

## CITY OF SHEFFIELD

### METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

#### MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 3 APRIL 2013

#### COPIES OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THERETO

##### Questions

##### Answers

#### Questions of Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Julie Dore)

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| 1. At previous meetings of Council you stated that the earliest possible start on the Sevenstones site would be Autumn 2014. Do you still believe this to be the case?   | Please see answer to the same question from the Council meeting in February.  |
| 2. At the February meeting of Full Council you stated you expect Hammersons to submit a planning application for Sevenstones this year. Do you still believe this to be the case?                              | Please see answer to the same question from the Council meeting in February.  |
| 3. What meetings have you personally attended since the December meeting of Council to ensure the Sevenstones development proceeds as planned? Please list all dates of meetings you have personally attended. | Please see answer to the same question from the Council meeting in February.  |
| 4. What specific progress has been made since the last Council meeting in delivering more shared services with other authorities within Sheffield City Region?   | Please see answer to the same question from the Council meeting in February.  |
| 5. On which occasions have you personally raised the issue of outstanding Trading Standards debts with other South Yorkshire Council Leaders? What response did you receive?                                   | My personal discussions with other South Yorkshire Council Leaders are confidential. However, be assured that this administration will pursue any debts owed to this Council. |
| 6. How much of the £1 million allocated to the Fairness Commission outcomes has been spent so far? Please list the specific budget allocations for each project.   | Please see the Executive Leader Decision circulated to you on the 20 <sup>th</sup> March and which was also posted on the website.  |

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| 7. How many meetings has the Council's Champion for Older People attended in his or her role since being appointed? Please list all meetings attended.   | Please see answer to the same question from the Council meeting in February. |
| 8. How many meetings has the Council's Champion for Sexual Health attended in his or her role since being appointed? Please list all meetings attended.  | Please see answer to the same question from the Council meeting in February. |
| 9. How many meetings has the Council's Champion for Younger People attended in his or her role since being appointed? Please list all meetings attended. | Please see answer to the same question from the Council meeting in February. |

Questions of Councillor David Baker to Councillor Jack Scott (Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Streetscene)

1. What was the outcome of your Administration's legal attempt through adjudication to recover further savings from Veolia?

As you are fully aware, we do not comment on ongoing legal proceedings.

2. How much did the Council spend in the 2012/13 financial year on legal costs, attempting to recover further savings from Veolia?

We are not currently disclosing any legal costs which could prejudice legal proceedings or our approach.

It is a revealing indication of your approach to a serious matter that you would seek to score trite points rather than focus on securing the best deal for the people of Sheffield.

As such, further questions in this vein will be referred to this answer.

3. At the February meeting of Full Council, you outlined the efforts you had undertaken to encourage new snow wardens to volunteer. Since that meeting, how many people have volunteered to become new wardens? How many of these individuals have so far been recruited to the scheme?

There are currently 86 Snow Wardens.

We continue to take on new volunteers, despite your scare-mongering assertions to the contrary.

The way that Sheffield has dealt with recent snow demonstrates the strength of the approach we have taken.

4. It is my understanding that allotment holders elsewhere in the country have successfully challenged the legitimacy of proposed increases in fees. Are you confident that the Council has fully considered the legal implications of proposed increases in fees?

Yes.

Question of Councillor Jillian Creasy to Councillor Jack Scott (Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Streetscene)

With regard to the Big Switch, which aims to reduce energy costs for Sheffield users, what consideration has been given to procuring that energy from renewable sources?

We have actively worked with the co-ordinating organisation to secure a Green Tariff.

The range and quality of the tariffs is determined by suppliers and heavily influenced by the number of participants, which is why encouraging sign-ups is so important.

It is therefore extremely unfortunate that despite warm words about the scheme, Sheffield's two opposition parties have once again joined forces and done nothing to promote the scheme in any of their literature, websites, social media etc.

Questions of Councillor Ian Auckland to Councillor Leigh Bramall (Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Development)

1. Regarding the £400,000 that has been allocated to the Council's Keep Sheffield Working Fund, how much has so far been spent?

