



Democratic & Central Services

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To: All Members of Council

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL MEETING – 14TH SEPTEMBER 2016

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 9 to 31 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 Environment and Sustainability tell me if all the Council's gully cleansing vehicles are currently being used?

A As of today (14th September), all 5 tankers are operating.

The Council routinely runs 5 gully cleansing vehicles across the city which are operated by 10 drivers and 10 attendants working on a shift pattern to provide 7-day a week cover between the hours of 6am and 4:30 pm. Crews also respond to out of hours calls to attend floods and major issues outside of these times, as was seen over Christmas, when staff made a huge contribution to the clear up operation.

Staff each have an annual holiday entitlement, additional LIEU days for working Bank Holidays and need to take rest days according to hours worked etc. This leads to there being times when not all tankers are able to be staffed up and on the road. Typically there would not be less than 4 in use.

There are currently 2 Gully Tank Attendant posts which are vacant, with interviews scheduled for later this month. Vacancies and cover for sickness absence or training etc are addressed through staff working overtime as much as possible.

Since January 2015, when the staff were reorganised there has been a significant increase in productivity. The number of gullies attended and cleaned is now routinely above 100 each day up from 30-40, 18 months ago.

Further improvements will be realised through the use of software installed on all gully tankers in June 2016. Detailed records of each gully are now made in the field with this being collated to provide a full record of work undertaken across the city. This allows

much better planning of cleansing routes and for gullies to be cleaned according to need rather than simply by request.

Q10 Councillor S Arif - Can the Executive Member for Employment, Enterprise and Opportunity update Council on the Re-making Leeds programme with regard to Heritage construction skills?

A Re-Making Leeds is a specialist three year heritage skills based training programme targeted to 18 – 24 year olds delivered by the Council in partnership with Leeds College of Building, York College and the Heritage Craft Alliance.

The Council secured £810,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to provide bursaries and training for individuals, businesses and trainers focused on the repair, maintenance and refurbishment of over 3,000 listed and traditional buildings in the city.

Students on the programme will be learning both technical craft skills along with underpinning knowledge at level 2 and 3 to pursue a career in the built heritage sector. Skills include brick work, carpentry and joinery, stonemasonry, painting and decorating, lime mortar plastering and rendering, wall and floor tiling and specialist lead work.

The programme also engages with schools to ensure that access points remain for young people to acquire craft skills that are being rapidly lost through an ageing workforce.

Year 3 of the programme was launched this month at Lotherton Hall and will run through to July 2017.

To date:

employers providing placements include the Council's Building Services, the Canal and River Trust and specialist conservation company Aura Conservation Ltd.

18 young people have successfully completed their bursary placements and 10 have secured employment or higher level apprenticeships.

20 young people have completed a Level 2 Heritage Construction Award and 5 young people working in the sector are continuing their NVQ Level 3 in Heritage
17 professionals trained on the Train the Trainer programme

60 pupils have attended the skills taster events

A Year 2 trainee was a finalist in the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)'s Skillsbuild Show, in November 2015 – competing with the best trainee builders in the country.

With a growing pipeline of major construction in the city, the Council is also working with partners and employers to address skills shortages and gaps in the wider sector locally. The Council has supported the development of the 'Step Up into Construction' programme, led by Leeds College of Building to secure £1m from the Europe and the Construction Industry Training Board to skill people for craft and professional occupations within the industry such as Carpenters and Joiners, Bricklayers, Plumbers, Electricians, Civil and Building Service Engineers and management expertise such as Site Supervisors, Contract Managers and Project Managers.

Q11 Councillor Caroline Anderson - Could the Executive Board Member for Environment and Sustainability please advise what plans the Council has for ensuring a litter free city?

A Litter on our streets is largely caused through the careless behaviour of people who drop it.

We will all have seen the people casually dropping their food wrappers, throwing cigarette ends from their cars and using the streets where they live as their litter bin.

The approach to being litter-free needs to start by changing people's behaviour and creating a general acceptance that it is peoples actions which create littered streets. A conversation with the city's residents and visitors on litter and its causes is overdue.

