

Agenda Item 6

CITY OF SHEFFIELD

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 1ST JULY 2015

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. With the decision about the location of the HS2 station imminent and the two largest groups on the Council favouring the City Centre location, the case for the City Centre location has been weakened by opposition from other Labour leaders in the City Region. What steps have you taken to convince these leaders of the economic benefits for the whole of the City Region? | We believe that the evidence supporting a City Centre station over Meadowhall is overwhelming and we are continuing to make this case to HS2, the Government and City Region partners. We have been consistently making this case in various ways through our involvement in the LEP, Combined Authority, One North and my membership of the HS2 Growth Taskforce. Ultimately the decision will be taken by the Government and we have consistently said that the decision should be based on the station that provides the maximum economic benefit for the City Region, the evidence makes it overwhelmingly clear this is Victoria. |
| 2. Given that you have been unable to persuade your Labour colleagues of the economic benefits, do you think the £190,000 spent on consultations is money well spent? | The money spent on consultants has revealed just what an overwhelming economic case exists for a city centre HS2 station, rather than the Government's current preferred option for Meadowhall. When the stakes are so high, it is right that we stand up for Sheffield by making the best possible case. Fighting for a City Centre HS2 station continues to be an absolute top priority for this Administration. |

Questions of Councillor Jack Clarkson to Councillor Jayne Dunn (Cabinet Member for Housing)

1. It has become evident that the Council housing policy in relation to the bidding process for one and two bedroom elderly persons bungalows, is to change from April 2016. Is this correct ?

The new Allocations Policy is due to be implemented in April 2016. One of the changes in the new policy is that there will be no 40+ designation for properties. We are undertaking a review of property designations for all properties where there is an age designation. In future, properties will be designated either for general needs (no age designation) or for applicants aged over 60 years old.

2. Currently many residents who occupy these bungalows are elderly or disabled, many have mobility issues or other health related problems and obviously these types of properties are ideal for such people which duly suits their life styles, and assists them greatly in respect of their health and wellbeing.

How will the new policy affect the availability of provision for such properties for a growing population of elderly people, and disabled residents with mobility and other health related problems?

3 out of 4 accessible properties are advertised that preference for them will be given to applicants with mobility priority. Where an applicant has a mobility priority, this overrides any age designation anyway. This assists us to ensure that accessible properties are let to applicants with mobility and health problems that need them. Applicants over 60 will be able to bid both for the 60+ properties and also for general needs properties in the same way that they could bid for general needs, 40+ or 60+ properties. As part of the age designation we have looked at the location of properties and tried to ensure there will be properties available that meet the housing needs of all age groups across the city.

3. The City Council housing service are now informing Tenant and Resident Associations, that when elderly/disabled persons bungalows become available, these are to be offered under 'general needs' to families who will be able to bid for these properties, especially the two bedroomed bungalows.

Are bungalows to be offered to families due to a shortage of social housing for families in the city in preference to the elderly/disabled?

There is a proposal that some bungalows will be redesignated to be let to general needs applicants. This is to ensure there will be properties available to meet the housing needs of all age groups more effectively. Some bungalows and flats that are designated 60+ currently are difficult to let. This may be down to location or other factors which makes them less popular. Two bedroomed bungalows are more difficult to let as the eligibility criteria for a two bedroomed property is a household with

children or two separate adults and there are a limited number of households who are aged 60+ bidding for them that meet this criteria.

4. When was the policy in respect of the re-designation of elderly/disabled persons bungalows to allow people to bid under 'general needs', discussed and changed, and were other political parties invited to make comment at the time?

The new Allocations Policy was agreed by Cabinet on 20th March, 2013. Prior to the new Allocations Policy being written, a wide public consultation was undertaken. The Council's Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee was involved in making recommendations to the Lettings Policy Review Team. The report is available on the Council's website and I have provided you with a copy of the report. Details of the consultation are at Section 11 of the report.

