

Council Meeting – 4th November, 2020

Written Answers Provided To Member Questions

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

Q.4 During your term as leader of the Council, how many Ombudsman complaints have been upheld?

A.4 I am sending you copies of all the Annual Ombudsman Complaints Reports from my tenure as Leader which include the information you have requested. The Ombudsman Reports are published every year.

[Annual Ombudsman Complaints Reports 2011-2019](#)

Q.5 Please provide a list of all complaints upheld since May 2011?

A.5 See answer above.

Q.6 In light of these complaints, what actions have you taken to improve openness and transparency following these ombudsman decisions/complaints against the Council?

A.6 See answer above. As you are aware following all ombudsman's decisions, a response is produced and the council will implement any improvements/changes required.

**Questions of Councillor Paul Turpin to Councillor Paul Wood (Cabinet Member
for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)**

Q.1 How many repairs to Council homes are incomplete and pending?

A.1 [There are currently 9,200 outstanding repairs.](#)

Q.2 Will you provide a rent free period to tenants until repairs are done?

A.2 [The Council does not change the requirement to pay rent as a result of not carrying out repairs. However, if any tenant believes that repairs have not been completed on time, caused inconvenience or, caused further disrepair then there are separate processes in place for tenants to seek compensation.](#)

Q.3 How long is too long to wait for repairs?

A.3 [We typically operate with the below priorities. We are still aiming to keep within these](#)

priorities but if there is an influx of repairs due the lack of repairs reported over the pandemic then these timescales could be impacted.

- Emergency (4 hours)
- Urgent (3 days)
- Responsive (28 days)
- Planned (55 days)

Q.4 What steps are being taken to speed up repairs?

A.4 Our Response to COVID

- We are planning and organising our resources to deliver the backlog and anticipated increase in volume of repairs above normal volumes;
- We have developed a tracker to compare actuals to projected volumes to understand financial and resource implications;
- We have batched work up such as high value fire damaged properties, acquisitions, roofing, windows and doors, plastering, and are working with Housing Investment colleagues and our supply chain contractors to deliver this work.
- We have recruited agency workers and set them to work to supplement our teams with additional resources;
- We have redeployed resources to manage demand in repairs and our work force is working flexibly and overtime giving us additional capacity;
- We are developing plans to recruit additional trade operatives to boost our internal resource to manage the present demand and future growth strategy;
- We are constantly reviewing our activities should we need to react to potential further Government directives;
- We are communicating to our customers regularly via a joint communication with Housing.

General Service Improvements

We have completed a major review of the repairs service and developed a new target operating model with clear priorities for change and improvements.

Change has started and will be continuous over the next 18 months with the overall aim of achieving a sustainable operating model that delivers excellent value for money services to the tenants and residents of Sheffield City Council.

Our improvements include:

- Restructuring the service to remove client/contractor roles, speed up the decision making process and reduce operating overheads;
- Shifting the balance of reactive repairs to more planned and cyclical maintenance;
- Improving customer focus and collaboration with key stakeholders;
- Modernising service delivery through the investment in ICT;
- Developing an organisational development strategy that empowers our staff with the skills to deliver a first class repairs service;
- Improving performance management, reporting and productivity;
- Improving financial awareness and management;

- Improving procurement and supply chain management;
- Creating opportunities for young people through recruitment of 45 apprentices this year (100 Apprentices in total within RMS);

Q.5 How many staff have there been in the Repairs and Maintenance Department, yearly since the year before it was taken back in house till present day?

A.5

	FTE	Headcount	Comments
Apr-17	487.46	492	
Apr-18	480.56	488	
Apr-19	560.90	574	Includes staff from Housing merged into repairs and increased operatives to manage growth in planned work and increased Apprenticeships
Apr-20	577.22	593	Includes staff from Housing merged into repairs and increased operatives to manage growth in planned work and increased Apprenticeships

Q.6 At what point do tenants receive compensation for incomplete repairs?

