

CITY OF SHEFFIELD

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 3RD SEPTEMBER 2014

COPIES OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THERETO

Questions

Answers

Questions of Councillor Colin Ross to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Julie Dore)

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| 1. Will you join me in welcoming the 22% drop in jobseekers allowance claimants in Sheffield since May 2010? | I always welcome increases in employment in Sheffield, however, it is worrying that figures continue to show pay falling behind inflation as a damning indictment of the cost of living crisis this Government are presiding over. |
| 2. What progress has been made since the July meeting of Council in delivering the New Retail Quarter? | We are making good progress on the New Retail Quarter, the focus in the period has been: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refinement of the procurement strategy for a Strategic Development Partner.• Engineering feasibility appraisal to assess key site issues.• Detailed development of a target baseline programme.• Ongoing liaison with key stakeholders• Progressing land acquisition work streams.• Procurement of the professional team for the next stages. |
| 3. When do you expect work to begin on the New Retail Quarter? | Initial enabling work is expected to start in 2015 with construction commencing in 2016. |
| 4. Do you believe the first nine months of operation of the Moor Market has been a success? | I believe that creating a sustainable and vibrant market to serve the shoppers of Sheffield and beyond is an important part of creating a first class retail offer in the City. |

When plans for the Moor Market were first drawn up, it was envisaged that

this would be just a part of a totally-revamped area of Sheffield city centre.

While developments are well underway on The Moor, and we are about to go out to procurement on the New Retail Quarter, these developments are not yet complete.

This is in no small part due to the double dip recession created by your Government over the period, which choked off the recovery and held the development back.

We are committed to making sure that the market and the city centre as a whole is a successful long term project and I hope that you will support the steps we are taking to give the market a short term boost until the New Retail Quarter is completed.

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

1. What progress has been made since July in appointing a new organiser for the Sheffield half-marathon?

The Council will be announcing a new half marathon organiser shortly and are currently working with that organiser to agree a date and route for 2015.
2. What was the Council's budget allocation for the Tour de France and what was the actual spend?

The estimated cost of hosting the end of stage 2 of the Grand Depart of the Tour de France in Sheffield was £900,000. This figure is contained within the original Cabinet report of October 2013. That estimated financial structure included a grant contribution from the central Tour de France Hub which was charged with allocating central Government grant towards the event nationwide. As yet, this final grant settlement has yet to be decided due to non-finalised costs being reached between the Hub and their centrally procured services. Once all the costs to Sheffield City Council are known, we will announce any variation in the actual expenditure against the budget.
3. Can you report to the Council any progress you have made with South Yorkshire's Police and Crime Commissioner with regards charging for events?

Following discussions with Senior Police Officers and the Commissioner, South Yorkshire Police have agreed that they have no legal right to charge Special Policing Service for Tramlines, Fright Night and Christmas Switch on. Special Policing Services still applies to certain events but cannot be levied against public events which have free access.

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

1. What licences does the Council hold in respect of the accepting, collecting and storage on land within Graves Park?

Officers in Parks have previously sought guidance from the Environment Agency about the need for an environmental permit for the management of waste and have been advised that this site does not require a permit.

2. Did you share my shock at images published in July of the Council dumping waste in Graves Park?

During the hot weather in July there was a build up of waste at Norton Nurseries depot because the vehicle we use to take the waste to Bernard Road developed a mechanical problem. This was quickly resolved but it caused an unacceptable delay in moving waste off the site for disposal. This equipment is now back in operation and we have the capacity to bring in additional capacity should the vehicle break down again to prevent a recurrence. In addition waste is now put in containers to minimise any impact on park users.

If we took waste directly from parks to Bernard Road there would be a significant cost in terms of time and costs for waste disposal. Amalgamating waste in a container at the depot and then making fewer trips with a larger vehicle makes sense. This has been the practice for many years and has operated previously without incident.

3. Do you believe the Council was acting in the best interests of the Graves Park Charity by allowing this activity to take place?