There is much that is already in place to stop litter being dropped. We are increasing the number of litter bins across the city and engaging people locally about where they are best located. We have significantly stepped up the enforcement to deal with litter louts and now issue over 300 fixed penalty notices a month to hit the message home. Litter campaigns are regularly undertaken in localities, with a focus on working with school children and in parts of the city which need most support. Members will be aware of the good example of 'Keep Harehills Tidy', a community based campaign aiming to raise awareness and encourage personal responsibility for conditions in this particular neighbourhood. We have also supported the #1pieceofrubbish campaign. Through using social media in a light-hearted way, people are encouraged to become more aware of litter and to engage with others in being less tolerant of littering behaviour. Everyone in Leeds is challenged to pick up one piece of litter and bin it every day. The 'Clean Leeds' twitter account promotes community activity to clean up neighbourhoods and showcases the good work the Council undertakes across the city. This will be developed to use other routes of communication and to again engage as wide a community as possible in keeping Leeds clean.

The Council encourages communities to be increasingly responsible for the condition of their neighbourhoods and this includes the amount of litter present. This takes various forms, including arranging and supporting community clean-ups which are regular or one-off events undertaken by groups and individuals. We would of course like to see more local communities taking responsibility and direct action in this way.

Despite our best efforts to prevent it, there will always be a need for some litter clearing to take place.

The Council employs approximately 300 operational staff in street cleansing, part of whose role helps to keep litter down by picking it up or emptying litter bins. The zonal model of deploying this significant resource is now paying dividends and Leeds is a cleaner city as a result.

In recent years, the streets of Leeds have been measured as being increasingly clean and perceptions have improved also. The aspiration to have a litter-free city is challenging, but with everyone playing their part, we will get ever closer to achieving that.

Q12 Councillor S Golton - Could the executive member please advise council as to the status of the decision regarding the future of Rothwell Council Offices?

A The Executive Member for Communities can confirm that no decision has been made on the future of Rothwell Area Office further to that reported to Executive Board on 22nd

June 2016 in the Community Hubs – Phase 2 business case (agenda item no.15). Rothwell Library, adjacent to the area office, has undergone refurbishment to create a Community Hub, with the customer service function having relocated from the area office and Rothwell Neighbourhood Housing Team to follow in the near future. There is no future council requirement for office, or other accommodation within Rothwell and as such once vacant the building will be put into void management. In line with the council's approved Asset Management Plan 2014-17, and the challenging capital receipts programme needed to support sustainability of the council's financial position over the coming years possible disposal of this site is being discussed with Ward Members, along with any alternative aspirations they may have. Asset Management officers will have met with all Ward Member by Friday 16th September. The Executive Members for Communities, and Regeneration, Transport & Planning will be briefed following consultation with all Ward Members.

Q13 Councillor C Gruen - Does the Executive Member for Regeneration Transport and Planning think that the same minister should cover Housing, Planning and London?

A I am concerned that one minister of state is intended to cover such a wide area. There have been a number of Housing and Planning ministers in the last few years and this is an areas that needs consistency, clarity and a sensible approach from government.

This decision also suggests that housing and planning are matters only for London. I am concerned that the government will concentrate on trying to resolve the very clear issues in the capital, without due consideration of the rest of the country.

This has already been shown in recent government policies like starter homes and the forced sale of so-called "high value" Council homes. We look forward to a country wide planning and housing policy for central government.

Q14 Councillor R Gettings - Will the Executive member join me in congratulating Woodkirk Academy in becoming the first of our high schools South of the river to gain the highest number of A to C GCSE grades including English and a Maths on the Provisional list for the whole city. 81% is a tremendous achievement.

A I agree that this achievement at Woodkirk academy is very encouraging and a reflection of the hard work and commitment shown by pupils and staff at the school as well as the constant support of parents, carers and families. Outcomes at Woodkirk have been consistently high in recent years and the school is to be congratulated for that.

It is important, however, to point out that the benchmark of the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C including English and maths is not one that will be included in the performance tables for 2016. The focus this year will be on the new measures of Attainment 8 and Progress 8 and a new 'Basics' measure which will count the percentage of pupils achieving a good pass in both English and in maths. The percentage of pupils achieving the Ebacc will also be included. I believe that Woodkirk would compare favourably against these new measures, as will other schools and academies in Leeds. This data, however, will not be available until later this school term.

It is also important to point out that the data received from schools about English outcomes needs to be treated with caution due to inclusion of English Literature this year. This makes comparison with previous years very unreliable.