Our new draft economic strategy recognises that a strong, vibrant business sector is vital to the economic growth of the City and that in order to achieve, this the City must play a role in developing and delivering a range of support packages for businesses, both for those starting up and those with ambitions to accelerate growth. We also know that we need to improve graduate utilisation in the City, particularly amongst Small and Medium Enterprises.

Based on this, the Keep Sheffield Working Fund is £800k over two years. We have a full programme of projects in development, and £160,000 of this is already committed to deliver the two projects identified below:

- £90,000 for an export market development pilot that will work with up to 30 companies to provide intensive export support over a fixed period of time
- £70,000 to support Sheffield Enterprise Agency to take over a contract for delivering the self employment option of the Work Programme. This will deliver an improved and more integrated service for unemployed and workless people looking to become self employed, supporting up to 200 people by March 2014.

A number of further projects are in development, accounting for a further £625,000 and information about these projects will be made available shortly.

2. Please list the specific budget allocations for each project funded through the Council's Keep Sheffield Working Fund.
3. Do you support proposed increases in bus fares across Sheffield?
4. Are further measures required to reduce the level of infringement at the Wicker Bus Gate?
5. How many Expressions of Interest have been made into the £25 million awarded to Sheffield City Region through the third round of the Regional Growth Fund?

Please see above for allocation for approved projects and committed spend.

I support fares being as low as possible, whilst enabling services to be maintained. That's why I am pleased that the Bus Partnership has seen a number of fares reduced below the level they were at previously.

We believe the signage at Wicker Bus Gate is clear. The Council has undertaken a significant communications campaign urging the public to be mindful of restrictions and the number of fines issued at the Wicker Bus Gate has decreased by almost 50%, comparing the first three months of 2012 with 2013.

A total of 240 businesses expressed an interest in funding from Regional Growth Fund Round 3.

Questions of Councillor Joe Otten to Councillor Isobel Bowler (Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure)

1. How many external expressions of interest have been made in the future of the Don Valley Stadium since the Council announced its plan for closure? What consideration were these expressions given?

So far, Sheffield City Council has received three external expressions of interest. As you would expect at this early stage, none of these have included detailed or firm proposals. Officers have met with two of the interested parties to share ideas, the third party has so far not sought a meeting with Sheffield City Council.
2. When did your Administration first approach Richard Caborn, MP regarding the future of the Don Valley Stadium site?

Mr. Caborn was asked by the Leader of the Council in January to lead a process of considering options for the future of the Stadium and/or site.
3. When did Richard Caborn first present his ideas for the future of the site to you?

Mr Caborn presented his outline ideas to Sheffield City Council (Leader and Chief Executive) on 22<sup>nd</sup> February and then to City partners on 8<sup>th</sup> March.
4. Did Richard Caborn receive a consultant's fee for his work on the future of the Don Valley Stadium site?

No
5. What steps have the Council taken to raise funds to support Richard Caborn's proposed vision for the future of the Don Valley Stadium site?

The current stage is ideas and concepts. The next stage is feasibility and funding. Mr Caborn has had his own initial direct conversations with partners – local and national – about future potential funding
6. What practical steps will you take to ensure that local taxpayers are not left picking up the bill, if the vision outlined by Richard Caborn for the future of Don Valley does not succeed?

The vision can only progress on the presumption that there will be no Sheffield City Council revenue support for any future development. Everyone has been clear about this from the beginning.
7. What plans are in place for the future of the Don Valley Stadium site, if the current feasibility study demonstrates that the vision outlined by Richard Caborn for the site is not viable?

Sheffield City Council will look at all options for the site – sporting and non-sporting. The sporting options will build upon Mr Caborn's visioning but will also have the flexibility to take on board other ideas and

opportunities. His work will support and enhance our future thinking.

8. Can you guarantee that whatever the outcome, the site of the current Don Valley Stadium will be used for sporting facilities?

It's too early to offer guarantees on future use.

9. What will be the estimated timeframe between the closure of the Don Valley Stadium and the end of the current feasibility study?

The study will be completed prior to the closure of the stadium in September.

10. What progress has been made in awarding £5 million of unallocated Olympic Legacy Funding?

Work is on-going. This project is not controlled by Sheffield City Council, but we are working hard with partners on examining the best options for the £5m and in particular, we're exploring the key issue of match funding and creating developments which integrate with the City's health and physical activity strategies.