Norton Nursery has been used as Council service depot for over 20 years and this arrangement benefits both Graves Park directly, and the management of other smaller parks in this area of the City.

Part of the former Nursery Site is needed by the Council's Parks Service to maintain and support not only Graves Park, but other parks in the City, including others originally gifted by J G Graves. The continued use of the former Nursery Site as a strategic operational base is critical to the city's park service.

The City Council is the Graves Park Charity's primary financial benefactor. The Graves Park Charity account operates at a deficit and it is underwritten by the Parks and Countryside general revenue budget. Since the former Norton Nursery site

has become recognised as now being held as part of the Charity, an additional payment for the use of this area is made from the Parks and Countywide Service to the Graves Park Charity account.

The Graves Park Charity benefits from this arrangement both operationally and financially.

4. Do you share the Friends of Graves Park understanding that it was agreed that the Norton Nursery would be restored to accessible parkland by 2014?

I do not share this understanding.

In September, 2006, Cabinet agreed to amalgamate the deeds for the Graves Park and Norton Nursery sites into a unified governing document, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Commission, the Charities Act 1993. However, the Cabinet/Trustee agreement did not extend to or agree that all of the Norton Nursery site would be managed as publicly accessible parkland. Part of the site has always been used to support the Parks Services wider operations and this site is still needed for this purpose.

The 2006 report considered the amalgamation of land at Graves Park and Norton Nurseries, and also to incorporate the land outside the charity containing the Graves Park Animal Farm. Whilst the Charity Land Estate was increased significantly as a consequence of the disposal of the Animal Farm site by the City Council to the Charity at the time - and indeed part of the lower Nursery site has also been converted to new parkland since with the generous assistance of the Friends of Graves Park - the upper part of the former Nursery site is still needed to support the operation of the Parks Service.

The Recommendation made in Paragraph C) in the 2006 Cabinet report, and as cited below, was quite clear that the agreed changes were conditional and subject to clarification

with the Charity Commission - and that part of the site would be retained for use by Council services:

The City Council agreed:

“c) to give authority to the Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Governance to take all necessary action to seek a Scheme arrangement with the Commission to permit the declaration of trusts over land detailed to Cabinet subject to retention by the Council of land necessary to the continued maintenance of Council Services and to permit disposal of land held within the Council's land portfolio to the Council as Trustee subject to compliance with any necessary provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Open Spaces Act 1906;”

No agreement was made to convert the whole of the site into publicly accessible parkland.

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

1. How much money did the Council estimate it could save when the decision was taken to remove historical war re-enactments from the Sheffield Fayre?

Sheffield Fayre is organised by the Friends of Norfolk Park with support from Sheffield City Council Events Team. The event which is largely self-funding (external grant and trader income supporting the event).

This year in order to increase the resilience of the event the decision was taken jointly not to buy in the enactment (which costs several thousand pounds) but to provide a new focus, generously supported by the University of Sheffield and the National Fairground Archive who provided much of the content (and funded some of the Merrie England activity). Arts Council England also supported the craft tent this year.

2. How much did the removing of historical

We do not fund the event but there

war re-enactments from the Sheffield Fayre save?

was a saving to the event of the cost of procuring the re-enactments as they were replaced by content funded by the funders mentioned in my answer to question 1.

3. How many visitors have attended the Sheffield Fayre in each of the last four years?

As this is a free event it is difficult to estimate the numbers of visitors each year. Our best guess would be that each year we attract 10,000 visitors on Sunday and 12,000 visitors on Bank Holiday Monday. We estimate that the Sunday attendance was in line to that of the previous years. However, Monday's attendance was significantly lower due to the terrible weather – it has been reported as possibly the coldest wettest bank holiday in years and tourism across the country suffered as a consequence.

Questions of Councillor Andrew Sangar to Councillor Ben Curran (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources)

1. Can you confirm what specific steps you have taken to recover outstanding debts relating to South Yorkshire Trading Standards since the last Full Council meeting in July?