There has also been public consultation as part of the redesignation exercise. Area Housing teams have consulted with TARAs about proposals for properties in their area. I understand that Mark Cowley met with you recently to discuss the redesignation exercise and advised you that further discussions with local TARAs is to take place in July, August and September. Mark will also be meeting with Labour Councillors to discuss the redesignation further.

5. Is the current Administration aware that many of these elderly/disabled persons bungalows are sited in areas in our communities that the majority of other residents know as quiet 'areas for the elderly/disabled' and allows them a quality of life, that in the main is quiet and peaceful for elderly and disabled occupants.?

The review of age designated properties has been done by area teams who have knowledge about the properties they manage at a local level. The further consultation will allow for tenants to raise any issues with the proposals they feel will impact on their quality of life.

6. Do you feel allowing families to occupy these bungalows will seriously impact on many of the elderly and disabled occupants, as no doubt there will be differences of life styles and standards,

Once the properties have been designated, they will be let following the new age criteria if they become vacant. The properties in North West area have a low turnover so

which we already see on many estates resulting in complaints in anti-social behaviour?

Do the Council think that they are being considerate to the elderly/disabled in changing the policy to 'general needs' in respect of elderly person's bungalows?

any change will not be immediate but will happen over a period of time. The area teams will monitor any anti-social behaviour and take action against the perpetrators.

Questions of Councillor Steve Ayris to Councillor Jayne Dunn (Cabinet Member for Housing)

1. Over the last four years, what percentage of Council house applicants have been successful? See attached tables.
2. Over the last four years, what percentages of Council house bids have been successful? See attached tables
3. At Full Council on 25th March, 2015, Councillor Harry Harpham said that Phase 1 of the Council House New Build Project is due to start on 5th August, 2015? Is this still correct? We are still aiming for a start on site in the late summer

Questions of Councillor Martin Smith to Councillor Jayne Dunn (Cabinet Member for Housing)

The Call for Housing Sites 2014 consultation took place from 14 July to 22 August 2014:

- (1) How many sites were submitted for assessment during this period? 199 sites.
- (2) How many sites been submitted for assessment since then? 7 sites
(A total of 206 sites)
For these late submissions, it was advised that if the site is currently in the Green Belt, a detailed assessment may not be possible, due to the advanced stage of the Green Belt review process, but the site would be reviewed for suitability.
- (3) How many of the sites submitted for assessment are either wholly or partly in the Green Belt? 106 wholly in the Green Belt
11 sites are partly in the Green Belt.
- (4) In which Wards are these Green Belt sites located? Across the following wards: Beauchief and Greenhill, Beighton, Birley, Crookes, Darnall, Dore and

Totley, East Ecclesfield, Ecclesall, Fulwood, Graves Park, Mosborough, Richmond, Shiregreen and Brightside, Southey, Stannington, Stocksbridge and Upper Don, West Ecclesfield and Woodhouse.

- (5) When will details of the sites be published?

Autumn 2015 - all submitted sites will be subject to detailed assessment to evaluate the suitability of sites for housing development, which will inform the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

In addition, sites submitted that are in the Green Belt will be assessed as part of the Green Belt Review, with details published as part of the Local Plan Issues and Options consultation, also in the Autumn.

The publication of sites will be accompanied by the methodology for undertaking the site assessments.

Questions of Councillor Sarah Jane Smalley to Councillor Jayne Dunn (Cabinet Member for Housing)

It was agreed last Council year by Cabinet that the residual levy pot would be spent in areas where there is currently no TARA. Please could you clarify that this is still the case and what the process is for such areas to bid in for funds?

See below.