11. What consultation was undertaken with Sheffield Landscape Trust regarding the move of countryside management from the Countryside Planning Unit (CPU) to Parks and Gardens?

The move of the Countryside Planning Unit from Development Services to Culture and Environment is an internal organisational switch of teams within the Council. The move will not adversely impact on the service or its client groups. The officers concerned will be managed in the Countryside and Environment team and the move is designed to bring together similar activities within the Council and look for better ways of working. The Executive Director of Place is organising a meeting with key client groups to reassure them about the proposals and offer the opportunity for questions and responses and this will include the Sheffield Landscape Trust.

Questions of Councillor Alison Brelsford to Councillor Isobel Bowler (Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure)

1. What practical steps have you taken in

Sheffield City Council has done



the last two months to ensure alternative management arrangements are found for Stocksbridge Leisure Centre?

three things to help ensure alternative management arrangements can be found:-

1. Fund an extended consultation period for all options to be explored. This includes agreeing to fund the operation of the centre until April 30 and an officer recommendation in next week's Cabinet report to help fund either an alternative management solution from 1<sup>st</sup> May or to meet the costs of mothballing the centre until the end of August - whilst further work on a community management business plan is undertaken.

2. Fund an independent consultants' report examining all options for the future of the centre.

3. Provide all available Stocksbridge Leisure Centre data to Stocksbridge Town Council and 4SLC on current, forecast and past financial performance, visit data, cost data, condition surveys etc. Furthermore, Sheffield City Council and Sheffield International Venues officers have offered to sit down with 4SLC to discuss the data in detail and answer any and all questions.

2. If alternative management arrangements can be found for Stocksbridge Leisure Centre, will you ensure that the Centre continues to receive financial support from the Council?

Sheffield City Council has already offered to fund the operation of the Centre for April. Furthermore, the Cabinet report of 10<sup>th</sup> April, includes a recommendation to offer up to £125,000 in 2013/14 to help fund either a new operation from 1<sup>st</sup> May or to fund a period of mothballing from May until August whilst further work is done on alternative management arrangements. If the latter results in a viable business plan that can be delivered during 2013/14, then the balance of the £125,000 can be used to support the new operation through to March

2014.

3. At the February meeting of Full Council, you stated that £54,000 had been earmarked for DDA works at Stocksbridge Leisure Centre. If alternative management arrangements can be found for the Centre, will this capital allowance remain allocated to Stocksbridge?

If a viable long term business plan was presented to Sheffield City Council by 31<sup>st</sup> August, then it would consider the allocation of the retained £54,000 to Stocksbridge Leisure Centre.

Questions of Councillor Colin Ross to Councillor Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families)

1. Do you believe there is a serious threat that any children's centres in the voluntary and community centre could be forced to close as a result of your Administration's decision to abruptly withdraw the childcare subsidy?

There have been, and continue to be, meetings with the childcare providers who, due to the Coalition Government cuts in the Early Intervention Grant, have had their subsidy grants stopped. These meetings are to help support providers to help them develop their own sustainable business plans for their organisations and also to discuss emergency plans to ensure that services to children and families will continue.
  
2. What practical steps have you taken to mitigate against this threat?

There have been, and continue to be, meetings with the childcare providers who, due to the Coalition Government cuts in the Early Intervention Grant, have had their subsidy grants stopped. These meetings are to help support providers to help them develop their own sustainable business plans for their organisations also to discuss emergency plans to ensure that services to children and families will continue.
  
3. Do believe it is inappropriate to use funds earmarked for making the city fairer to support children's centres under threat of closure?

The Council will respond to the recommendations of the Fairness Commission shortly.