Q15 Councillor J Jarosz - Please can the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults outline some of the key achievements of the sexual health service provided by the Council – one year on from the new service being delivered?

A **Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS)**

Background

From the 1st April 2013, Local Authorities were mandated to commission comprehensive open access sexual health services (including free sexually transmitted infections testing and treatment, notification of sexual partners of infected persons and free provision of contraception).

Reasons to integrate Genito-Urinary Medicine and contraception services;

- See the patient as an individual, not a specialism
- Far less likely to lose patients; silo services cannot ensure patients attend onward referral
- More convenient & less embarrassing for patients
- Facilitates alternative diagnosis and treatment
- Better able to deliver care closer to the patient
- Closer accountability to peers for quality of clinical work
- Able to do more with less (buildings/IT/reception etc)

Leeds integrated contract was awarded to a consortia (Leeds Community Health Care, Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, Yorkshire Mesmac) in December 2014. The service had a 6 month mobilisation period and implemented service delivery July 1st 2015.

Despite experiencing difficulties at the start with IT and premises, approximately 5000 service users are seen every month across 5 sites.

- Hub:
 - Merrion Centre
- Spokes
 - Reginald Centre
 - Armley Moor Health Centre
 - Beeston Village Surgery
 - Burmantofts

The Hub is located in Leeds City centre with service provision Monday 8 am – 8pm – Friday 8am – 5pm Saturdays 11am – 3pm. Spokes are open at different times across the week.

Achievements

- 100% of individuals accessing the service have a sexual history taken
- 90% of men who have sex with men accept a HIV test if status unknown.

- Number of service users identifying as sex workers as increased by 215% this is due to the excellent outreach, relationships developed and the trust in the service from the women who are willing to disclose.
- Chlamydia target achieved, diagnosing 2659 chlamydia positives in the under 25s.
- All phone calls to the service are responded to within 1 hour
- 90% of service users feedback (satisfaction surveys) rated the service good or excellent
- 89% of patients with a booked appointment are seen within 30 minutes of their appointment time
- Uptake of Long Acting Reversible Contraception increased from 16% to 38%.
- Check in Kiosks across all sites
- Regular patient and public involvement with 'you said... we did'
- Rapid access for sex workers, vulnerable young people and men who have sex with men
- Men only night at the clinic in conjunction with a community asymptomatic clinic at Mesmac
- Express clinic for self-testing (providing rapid access for asymptomatic patients)
- Dedicated clinic sessions for Under 19s every day 3.30 – 5.30, youth worker present.
- Excellent website www.Leedssexualhealth.com managed by digital engagement worker with;
 - Full central booking system and online triage
 - Podcasts
 - Sexual Health news
 - Clinic locator
 - Triage
 - Information STIs / contraception
 - Professional Area
 - Live web chat daily 2-4
 - Online postal kits gonorrhoea / chlamydia
 - Mobile phone compatible

Outreach

The service has delivered an excellent outreach programme targeting those most at risk in partnership with third sector organisations. Leeds has a vibrant third sector, the partnerships are extremely valuable in ensuring easy access for those most at risk, raising awareness for health promotion and prevention strategies, and on-going engagement with clients in achieving behaviour change.

- Outreach at the Armley steam sauna complex (for men who have sex with men) on a weekly basis and once a month on a Saturday. This provides full sexual health screening

- Testing Times Plus is a monthly clinic (first Tuesday in the month) full screen and Hep B vaccination offer alongside MESMAC's Testing Times (where point of care HIV tests are offered).
- Joint outreach work with Basis (organisation supporting women selling sex) on a weekly basis. This is with indoor working women, in flats and saunas, providing contraception, sexual health screening, Hepatitis B vaccination and the provision of treatment where women have failed to attend the clinic.
- 3 Site Testing developed (Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea testing from oral, genital and rectal sites). This will be delivered by Mesmac, Basis and the Joanna Project to sex workers and MSM.
- BHA Leeds Skyline, monthly clinic offering contraception and screening to Black African communities diagnosed or at risk of HIV.
- Forward Leeds Midwifery service - the outreach nurse has been working with ForwardLeeds to provide individual visits to women post-natally to offer contraception.
- Support to the Haamla team (midwives that look after pregnant and postnatal asylum seekers and refugees and other BME) to look at increasing access to contraception post-natally in this group.

