which was not fit for purpose. There were no appropriate facilities for families and interested parties to meet during the hearing; there were inadequate arrangements for the security of the jury and the coroner who have to use shared corridors and toilet facilities which brought them into direct contact with family members during what are frequently emotionally charged hearings. There were also general security concerns about the building.
- The Lease for Symons House expires in July 2017, but a break clause enabled it to be brought to an end sooner.

Current Arrangement

The replacement Court is at the existing Coroner's Court in Wakefield but this will be replaced by an alternative specially adapted building with all necessary facilities for parties, juries, coroners, witnesses and families. Staff will also be located at this building and an efficient and streamlined process will be developed.

They restructured the service @18 months ago and moved all Council staff to Wakefield. These changes have already brought service improvements with a 72.09% increase in inquests held in 2015 when compared to 2014.

The costs saving efficiencies will finance additional resource and improvements for the Coroner's Service to enable it to meet national service targets and expectations.

Consultation

This package of efficiency measures has been put together and implemented by Wakefield MDC who are the Lead Authority for this joint service. As part of this process, Wakefield MDC decided upon the proper decision-making process and whether or not consultation was necessary. They briefed the Chief Coroner for England and Wales who was supportive of the proposals.

They deemed that formal public consultation was not necessary but nonetheless, LCC consulted with the Group Leaders as democratic representatives of the people of Leeds, as well as with the Chief Executive.

- Q17** Councillor M Robinson - Will the Executive Board member for Community Safety set out what measures have been taken to tackle extremism and radicalisation in Leeds?

A Leeds City Council – PREVENT PROGRAMME

CONTEST is the Government's national policy to reduce the risk to the UK and its interest overseas from the risk of terrorism. At a local level, we have consulted widely with local communities about our approach and work on the Prevent agenda (an integral strand of CONTEST), and highlighted the importance of developing the capacity and confidence of communities to tackle extremist ideology and groups, and provide support to vulnerable individuals.

Background

Our work on Prevent in Leeds dates back to 2007 when the local authority was selected as a pilot area for the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Programme. Leeds is a designated Prevent Priority Area. In addition, the Prevent Duty that came into force on 1st July 2015 now places a statutory requirement upon Leeds City Council to have due regard for the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

On the 19th October 2015, the Government published its National Counter Extremism Strategy, which seeks to tackle all forms of extremism: violent and non-violent; Islamist and neo-Nazi, and to improve the understanding of the causes and impacts of extremism. The strategy has four main strands, to:

- Counter the extremist ideology
- Build a partnership with all those opposed to extremism
- Disrupt extremists
- Build more cohesive communities

Work with communities

We continue to encourage communities to be at the heart of this agenda and to take a proactive approach in developing and delivering a response to it. This type of collaborative work sends out a united response and undermines the messages of isolation and conflict that is so often used by those who wish to divide communities.

We seek to engage with local communities through a variety of ways. This includes:

- active engagement with local communities through local forums and events;
- visits to faith groups and networks;
- building the capacity of community and faith organisations to reject extremist voices;
- develop strong leadership within local communities to provide them with a voice;
- support to schools to enable them to understand the role they have to play within the Prevent agenda and how we can assist them in this area of work; and
- development of projects such as materials and literature that refute extremist narratives, engagement with young people involved with gangs that could be particularly susceptible to extremist messages, and training and support for staff and students at colleges and schools.

Although a very challenging agenda, the Leeds Prevent Programme has the support of many communities in Leeds and this can be attributed to our personalised approach to the agenda where we have been very honest and open with communities about the Prevent agenda and what it aims to achieve. Our approach over the years has included regular meetings and briefings with community and faith leaders and the delivery of training and grassroots initiatives. This has won the support of many diverse communities, including migrant communities, that has led to the development of many new important relationships with communities in Leeds.

Work with vulnerable individuals

Work to safeguard children and adults, providing early intervention to protect and divert people away from being drawn into extremist activity, is a key objective within the Prevent strategy. This work in Leeds is supported through the Channel programme. Channel is a core component of Prevent and is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk from radicalisation. Within Leeds, Channel uses existing collaboration between local authorities, statutory partners (such as the education and health sectors, social services, children's and youth services and offender management services), the police and the local community to:

- identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism;
- assess the nature and extent of that risk; and
- develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

Leeds has a varied cohort of referrals to the Channel programme, from across the broad spectrum of extremist ideologies.

Work with statutory partners

The Prevent Duty demands a partnership approach to tackling issues of extremism and terrorism. Over the past 5 years, Leeds has taken a lead in coordinating partnership activity to tackle the threats of extremism within our communities. The

To date, we have established the Gold, Silver, and Channel partnership groups to share information between organisations and develop a coordinated approach and response to the threats associated with the Prevent agenda. We are using these groups to ensure that we undertake a holistic approach to supporting vulnerable individuals, addressing the grievances of communities and individuals, and to tackle the drivers of extremism. Partners involved include the Police, Children Services, Probation, Health, FE/HE sector, and the Youth Offending Service. We are committed to continue work with a wide range of partners from across a variety of sectors to ensure that we develop and deliver a co-ordinated response.

The Gold Group provides a strategic steer for the delivery of the four CONTEST workstreams, based on the current and emerging terrorism risk to the Leeds area. The group is responsible for oversight of the action plan for Leeds and briefings are provided on issues including mapping of risks and heat spots, and the impact of global conflicts within local communities. The group meets on a quarterly basis and involves senior officers from the Council, Police, CTU and Probation.