We have reached agreements with Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham. I'm sure you will be pleased that we have been able to resolve this long-standing matter.
2. How much did the Council save as a result of national strikes held on Thursday 10th July?

£136,540.57 (excluding schools)
3. When will you be in a position to brief the Council on the eleven expressions of interest in the Don Valley stadium site?

The Don Valley site is subject to complex negotiations and a number of the expressions were commercially sensitive. Information will be disclosed in due course.

In the interest of openness, I would be happy to arrange a confidential briefing for you.

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

1. How much has Sheffield received in capital funding to ensure infant schools are ready to provide universal free school meals?

The Government have left the Council with a £401,000 shortfall, as the £1.118m they have provided does not meet the £1.519 million cost of upgrading the kitchens for locally maintained schools. Academies had to apply to the Department for Education directly.
2. How many two year olds in Sheffield have currently signed up for fifteen hours a week of fully funded childcare?

At the last census (April – July 2014) there were 1,103 children accessing a 2 year Free Early Learning place.
3. What action has been taken to replace the services previously provided by the local authority managed nursery at Chancet Wood since closure in July?

The data showed that there was sufficient provision in the area at the time the decision was made to cease offering childcare from Chancet Wood. As part of the expansion programme for 2 year Free Early Learning places, there have been a number of expansions across the area which are in development. Demand is being monitored and if there are any gaps identified in the future the Local Authority will look to intervene by stimulating the childcare market to respond.

Questions of Councillor Steve Ayris to Councillor Harry Harpham (Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods)

1. How many houses in Sheffield have been recorded empty for more than two years?

As of August 2014, there are currently approximately 777 empty properties on record that have been empty for more than two years.
2. How have tenants been involved in consultation about changes to the age designation of properties?

Many tenants and Councillors have been, and can still get, involved in the consultation about the proposals for age redesignation through their local Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TARAs). For some estates, where a TARA does not exist, a special meeting has been held with groups of residents so that we understand their views on the proposals which affect their estate.
3. When will tenants be informed about any age designation changes to the properties they live in?

Only where an age designation is changed will the tenant be notified. They will receive an individual letter which will tell them what the new designation is once the changes have been agreed.
4. Are new tenants being informed that the age designation of their properties may change in the near future?

We have not yet made any changes to age designations and until the proposals for change are firmed up/agreed then we have to continue to let properties under the existing designations.
5. Will there be any opportunity for tenants to move from a general use property to a 'over 60's' property if the designation of their property is changed, and if they wish to do so?

There is a provision in the Lettings Policy which allows us to award a priority to a person whose property is redesignated from a 60+ property to general needs.
6. I am sure you will have noted figures that show that the Housing Revenue Account's reserves now stand at £13 million, £3 million higher than predicted when your Administration rent bombshell was agreed. Do you feel that these funds could have been used to reduce your 6.2% hike on local tenants?

The main reason for the difference is district heating which has balances on the account. This is a part of the £13m reserve showing on the Statement of Accounts but in the budget report to Cabinet in January, 2014 district heating balances were separated out from the £10m 'risk based reserve' because it is ring-fenced for expenditure on district heating.

The other reason reserves are £13m in the statement of accounts is because some budgets underspent in 2013/14 but will need the money in 2014/15. The underspend was therefore carried forward into the New Year as a reserve. This includes some Going Local spend where the money was allocated in 2013/14 but the procurement process meant the money was not always actually spent in the same year.

This reserve could not have been used to offset the rent increase because:

Much of the £3m was funded not by rent but by the district heating charge which has been the subject of low increases in recent years compared with the market because the reserve has been used to absorb some of the cost and allow charges to be gradually brought into line with costs.

7. How much money is currently in the Residual Levy Account?

There is currently £54,045.38 in the residual levy account.

8. How much money has been spent from the Residual Levy Account in the following years and how has this money been spent (a) 2012-13; (b) 2013-14 and (c) 2014-15?