Developing support for the The Footsteps Group (Womens Health Matters) for women with repeated removals of babies at birth.

Q16 Councillor M Robinson - In light of the recent GCSE and A-level results, what steps has the Executive Board member for Children's Services taken to improve GCSE results and the progress of students in Leeds in 2016/17?

A It is important to state at the outset here that it is not possible to make a judgement as to how well the GCSE and A Level performance in Leeds compares this year to previous years as there is no national data for 2016 yet. At Key Stage 4 (GCSE level) and A level, raw data this year suggests some improvement in Leeds compared to 2015, but until the national data is published, all data should be treated with caution, for the following reasons:

- The benchmark of the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C including English and maths is not one that will be included in the performance tables for 2016. The focus this year will be on the new measures of Attainment 8 and Progress 8 and a new 'Basics' measure which will count the percentage of pupils achieving a good pass in both English and in maths. The percentage of pupils achieving the Ebacc will also be included. Schools and academies in Leeds should compare favourably against these new measures. However, the data will not be available until later this school term.
- It is also important to point out that the data received from schools about English outcomes needs to be treated with caution due to the inclusion of English Literature this year. This makes comparison with previous years very unreliable.

The Learning Improvement team within Children's Services is continuing to work closely with schools to improve outcomes. At Key Stage 4 (GCSE level), having scrutinised the data, two key areas of concern emerge across the city as a whole; they are the achievement of

pupils in maths and the achievement of the most vulnerable (particular pupil premium) pupils. As a result, a number of additional strategies have been put in place to improve attainment and progress further in 2017. These include:

- The launch of a maths strategy targeted at the schools and academies in greatest need. This will include a detailed review followed by targeted support.
- A realignment of roles within the learning improvement team to ensure a greater focus on the outcomes of pupil premium pupils.
- A much more bespoke response to challenge and support for secondary schools which will include a closer scrutiny of the effectiveness of leadership and management.
- Looking more widely at secondary achievement; effective transition between primary and secondary schools is of course vital and the learning improvement team continue to work closely with schools to ensure that this is as effective as possible – this currently includes a major focus on ensuring effective assessment of pupils at KS2 and KS3, i.e. as they transfer.

Q17 Councillor J Bentley - Could the executive member please confirm to council as to the current plans for expanding park and rides in the city.

A The Elland Road park & ride opened in 2014, delivered in partnership with WYCA currently averages over 500 weekday users. The success of the scheme has necessitated an extension to the car park, to circa 800 spaces, alongside a new passenger waiting facility due to open later this year. The Temple Green Park and Ride Site (1000 spaces) was approved at Executive Board in July 2015 and work started on site in early September with a scheduled opening in summer 2017.

Further opportunities for park and ride sites are being considered in the Leeds transport strategy work now being undertaken as part of the wider transport engagement and conversation now taking place and in the context of the £173m earmarked for the city by the Government following their decision on the NGT trolleybus scheme. This will complement the provision made at the new Kirkstall Forge and Apperley Bridge stations; work being undertaken to look at the expansion of parking at existing railway stations and the development of plans for a new parkway station in East Leeds.

Q18 Councillor M Dobson - Can the Executive Member update the Council on the launch of White Rose Energy?

A **White Rose Energy is a new energy supply company for homes in Yorkshire, created as a partnership between Leeds City Council and Robin Hood Energy (RHE).** RHE are a not-for-profit energy supply company owned by Nottingham City Council and will provide all the back office functions associated with energy provision, such as customer service and billing, whilst the council will manage the front end promotion of the partnership branded 'White Rose Energy' ('WRE').

The Council has a long standing commitment to promoting affordable warmth and power and has made considerable progress over the past two decades through improving the energy efficiency of homes across the city. **However, we wanted to provide a more holistic package to residents, to address the high costs they pay for the energy they use.** Previously, we tried to encourage people to sign up to bulk switching schemes but with limited success. By creating this partnership with RHE we will have much more influence over branding, prices, and customer service – the three key factors. Our intention is to offer consistently low priced energy tariffs and great customer service.