Response to the question of Councillor Sarah Jane Smalley to Councillor Jayne Dunn

A paper was taken to Cabinet Members Briefing (CMB) in December 2014 which outlined the current position with regards to Residual Levy. Five options were written in to the paper for suggestions on how the Residual Levy should be spent. These options were also discussed at HANAP (Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel) in January and at CEPG (Community Engagement Partnership Group) in February. Option 1 was the preferred recommendation at CMB and HANAP, with then a consultation exercise taking place with recognised TARAs. The results of the consultation were then brought back to HANAP in March and CEPG in April. The options and consultation results are as follows:

Votes		
Option 1: Utilise the money to target areas that have no representation by a recognised TARA. Coordinate a tailored project plan to consult effectively in the attempt to encourage the start of new TARAs and to target areas with limited engagement	29	54%
Option 2: Distribute the Residual Levy Money per the amount of Residual Levy. Payers per Area, to fund Community Engagement and Governance activities and consultation in line with Housing +	2	4%
Option 3: Use the money to help support the new proposed Tenants Federation in Sheffield (Money to be held until decision made)	3	4%
Option 4: Consult with Residual Levy Payers on how and where to distribute the Residual Levy	8	15%
Option 5: No Action – Residual Levy is not distributed and continues to build up	2	4%
Abstain	1	2%
No Vote	9	17%

When the results were fed back at CEPG, there was an objection by a Residual Levy payer to move forward with Option 1. The reason for this objection was that there had been no consultation or involvement with Residual Levy payers with the review. Because of this, no recommendation has yet been sent to the Cabinet Member. A meeting has since taken place with the Residual Levy payer and officers.

At the moment there is no standard procedure for allocating money to areas where there is no representation by a TARA. The process would be drawn up and finalised once the option has been agreed.

Questions of Councillor Richard Shaw to Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport)

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| 1. What is the current policy relating to the removal of handrails as part of the Streets Ahead project? | There is no current policy regarding the removal of handrails. |
| 2. Why have handrails been removed without consultation of residents, such as on Roxton Avenue in Beauchief and Greenhill Ward? | As discussed with Councillor Joe Otten and described to Councillor Roy Munn, the handrails were removed in error and are being replaced and Amey have apologised for their mistake. |
| 3. What has been the cost of removal of handrails across the city? | There were no costs to the Council from Roxton Avenue. |
| 4. What is the cost of the reinstatement of handrails across the city? | There were no cost to the Council from Roxton Avenue. |

Questions of Councillor Joe Otten to Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport)

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| 1. What (cumulative) percentage of Sheffield's highways had been resurfaced under the Streets Ahead programme by the end of each month since the programme began? | We don't measure such information and so it is not available. However since the start of the contract, we have resurfaced over 300 miles of roads and 500 miles of pavements. |
| 2. How many pothole repairs have been carried out under the Streets Ahead programme, each month since it began? | Last year we repaired around 87,000 potholes. During any year the profile of potholes reflects the weather in that there are more potholes during winter caused by the freeze-thaw cycle. |
| 3. Has any assessment been made of the potential benefits to the city's air quality of extending the life of highway trees, which although they may, for example, suffer some disease and so qualify for removal during Streets Ahead zonal works, have nonetheless not (yet) become dangerous? | Assessments are made by tree experts if a tree is diseased as to the effect that might have on its lifespan. Just because a tree is diseased does not automatically mean removal and replacement. Some diseases can infect other trees and that is a consideration. |

We would cite an independent standpoint from a nationally recognised authority on trees and carbon where the Forestry Commission's research stance which says: "young trees absorb carbon dioxide quickly while they are

growing, but as a tree ages a steady state is eventually reached. At this point the amount of carbon absorbed through photosynthesis is equal to that lost through respiration and decay”.

4. Of trees condemned to destruction during Streets Ahead zonal works, have you considered indicating in each case whether the decision to destroy a tree is clear cut or marginal?

No trees are condemned for destruction and all trees are managed in their own individual way to ensure they remain safe for the highway. Where a decision is marginal, the tree will be retained as removal is the last resort.

5. By how long do you consider it reasonable for the life of a highway tree to be shortened so that work on that tree may be carried out during the Streets Ahead zonal programme, rather than at some other time?