In financial year 2011/12, the Residual Levy was allocated as part of Going Local funding which each Housing Area received. TARAs were able to bid for funds to support engagement or community projects. Local Area Boards decided which of the bids were to be awarded funds. Since then, the residual levy has not been allocated, one of the options being considered is that the money is used to support the Tenants Federation which is currently being developed.

9. What plans are in place to use funds within the Residual Levy Account during the remainder of this financial year?

Later this year, the Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel will be looking at the Tenants Levy, including the residual levy, and options for its future use.

10. When will your Administration publish a

When required.

new Rural Communities Strategy for Sheffield?

Question of Councillor Jillian Creasy to Councillor Harry Harpham (Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods)

A survey for Inside Housing has found that Sheffield City Council had the highest number of actual evictions in 2013/14 of any social landlord surveyed as well as the highest increase in evictions compared with the previous year (406 evictions, compared to 311 in 2012-13 and compared to just under 300 by Birmingham City Council). Why is this?

Sheffield has a firm approach to tackling tenants who do not pay their rent, and will not delay in taking legal action if a tenant is clearly not making efforts to pay or engaging with the service.

However, Sheffield also provides high levels of support to tenants at all stages of the arrears recovery process. Examples of support that is available includes:

- Intensive early support for new tenants in the first few weeks of their tenancy, or those getting into low level arrears. This includes making early contact with tenants to help them set up a preferred payment method, claim housing benefits if appropriate, signpost to support if required etc. Sheffield are also testing a Housing Plus model, that ensures a more joined up service for tenants around all the issues important to sustaining a successful tenancy
- Help tenants to complete applications for housing benefit, Department for Work and Pensions benefits, Discretionary Housing Payments, hardship funds or other funds available
- Internal Money Advice team that supports tenants on all their finances, from providing basic budgeting advice and switching utility/ broadband providers, to helping them to set up bank accounts or access Credit Union services
- Access to specialist debt advice provided by Sheffield Citizens Advice Bureau, which is funded

- by Sheffield City Council
- Provision of a Housing Revenue Account hardship fund, for tenants struggling with rent arrears and who face imminent legal action
 - Use of a sensitivity procedure to ensure vulnerable tenants are protected and offered appropriate support
 - Rent surgeries in First Points and Area offices across the city, ensuring tenants have direct in-person access to specialist rents staff where required
 - Joint working with Sheffield County Court to hold pre-Court and Eviction interviews at Court, to offer tenants a final chance to engage with us, resolve their financial difficulties and avoid this legal action from being taken
 - Sheffield City Council has not taken any court or eviction action against any tenant where arrears are solely attributable to the Bedroom Tax. Tenants affected by this have received high levels of support, including
 - Help to complete claims for Discretionary Housing Payments (over £860,000 paid to rent accounts in 13/14)
 - Rehousing priorities awarded to move to a smaller property where requested
 - Agreements made for tenants to move, even if their rent arrears would normally stop them from being able to do so
 - Provision of a Hardship Fund to help reduce arrears on rent accounts (£50,000 awarded in 13/14)
 - Physically moving tenants from one property to another when downsizing,

where otherwise the
tenant would not have
been able to afford this.

Questions of Councillor Penny Baker to Councillor Mazher Iqbal (Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health)

1. How many property leases for libraries have now been agreed with community groups?

Whilst the Council has yet to finalise lease terms with any of the community groups, it is in negotiations with the groups and their appointed legal representative to develop leasing arrangements that meet their needs.

2. I am sure you are aware that many community groups are concerned about the leases they have been offered. Why have community groups not been given the opportunity to apply for five-year leases?

The initial offer made to the community groups was for a term of three years. However, following representations made by the groups, leases of five years will now be offered to the community groups where requested.

3. What progress has been made in helping community groups keep libraries open in Walkley and Burngreave?

We are currently supporting, training and working with both groups that submitted business plans that met the bench mark regarding future plans for the running of Walkley Library.