The key benefits for residents include:

- **Consistently competitive prices regardless of income or tariff type** – as part of our contract, Robin Hood Energy, have committed to ensuring that all White Rose Energy tariffs will be within the best ten percent of all similar tariffs for 75% of the year.
- **Transparent tariff structures with no unwelcome surprises** – White Rose Energy will not lure customers in by providing unsustainable loss-leaders and fixed term offers, then raising prices unreasonably when the offer ends. The aim is to have consistent, competitive pricing that people can trust.
- **A fairer deal for low energy users and pre-payment customers who have traditionally been poorly served by the established energy suppliers** – the tariff is only marginally higher than its standard variable tariff and we will replace all traditional prepayment meters with smart PAYG alternatives that can in future be switched to credit mode remotely and free of charge.
- **Great customer service for all customers.**

I am pleased to announce that White Rose Energy launched on the 12th of September, the website <https://www.whiteroseenergy.co.uk/> and the phone number 0800 022 3553 are now live and received the first sign up on launch day.

The Council is planning a relatively soft launch initially whilst all systems are bedding in, then has a large scale communication and marketing campaign planned for September and October. This will include advertising in bus and train stations, billboards, Metro adverts, press releases, blogs, tweets, Facebook adverts, internet and intranet stories, staff briefings, marketing via council partners and of course ongoing council house void switches.

A second phase of marketing will see White Rose Energy pushed by a number of other Yorkshire local authorities and housing associations around Christmas.

I can provide a written brief on the company to anyone who is interested, but the most important message is for us as Elected Members to promote this at every opportunity. So, please, sign up to White Rose Energy yourselves and use your influence to encourage residents in your wards to switch and your contacts in the community to promote the company. We will be able to make posters and leaflets available to help with this.

For more information, contact the Sustainable Energy and Climate Change team in the council.

Q19 Councillor D Blackburn - Could the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability tell me the number of staff deployed in street cleansing activities and as Estate Caretakers in each of the following areas; East North East, South South East and West North West, both prior to the incorporation of Estate Caretakers into Localities and the corresponding numbers now?

A The Estate Caretakers were employed by the ALMOs until transfer into Locality Teams in summer 2014. Up to that time, the ALMOs had used a mix of Caretakers and contractors to undertake cleansing of estates and also void clearance work. The street cleansing service run by Locality Teams was restructured in 2014, with implementation from January 2015. This brought a significant change in job roles and types as several teams were brought together, new teams were created and new job descriptions were introduced. The implementation was done voluntarily and staff were allowed to remain on their old job descriptions if wished, even though the formal structure of the service recognised only the new roles. A previously city-wide cleansing team was incorporated into Locality Teams and the Gully Cleansing service was moved from Locality Teams into a central team serving all areas of the city. The work of Locality Teams was limited to that outside properties on estates, with staff in CEL undertaking void clearance work previously carried out by Estate Caretakers under the ALMOs. This background is provided to show that it is not possible to make 'like for like' comparisons of staff numbers in each role prior to Estate Caretakers being incorporated into Locality Teams and now. The numbers presented below should be seen in that context.

Staff numbers in 2014/15:

Street cleansing staff in Locality Teams:

WNW: 64

ENE: 44

SSE: 44

City-wide team serving all localities: 52

City Centre team: 44

Estate Caretakers:

WNW: 43

ENE: 35

SSE: 12

TOTAL: 338

Staff numbers in 2016/17:

Street cleansing staff in Locality Teams (Estate Caretakers included in team figures):

WNW: 96

ENE: 86

SSE: 83

City Centre team: 62

CEL (Caretakers on void clearance):13

TOTAL: 340

The movement between the years reflects the reconfigurations of job roles, the inclusion of the city wide team into locality teams and the city centre team

Q20 Councillor A Smart - Please can the Executive Member update Council on Baby Week and how it is being marked in Leeds??

A Baby Week took place in Leeds from Monday 12 – Friday 16 September 2016 - the first time an English speaking country has replicated the Semana do Bebe model (supported by UNICEF) from Brazil. It was brought to Leeds by Lucy Potter, a Winston Churchill Fellow.

Baby Week is an early year's initiative aimed at raising awareness of the critical growth stages of a baby's life and in particular the first 1001 days of a child's life (from conception to age 2). The week was a result of a partnership between Leeds Beckett University, Leeds City Council (Children's Services and Public Health), the NHS Leeds and Child Friendly Leeds. The initiative ties in perfectly with the city's aim of putting children at the heart of the growth strategy – if we as a city can 'get it right' early on in the life of a child and give them the best start in life, then those children's life chances and outcomes will be vastly improved.