The Silver Group's main objective is to identify and manage the terrorism risk to the city through a range of activities involving both statutory and VCF partners and in the form of a comprehensive Prevent Action Plan. Representatives for this group have been drawn from Citizens and Communities, Safer Leeds, Children's Services, FE and HE partners, Emergency Planning, Probation, Police and CTU. The Silver Group also meets on a quarterly basis.

The Channel Group meets on a monthly basis and includes representatives from the Police, Safer Leeds, Youth Offending Service, FE sector, and health professionals. The group has a specific remit to consider cases that have been referred to the group due to their susceptibility to extremist rhetoric, and develop packages of support and intervention for the individual so that they are drawn away from this kind of behavior and groups.

The Prevent Coordinator is supporting a range of sectors where the risk of radicalisation may occur and who must meet the requirements of the Prevent Duty. This involves support with developing action plans, responding to concerns about vulnerable individuals, and delivering training to staff to ensure they are aware of the factors that might drive an individual towards extremism, and the behaviours that should give them cause for concern.

During 2015, 146 Prevent training sessions were delivered with almost 5000 staff (including teachers and governors, housing staff, ASB staff, police, and community members) attending the sessions.

Moving forward

The new National Counter Extremism strategy provides impetus for the Council to strengthen its approach to promoting cohesion and preventing all types of extremism (including far right narratives), in a broader context of universal and targeted activity, delivered through the new 'Strong Communities Benefitting from a Strong City' Breakthrough project. The programme will aim to embed the benefits of good community relations, promote cultural and religious respect, celebrating diversity, and also delivering more targeted work with communities, where appropriate, to dispel extremism from our city wherever it exists. Our approaches to the work of prevent and extremism in Leeds has always been about working with communities and the Counter Extremism Strategy is an opportunity to both broaden and deepen its impact.

Q18 Councillor S Bentley - Does the executive board member for environmental protection and community safety think that Leeds is winning the battle to get dog owners to clear up their dog's mess and has he considered using the methods employed in the village of Catterick by Richmondshire Council?

A Dog fouling complaints in Leeds have reduced in number over the past three years. In 2013 the Environmental Action Service received 1,559 service requests relating to dog fouling. This compares to 1,160 service requests received in 2015, an overall reduction of 25%.

This reduction in complaints can be attributed to;

- An increased focus on enforcement activity including the empowering of Environmental Action Officers, our partners and the public to report fouling offences.
- The delivery of educational projects including a number of responsible dog ownership events across the city.
- Improved cleaning operations.

However it is recognised that dog fouling continues to be a real issue for the Council and the residents of Leeds. In view of this the Council has introduced a number of innovative schemes to compliment our enforcement and cleaning activities. In particular the use of community led campaigns to change behaviours and empower people to take action.

Successful schemes include;

The Garforth Dog Watch Scheme operating along similar lines to a neighbourhood watch scheme. Community volunteers monitor specific areas, taking action themselves to report people who allow their dogs to foul, maintain specially designed dog watch signage and also create peer pressure in the neighbourhood on those residents who may not clean up after their dogs.

The Hawksworth Wood Campaign. The local primary school was central to the campaign with pupils designing posters and leaflets to raise awareness among residents of the estate as to the effects and consequences of dog fouling on the community.

The Flag it, Bag it Campaign in Clifford village with the Parish Council. Fouling was sprayed with paint to visually highlight the extent of the problem to irresponsible dog owners.

Keep Britain Tidy "We are watching you" posters have been used in "hot spot areas". The glow in the dark posters were used as research suggests that dog fouling tends to occur at night time and during the months with shorter days, as some dog owners feel that they can't be seen under the cover of darkness. Other hard hitting signs are in use to illustrate the serious public health risks of fouling particularly to the young and also the legal penalties for fouling.

Dog Waste Bag Dispensers are to be trialled at six parks across the city to encourage more owners to pick up after their dogs.

Pick up or Pay up pavement stencils similar to those used by Richmondshire District Council have been trialled by a Locality Team to good effect on selected ginnels and pathways. High visibility biodegradable paint is used to provide an eye catching but temporary reminder to dog owners. The use of the templates is restricted to selected areas so as not to encourage copy cat graffiti. The use of the templates is currently limited to the Locality Teams however Parish Councils or established community groups could be enlisted to use the templates as part of an effective community based campaign.

Q19 Councillor M Robinson - Would the Executive Member for Economy and Culture set out how many new businesses have been listed on the Council's YORtender database in each of the last three years?

A 2013 - Suppliers registered to YORtender = 9967
2014 - Suppliers registered to YORtender = 7797
2015 - Suppliers registered to YORtender = 3224

Please note that YORtender is a regional system and although a supplier may register to the YORtender database, it does not indicate that they are a contracted Leeds City Council supplier, nor does it indicate that Leeds City Council have conducted any business activity with the supplier registered to the YORtender system.

The YORtender system was commissioned by the region three years ago, when all the suppliers that were on the previous system (SCMS) had to re-register to YORtender. Since then, knowledge of and registration by new business, has continued to grow, and the number of new businesses able to bid for work with the council more than doubled, from 9,967 to 20,988.

Yours sincerely

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