Burngreave Library Group was given an extension of time to submit their business plan and we are currently in discussion with them regarding their submission.

Question of Councillor Roger Davison to Councillor Mary Lea (Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Independent Living) (to be answered by Councillor Mazher Iqbal (Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health))

What progress have you made since the July Full Council meeting in developing the Council's Tobacco Control Action Plan?

A Tobacco Control Action Plan has been developed on behalf of the Sheffield Tobacco Control Programme Accountable Board*.

The plan includes a range of action to reduce the number of smokers in the city and contribute towards a reduction in health inequalities. Actions include: reducing the availability and supply of illegal tobacco and addressing the supply to children, protecting communities from exposure to dangerous

secondhand smoke and helping people to stop smoking.

[*The Sheffield Tobacco Control Programme Accountable Board is a multi-agency group with representatives from the following organisations;

Sheffield City Council, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust, Sheffield Health and Social Care Foundation Trust, Sheffield Children's Hospital Foundation Trust, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector in Sheffield]

Question of Councillor Roger Davison to Councillor Mary Lea (Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Independent Living)

What progress have you made since the July Full Council meeting in developing the Council's Tobacco Control Action Plan?

Question to be answered by Councillor Mazher Iqbal

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

1. How many Streets Ahead work zones have been completed?

11 zones have been completed and a further 12 are substantially complete with 12 in progress.
2. At the last Council meeting you stated that Amey were trialling different types of barriers to protect residents from ongoing work. What has been the outcome of these trials?

The trial is not yet complete.
3. At the last Council meeting you stated that the Environment Agency had granted licenses to ensure technical issues with the storage of waste as a result of Streets Ahead work could be dealt with. When were these licenses applied for and when were they granted?

The licence to store road planning materials containing tar was applied for on the 28th October, 2013 and issued on 24th March, 2013.

The full permit can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/s9-1tq-environmental-permit-issued>
4. What limits did these licenses place on the storage of waste materials and on how many occasions has the waste material produced exceeded these limits?

The permit permits 200,000 tons of Hazardous and 200,000 tons of Non-Hazardous material per year with a maximum of 50,000t and 25,000t respectively of each material on site at any one time.

These limits have not been exceeded because of the mitigating action that has been taken.
5. In November 2011, the Cabinet Highways Committee granted the power to remove a vehicle, where "if left in its current position, would impede the undertaking of highways works by the PFI Service Provider on a highway to which a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order applies". How many times has this power been used since the start of the Streets Ahead project? Please break down your answer by month.

The number of vehicles removed typically reflects the amount of work done in a month – so there are fewer when the weather is worse etc.

We expect there to be removals every month during the core investment period as work progresses across the City.

Figures are only available from January, 2013 and reflect the changes in the scale and pace of the work undertaken:

January 2013 – 2 vehicles
February 2013 – 0 vehicles
March 2013 – 0 vehicles

April 2013 – 6 vehicles
 May 2013 – 21 vehicles
 June 2013 – 12 vehicles
 July 2013 – 9 vehicles
 August 2013 – 18 vehicles
 September 2013 – 25 vehicles
 October 2013 – 16 vehicles
 November 2013 – 9 vehicles
 December 2013 – 5 vehicles
 January 2014 – 13 vehicles
 February 2014 – 5 vehicles
 March 2014 -9 vehicles
 April 2014 – 7 vehicles
 May 2014 – 17 vehicles
 June 2014 – 40 vehicles

6. In each year of operation what percentage of enquires made to Council's Streets Ahead contact address have been dealt with within 3 days of receipt?

I'm not clear why you've asked the question. The Customer Charter entitles the customer to a response within 7 days or, if the question or complaint is more complicated, 28 days.

7. How many households have received improvements to their home through the Sheffield Heat and Save scheme?

You will be aware that the Government gutted the ECO and Green Deal schemes earlier this year and this has impacted on all schemes aimed at improving insulation and reducing bills.