Our approach to trees is that removal is a last resort and for a tree to be removed it needs to be dead, dying, and dangerous– all of those aspects create unacceptable risk to person and property. Trees may be removed if they are diseased and that decision will be made by tree experts should that disease reduce the lifespan of a tree or potentially infect other trees. Trees will also be considered for removal if they are damaging footways and kerbs etc. or if they obstruct the footway to prevent reasonable use of a footpath by the disabled or parents with pushchairs.

Questions of Councillor Sarah Jane Smalley to Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport)

1. Issues have been raised by residents regarding the details of the Amey Streets Ahead Contract in relation to street trees and how decisions are made regarding removal and replacement. Whilst understanding that some parts of the contract will be commercially sensitive, can the Cabinet Member make the details of those parts of the contracts related to the removal and replacement of street trees publicly available in order to clarify this situation, even if in a redacted form?

There are no parts of the contract which relate to trees that have been redacted. The approach to decision making about trees is included on the Councils website via www.sheffield.gov.uk/streetsahead.

2. With other core cities having adopted a Tree Strategy, and bearing in mind Sheffield's status as the greenest city in

The Council's Highway Tree Strategy is to manage the tree stock as an asset and remove and replace trees

the UK, does the Cabinet Member plan to introduce a similar strategy for our trees and woodlands?

only as a last resort. We do not have any information about other Core City tree strategies.

Questions of Councillor Brian Webster to Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport)

1. It has been repeatedly stated that the Streets Ahead contract calls for "notification" not "consultation" with residents. Does the Cabinet Member think that this goes far enough?

The approach in communicating with residents and businesses about the Streets Ahead works is in line with the requirements of the Council and takes account of the practicality of delivering such a huge project. The Council approach is one that other Highways PFI contracts take.

Substantial communication is carried out with the public (including letter drops to residents, roadshows, meetings with community groups and Ward Members, regular updates via social media and the website, email alerts and local signage) well in advance of any work.

2. Could the Cabinet Member give us an idea of what the impact of a Moratorium on the removal of street trees would have, both on the progress of the Streets Ahead works programme in general and in terms of the financial implications?

Delays to the Streets Ahead programme would have a significant effect on the project including a financial cost to the Council. Delays to improving the condition of our roads, pavements, lighting and trees also exposes the road users to risks due to trips and falls and potholes, etc.

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

1. What systems have been put in place to make sure that the blunders in social payments to an amputee - recently highlighted in the 'Star' newspaper - don't re-occur?

Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Health and Social Care Foundation Trust have of course formally apologised to the individual affected by this unfortunate and regrettable situation

Many of the issues were about communication between people and organisations, and confusion over the different roles and responsibilities of the Council and Sheffield Health and Social Care Foundation Trust

To rectify this, in future situations where people have needs across more than one service, one service will lead on assessment and care planning, and there will be a single personal budget tailored to the individual's needs

Senior officers from both Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Health and Social Care Foundation Trust will monitor and review the above arrangements, to ensure that the above situation is not repeated and all individuals receive the best possible level of service.

2. Where there are failings in the Sheffield Care Trust and the City Council, it is difficult for Councillors to pick up on this until something like the above goes drastically wrong. Reports always highlight the perceived strengths of an organisation, so Councillors need more training on how to ask questions that get below the surface of Director reports. Do you agree?

As you will know as Shadow Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Independent Living there is a training programme for all Councillors, including those on Scrutiny Boards which helps Councillors question Officers including those from the Health Service. I will arrange for Officers to send you a copy of the training programme. I am happy to discuss any further training needs you feel you have.

3. The Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Board is only represented by Councillors of one party, which does not give a balance to the City's elected representation; do you think that should

Councillor representation in Health and Wellbeing Boards is a Council decision – there is no national prescription other than there needs to be at least one Councillor on the Board.

be reviewed?

Regulation 7 of the Health and Social Care Act, 2012 modifies Sections 15 to 16 and Schedule 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to disapply the political proportionality requirements for the Section 102 committees in respect of health and wellbeing boards.