Leeds has an ambition to be the best city in the UK by 2030, and also a baby, child friendly and age friendly city. Partners work together to improve the support available to families from conception, during pregnancy and for the first two years of a child's life. This includes maternity care through to helping families support their child to be ready for learning and ready for life.

The activities during Baby Week were aimed at parents and professionals and provided information about the range of support that is available to families from within statutory services and from voluntary sector organisations, such as Homestart. It also highlighted and helped to improve access to services within the communities that need them the most. Baby Week also served to motivate frontline staff working to support mums and families, and raise awareness of the critical stages in a baby's mental and physical development. The week was also used to share some of the city initiatives that are making a difference to Leeds families, e.g. like The Best Start Plan and Maternity Strategy.

The week was opened and closed by Cllrs Mulherin and Dowson with keynote speakers including Hilary Benn MP and Dr Robin Balbernie, the Clinical Director of the Parent Infant Partnership UK and who was involved with the '1001 Critical Days' who gave a lecture entitled *Rick and Repair and Circuits and Circumstances* at Leeds Rosebowl. **The cost and benefit of investing in Early Years was highlighted with some economists arguing that for every £1 invested, a saving of between £3 and £15 is made later on.**

Throughout the week, there were exciting activities for babies, children and families at a number of our Children's Centres – Chapeltown, Kirkstall and Two Willows. The activities included Sensory Storytime with Leeds Libraries, baby massage, play and art, breast feeding peer support and lots more.

Thanks to the wide range of partners who contributed to the success of Leeds' first Baby Week – Leeds Beckett University, Trinity Leeds, Public Health, NHS, 3rd and private sector partners.

We are looking forward to building on this success next year.

More information about Leeds Baby Week is available on the website: www.babyweek.co.uk and via Twitter: #BabyWeekLeeds and @BabyWeekLeeds

Q21 Councillor M Robinson - What conversations has the Leader of Council had with the Environment Agency about flood prevention measures on the River Wharfe between Otley and Thorp Arch?

A We are working with the Environment Agency and we are in discussion with other stakeholders in looking at the whole Wharfe catchment area and to identify mitigation measures that could be undertaken. Leeds have appointed a consultant to undertake the initial Data Collection & Review on the Wharfe Catchment and to report with recommendations on the next phase of work. The Environment Agency is also well on with preparing a Wharfe Catchment Plan following the flooding last December which will detail the work they have done and intend doing.

A public meeting in Otley was chaired by the Leader shortly after Storm Eva. This has culminated in Leeds securing £50k of grant in aid funding to undertake an appraisal of flood mitigation at Otley and the EA in securing £75k of funding for a similar appraisal for communities in Leeds downstream of Otley. Further grant funding will be sought following the outcome of these studies.

We are now working closely with other stakeholders including the EA, Bradford, North Yorkshire County Council and Yorkshire Dales River Trust to examine the whole River Wharfe catchment area. Our strategic consultancy partner Kier Mouchel has been appointed to undertake this appraisal work. A similar whole catchment approach is being undertaken for Leeds and the River Aire to the west of the railway station up to Malham Tarn.

Q22 Councillor J Bentley - Would the executive member please advise council what plans are in place for the Section 106 monies across Leeds allocated to the NGT scheme, now that it has been cancelled?

A When Supertram was superseded the Council sought to broaden the scope of development contributions. The standard clause used in S106 legal agreements explains the use to which the money might be put, "Towards the provision of and or improvements to public transport or other related environmental improvements within the vicinity of the Development or elsewhere within the administrative area of the Council required as a consequence of the Development as the Council may in its absolute discretion decide' and also 'Towards improvements to public transport in accordance with the Public Transport Improvements and Developer Contributions SPD adopted by the Council on 21st July 2008 the need for which directly arises from the Development"

The Council is currently in consultation through "The Big Conversation" about future plans for transport in Leeds including how to spend the £173.5m which had been earmarked for NGT. When the Council digests the feedback received and makes recommendations it will be appropriate to include consideration of how spending previously raised through S106 will be spent.