Questions of Councillor Penny Baker to Councillor Harry Harpham (Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods)

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| 1. Have all tenants now moved into the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) units in Flank A of Park Hill? If not, how many units remain vacant? | All the tenants who were successfully nominated to Phase 1 from Phase 5 have moved into their new homes at Park Hill. There were 4 flats which did not receive nomination from Phase 1 and these are all out on offer to residents who previously lived at Park Hill, but moved away because of the redevelopment. |
| 2. How many cases passed through Community Justice Panels in each of the following months? January 2013, February 2013 and March 2013.       | January 2013 = 16<br>February 2013 = 12<br>March 2013 = 13   |
| 3. How many houses have been demolished in Sheffield in each of the last ten years?  | 5,104 homes were demolished between 2002/2003 and 2011/12 (10 years).  |
| 4. How many Council-owned houses in Sheffield have been declared surplus to requirement in each of the last ten years?                       | The Council does not routinely declare properties surplus to requirements.   |

Questions of Councillor Alison Brelsford to Councillor Mazher Iqbal (Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion)

1. Between the December 2012 Council Meeting and 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013, how many meetings did you attend to discuss your Administration's review into Community Assemblies? Please provide dates and times of each meeting you personally attended.

Please see answer to the same question from the Council meeting in February.
2. Between the December 2012 Council Meeting and 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013, how many officers were asked to provide evidence as part of your review into Community Assemblies? Please list each officer that was asked to provide evidence.

Please see answer to the same question from the Council meeting in February.
3. Between the December 2012 Council Meeting and 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013, how many Community Assembly Chairs were consulted as part of your review into Community Assemblies? Please list each Chair that was consulted.

Please see answer to the same question from the Council meeting in February.
4. Between the December 2012 Council Meeting and 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013, how many Community Assembly Managers were consulted as part of your review into Community Assemblies? Please list each Manager that was consulted.

Please see answer to the same question from the Council meeting in February.
5. How many Expressions of Interest have you received regarding the running of libraries, since the publication of the libraries prospectus?

The consultation remains open until 8<sup>th</sup> April, so far we have received positive responses from many organisations, however, we can not disclose details of the expressions of interest at this stage.
6. How many community groups have you personally met regarding the running of libraries, since the publication of the libraries prospectus? Please list all groups that you have met.

The consultation remains open until 8<sup>th</sup> April. So far we have received positive responses from many organisations, however, we cannot disclose details of the expressions of interest at this stage.
7. How many commercial operators have you personally met regarding the running of libraries, since the publication of the

The consultation remains open until 8<sup>th</sup> April. So far we have received positive responses from many

libraries prospectus? Please list all commercial operators that you have met.

organisations, however, we cannot disclose details of the expressions of interest at this stage.

8. Have you yet made any financial guarantees to community groups or potential commercial operators, regarding the running of libraries?

The consultation remains open until 8<sup>th</sup> April. So far we have received positive responses from many organisations, however, we cannot disclose details of the expressions of interest at this stage.

Questions of Councillor Simon Clement-Jones to Councillor Bryan Lodge (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources)

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| 1. How many Council employees have been appointed on a salary greater than £50,000 since May 2011, including new starters and internal appointments? Please list each post with corresponding salary. | You have asked this question consecutively for a number of months now and every month you get the same response – nothing to add since you last asked.<br>I'm all in favour of recycling, but, as with your recent budget amendment, it's clear where your commitment to recycling lays – pointless questions and words rather than actions. |
| 2. How many members of staff within the Council are paid salaries but only carry out trade union work? Please list each post with respective costs.   | Staff employed by the Council conduct Council work.  |
| 3. How many members of staff within the Council are paid salaries but carry out trade union work on a part time basis? Please list each post with respective costs.                                   | Staff employed by the Council conduct Council work   |
| 4. What progress has been made in recovering outstanding Trading Standards debts from other South Yorkshire local authorities?  | Positive.  |

Questions of Councillor Alison Brelsford to Councillor Bryan Lodge (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources)

Since the publication of the Cabinet Report on broadband provision in Sheffield, what practical steps have the Council taken to encourage rural communities to come forward for support?

The report was published on the 12<sup>th</sup> March and all elected Members will be aware of this. It is part of the role of local elected Members to work with their communities. It is therefore appropriate for these Members to actively engage with their communities, encouraging them to come forward for support where there is a demonstrable demand, and where they are willing to come together to form community groups across rural Sheffield with other rural communities with similar needs, making solutions viable for internet providers.