It has been suggested that nationally there is now the lowest investment in insulation since records began.

Availability of ECO grant was frozen and although our partners do now have funding available, this is very limited and at substantially reduced rates per measure following the national ECO cutbacks.

The current situation is that there have been:

- 246 enquiries, of which 219 are currently still in progress
- This includes 459 potential measures of which the majority are for heating and insulation
- Many of these are not eligible for full funding

8. Which geographical areas of the city are currently eligible for the Sheffield Heat and Save scheme?

The whole city is eligible for help through our scheme. However, the Government sets ECO eligibility.

The Government's reductions to ECO funding now mean there is now extremely limited heating/insulation funding for low income households, covering only an estimated 300 measures up to the end of December.

The non-means tested insulation funding is restricted to areas covered by the 'Carbon Saving Community' (CSCO) part of ECO funding – approximately one third of the city.

There are three parts of ECO:

Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO) - This provides predominantly heating, but also insulation measures to residents living in private tenure properties that receive particular means-tested benefits or are on a low income:

Carbon Emission Reduction Obligation (CERO) – This covers the installation of measures like standard loft and cavity wall insulation and is open to all residents regardless of their circumstances. Following the Government's decision to cut ECO, Keepmoat and SIG / Miller Pattison currently have no funding for this kind of ECO under the scheme.

Carbon Saving Community Obligation (CSCO) – The Government has ranked Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) using data (the Indices of Multiple Deprivation) to offer energy efficiency measures to the most deprived areas in the country (focusing on insulation). The CSCO strand of ECO targets 25% of LSOAs nationally. This equates to 131 LSOAs in Sheffield, or roughly a

third of the city.

The Sustainable Development Service has identified up to 19,000 households potentially eligible for the HHCRO part of ECO and is undertaking a staged mailshot starting in early September. Alongside this, a similar mailshot offer for insulation will be sent out to households who may have missed the previous Sheffield Free Insulation Scheme.

Outrageously, Department for Energy and Climate Change will not reveal how many Green Deal assessments have taken place across Sheffield – presumably because the conversion rate is so low.

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

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| 1. What will be the cost to the Council of recent rent reductions announced for the Moor Market? | We have to assess the final proposed rent and review the impact on income and therefore cannot provide any detail at this point in time. |
| 2. In addition to rent reductions and simply waiting for the development of The Moor to complete, what other ideas are you considering to boost trade at the Moor Market? | We are looking at a host of initiatives including creating enabling online marketing, promotion and trade, a significant events programme. |
| 3. How many schools now have legally-enforceable Traffic Regulation Orders for Keep Clear signs? | There are 71 schools with enforceable restrictions outside their entrances. By the Spring of 2015 well over half of all schools will have been completed with all done by the end of the Streets Ahead core works. |
| 4. What progress has so far been made in awarding JESSICA funding? | To date the JESSICA Fund has completed two investments.

1) Revolution at the AMP - £2.7m
2) 3 St. Paul's Place - £3.75m |

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

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| 1. When will your Administration's review of criteria for double-yellowed lines be completed? | We have no review of criteria for double-yellow lines. |
| 2. What new criteria did you intend to include as a result of this review? | See above. |
| 3. Can you assure residents in my ward that the corner between the Hutcliffe Wood Road and Hutcliffe Wood Drive junction will be considered seriously for the installation of double-yellow lines? | Any requests will be assessed as per the current criteria. |
| 4. Can you assure residents in my ward that the crossroads of Westwick Crescent and Westwick Road, about which local residents and community groups have grave safety concerns, will also be considered seriously for double-yellow lines? | There have been three individual requests for restrictions at the junction of Westwick Road with Westwick Crescent. I am pleased to say that officers have chosen this location to be investigated this financial year. It is pertinent to note that previous changes to restrictions in this area have produced objections |

from traders and this is likely to happen here. The introduction of yellow lines is something that needs to be carefully balanced.

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