The Council will also need to review the wording of the Regulation 123 List of the Community Infrastructure Levy which still says that money is being collected to be used on Sustainable Transport Schemes, including NGT

Q23 Councillor C Anderson - Can the Executive Member responsible please advise me what plans are in place to deal with the number of pull-out requests that the Refuse Collection department are going to get in the years to come bearing in mind the increasing elderly population in the city?

A The service has a clear process to follow when requests are made for any assisted collection. Applications can be made from not just elderly residents but from frail and disabled residents too. Whilst the potential pressure on the Service from the increasing elderly population is acknowledged, in reality the level of assisted collections provided has remained quite static over recent years (at approximately 10% of all current collections). The service is working to more regularly review those in receipt of an assisted collection to ensure this is still required, as residents can change address, circumstances may change, etc.. With recent improvements to our management information systems and in-cab technology, the Service is now able to monitor this position more effectively. This should serve to balance out a potential increase in requests resulting from demographic change.

Q24 Councillor S Bentley - What is the executive member doing to improve the readability of the council's website, given the increasing number of residents who are being encouraged to access services online and the recent local authorities clarity index, which highlighted a number of areas for the council to improve upon?

A We are encouraged by our top ranked 'readability' rating in the local authorities' clarity index, but recognise that while we were ranked 49th out of 191, there is further work to do and we are focused on addressing all of the areas highlighted, and will particularly pay attention to avoid passive language.

This will be done through our continuous programme of development and content management improvement. We are working closely with services to help improve the clarity of our web pages. If we are to help customers use online we recognise that their experience must be a positive one, and clarity of the website is absolutely fundamental.

Key to this is our work on finding out much more about our whole customer/user experience, how they find out about and access our digital services, and their on-line user journeys. This information provides us with the rationale for all that we do through helping us to promote and target our services more effectively and to then evaluate how effective they have been. This work includes our current user research surveys on www.leeds.gov.uk and MyLeeds, plus our ongoing site survey questionnaire.

By getting this greater understanding direct from our customers we are able to scope our work more appropriately in order to develop the website so it meets their needs, and involving services in understanding what is most important to their customers.

Providing an accessible to all on-line service is essential, so we are committed towards delivering all our digital channels in accordance with Level AA accessibility criteria.

Q25 Councillor R Stephenson - Does the Leader of Council agree that it's a sign of a progressive, meritocratic Britain today that political parties can select a female leader without the need for discriminatory same-sex shortlists?

A "Increasing the number of women in politics, especially in senior roles, can have a significant impact on politics and I am committed to ensuring that women are given the opportunities to succeed. There are currently 191 women MPs, which is just 29.4% of the chamber. 68 out of the Conservatives 329 MPs are women, which amounts to one woman for every 4 men. I welcome having a female Prime Minister, but she represents a parliamentary party that is overwhelmingly made up of men.

The Conservative Group at Leeds City Council have 5 female members; just over a quarter of their group. The Labour group represents the wider society, with over 50% of its members being women.

All women shortlists are just one way political parties have undertaken in order to improve women's opportunities in politics. I hope all political parties will seriously consider ways in which this important aim can be achieved."

Q26 Councillor C Campbell - Could the executive member tell council when the street gullies on Gay Lane in Otley will be cleared out?

A The gulley cleansing crew last worked on Gay Lane on 16th July 2016.

Gullies were inspected and cleansed with the exception of five which the crew could not get running. These were referred for inspection and remedial action by Highways Services.

In May, work was undertaken by Highways Services on pipework on the East Chevin Road junction which had allegedly been damaged by utility works. Further work is required to de-silt the main culvert here which is partially blocked and possibly preventing the gullies from working. The de-silting of the main culvert will take place in the next 4 weeks.

Q27 Councillor M Robinson - Is the Executive Board member satisfied that the highways maintenance and repair programme for Leeds is adequate to deal with the current state of Leeds' highways and byways?

A In 2016/17, we are set to spend approximately £21m on Highways Maintenance. This includes £10m of LCC capital funds. In 2008/09, the corresponding figures were circa £28m and £14m.