It is my view that we have the right decision makers on this Board at present.

**Bids Placed - Northgate Website/OHMS
between 01/01/11 and 31/03/12**

Council Property

Number of Bids Placed	549670	
Properties Receiving Bids	4999	
Applicants Placing Bids	20671	
Average Bids Per Property	110	
Average Bids Per Applicant	27	
Successful Bids	5072	
% Successful Applicants	24.5%	Successful Bids/Applicants Placing bids
% Successful Bids	0.9%	Successful Bids/Number of Bids Placed

Housing Association Property

Number of Bids Placed	124926	
Properties Receiving Bids	1195	
Applicants Placing Bids	12898	
Average Bids Per Property	105	
Average Bids Per Applicant	10	
Successful Bids	1113	
% Successful Applicants	8.6%	Successful Bids/Applicants Placing bids
% Successful Bids	0.9%	Successful Bids/Number of Bids Placed

Council and Housing Association Properties

Total Number of Bids Placed	674596	
Total Number of Properties Receiving Bids	6194	
Total Number of Applicants Placing Bids	21428	
Average Bids Per Property	109	
Average Bids Per Applicant	31	
Successful Bids	6185	
% Successful Applicants	28.9%	Successful Bids/Applicants Placing bids
% Successful Bids	0.9%	Successful Bids/Number of Bids Placed

**Bids Placed - Northgate Website/OHMS
between 01/04/12 and 31/03/13**

Council Property

Number of Bids Placed	390151	
Properties Receiving Bids	3894	
Applicants Placing Bids	17103	
Average Bids Per Property	100	
Average Bids Per Applicant	23	
Successful Bids	3804	
% Successful Applicants	22.2%	Successful Bids/Applicants Placing bids
% Successful Bids	1.0%	Successful Bids/Number of Bids Placed

Housing Association Property

Number of Bids Placed	85406	
Properties Receiving Bids	925	
Applicants Placing Bids	10271	
Average Bids Per Property	92	
Average Bids Per Applicant	8	
Successful Bids	848	
% Successful Applicants	8.3%	Successful Bids/Applicants Placing bids
% Successful Bids	1.0%	Successful Bids/Number of Bids Placed

Council and Housing Association Properties

Total Number of Bids Placed	475557	
Total Number of Properties Receiving Bids	4819	
Total Number of Applicants Placing Bids	17770	
Average Bids Per Property	99	
Average Bids Per Applicant	27	
Successful Bids	4652	
% Successful Applicants	26.2%	Successful Bids/Applicants Placing bids
% Successful Bids	1.0%	Successful Bids/Number of Bids Placed

**Bids Placed - Northgate Website/OHMS
between 01/04/13 and 31/03/14**

Council Property

Number of Bids Placed	160895	
Properties Receiving Bids	2343	
Applicants Placing Bids	10206	
Average Bids Per Property	69	
Average Bids Per Applicant	16	
Successful Bids	2068	
% Successful Applicants	20.3%	Successful Bids/Applicants Placing bids
% Successful Bids	1.3%	Successful Bids/Number of Bids Placed

Housing Association Property

Number of Bids Placed	39666	
Properties Receiving Bids	592	
Applicants Placing Bids	6195	
Average Bids Per Property	67	
Average Bids Per Applicant	6	
Successful Bids	473	
% Successful Applicants	7.6%	Successful Bids/Applicants Placing bids
% Successful Bids	1.2%	Successful Bids/Number of Bids Placed

Council and Housing Association Properties

Total Number of Bids Placed	200561	
Total Number of Properties Receiving Bids	2935	
Total Number of Applicants Placing Bids	10746	
Average Bids Per Property	68	
Average Bids Per Applicant	19	
Successful Bids	2541	
% Successful Applicants	23.6%	Successful Bids/Applicants Placing bids
% Successful Bids	1.3%	Successful Bids/Number of Bids Placed