Notwithstanding the reduction in funding, the Highways and Transportation Service has sought to improve its efficiency. The council has long since recognised that a highway asset management system is essential to deliver an effective and efficient approach to the long term investment in the condition of highways in Leeds. To that end Highways Assets are regularly inspected and continually monitored for condition and maintenance needs. Prioritised planned maintenance and strengthening programmes are developed to maintain the assets in a safe and serviceable condition appropriate for their use together with a view to minimising whole life costs.

The government have been promoting the potential benefits of an asset management approach to highway maintenance for some years. Officers have developed the highway asset management system in line with national recommendations and we continue to implement a maintenance strategy to deliver the most favourable long term benefit, with the available levels of funding. The overall approach is proving successful in terms of reducing accident claims received and value of claims.

The objective of a good asset management strategy is to determine and balance the proportion of expensive structural and low cost regular preventative maintenance work that should be carried out for each category of road (e.g. A, B/ C and unclassified) and footway.

Q28 Councillor M Robinson - Has the Leader of Council ruled out an underground/Metro system in the administration's future transport plans for Leeds?

A A public engagement process and conversation is presently underway with the people of Leeds to allow them to have a say in the future transport strategy direction for the city.

As part of the development of the strategy we are working with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to understand where the future opportunities for public transport and mass transit lie within the city region.

We already have a good local rail network in the city which is set to receive a major investment boost through the new Northern, Trans-Pennine and Inter-city East Coast franchises with the new train fleets to be introduced on their routes in the next few years alongside major investment by Network Rail with much more potential yet to be realised. Any future role and ambition for a Metro system, whether it be over or underground should be seen in this context, and of course the ambition needs to be affordable and deliverable.

The costs of underground systems are significantly greater than comparable surface systems. The transport conversation will help everybody to understand the costs and benefits of the various options open to us so that informed decisions can be made on systems and public transport networks that are best suited to the specific needs of our city region.

Q29 Councillor M Robinson - Does the Executive Board member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning feel that adequate preparations have been made for winter highways clearance to keep Leeds moving and open for business?

A (Yes)

The budget provision for 2016/17 for the winter gritting and snow clearing service has been maintained at the same level as last year. This will allow Highways to deliver the same level of service as they have done in previous years.

The service is delivered wholly in-house by Highway Maintenance who provide a 24/7 service between November and the end of March.

The service has already restocked with salt to its maximum storage capacity of approximately 27,000 tonnes. To put this into context, in the last bad winter we had Of 2012/13 we used just over 26,000 tonnes, and in the mild winter of last year we used only 10,000 tonnes.

Rotas are currently being drawn up for gritter drivers and the service has indicated that there is no shortage of willing volunteers. Refresher training will commence shortly in time for the onset of wintry conditions.

The gritting vehicles have been undergoing overhauls and relevant calibrations over the summer months and these are scheduled to be completed by the end of September.

We are very conscious of the need to keep the city moving and would stress that preparations for the coming winter are well under way and that there will be no reduction in the service level provided.

Q30 Councillor R Stephenson - Will the Executive Board Member for Communities tell me how many unaccompanied Syrian child refugees the Council has taken into its care since the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War?

A There are 4 unaccompanied asylum seeking children from Syria, who have arrived here, in Leeds, since 2011. Of these 1 arrived in 2012, 2 in 2013 and 1 in 2015. The numbers quoted are as of July 2016.

Q31 Councillor D Collins - Given the rumours that Church Fenton Airfield could soon host commercial flights, does the Leader of Council agree with me that sharing the burden of air flight to other sites in the Leeds area would be a good thing rather than relying solely on Leeds Bradford Airport?

A Members of Council will recall that on 26 March 2014 full Council considered a White Paper Motion that the:

“Council recognises the long term benefits Leeds Bradford International Airport brings to the local and regional economy and fully supports the city region’s proposed infrastructure improvements to improve both its accessibility and connectivity.”

Following a full debate by Council Members this motion was supported by Full Council by a vote of 82 members for, 3 abstentions and 0 votes against.

Against this background, it is the Council’s considered view that the city, people and businesses of Leeds needs a strong and growing airport which is capable offering access to a wide spread of domestic and international destinations. Leeds Bradford is a well established airport which continues to grow and expand the services on offer to the city region. It would be premature to comment on any plans for development of a commercial airport at Church Fenton. If a firm and detailed proposition is to hand we can look at the proposition and also any plans for surface access to the site at that time.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Tomkinson
Principal Governance Officer