A.6 We don't have a blanket policy on this other than we will treat complaints on their individual merits. If incomplete repairs have led to a material loss to the customer then we would offer compensation based on that (e.g. loss of earnings or damaged property) or if substantial inconvenience has been caused we would offer a goodwill payment.

Q.7 What steps have been taken to ensure officers in the homes department can deal with urgent repairs after officers in the Repairs and Maintenance Department have left work?

A.7 Urgent repairs need to be responded to within 3 days. However for emergency repairs out of hours the Repairs Service have a dedicated Emergency Standby Team that operates out of hours and around the clock to ensure these repairs are responded to.

Q.8 How do you anticipate the new IT system in Repairs and Maintenance making the department deal with repairs more quickly?

A.8 The new IT system will automate workflow, reduce admin time, and provide users with the visibility and ability to control complex tasks enabling the streamlined delivery of work.

Automated Management of up to 90% of jobs enables Coordinators to spend more time interacting with Customers, organising complex repairs, and providing updates and advice.

Real-Time Dashboard Information to continually improve and proactively manage performance and efficiencies.

Q.9 What steps have been taken to improve the woeful communications from Repairs and Maintenance department?

A.9 The Repairs Service is producing a monthly update for Members and Senior Officers of performance throughout the COVID pandemic. The Repairs Service is working with Corporate Communications to obtain dedicated resources to improve communications with Members, Tenants and Employees.

Q.10 How many workers are employed through agencies for Repairs and Maintenance department?

A.10 There are 52 Agency workers working for the R&M department

Q.11 How many subcontracted companies are working in the Repairs and Maintenance department?

A.11 There are 17 subcontracted companies working for the R&M department

Q.12 What towns or cities are the subcontracted companies based?

A.12 9 in Sheffield
2 in Doncaster
2 in Barnsley
1 in Worksop
1 in Leeds
1 in Huddersfield
1 in Wakefield

Q.13 What has been done by the City Council to ensure that firework laws are being kept to regarding:

(a) Sales

Each year we contribute to Operation Dark Nights, a police led multi-agency operation tackling the numerous issues caused by bonfire night in Sheffield. Our particular contribution is in advance of sales starting, by providing free advice and materials to businesses selling fireworks as to their responsibilities regarding preventing underage sales (Over 18 years being the requirement for fireworks).

During the firework sales period, we visit businesses with a test purchase volunteer over a number of nights. Enforcement action is taken and re-tests soon after for

those failing to comply, with further escalated enforcement action as necessary.

In addition to operation Dark Nights, we receive intelligence regarding the sale of 'Commercial Grade Fireworks' to the public. We investigate and take appropriate action against these individuals as well as share that intelligence with other relevant agencies for them to act eg South Yorkshire Fire Service (who are responsible for licensing firework sellers & checking explosive storage requirements are met). We also, investigate any complaints regarding alleged unsafe fireworks eg rocket that has failed and exploded on the ground.

(b) Times they are set off

The Fireworks Act 2003 states that fireworks cannot be set off between 23:00 and 07:00 during the year which is increased to 00:00 and 07:00 for bonfire night, New Year's Eve and some religious ceremonies. This information was put out as a reminder on social media by SCC and SYP prior to bonfire night. We will investigate any noise complaints of fireworks being set off outside of the permitted hours by following up any intelligence or evidence directly with the alleged perpetrator, however this year our service didn't receive any complaints of this nature which is positive.

Q.14 What work has been done to look into possibilities of banning private sales altogether?

A.14 See Q17 below.

Q.15 What work has been done to look at the effect on emergency services over the 5th November period?

A.15 All the individual blue light services carry out their own monitoring but then as a Community Safety Partnership monitoring will also take place.

Every year a group of all relevant partners including the Police, SYF&R and the local authority come together to plan for the Dark Nights period. This year with Covid regulations planning was different as community events such as the Bonfires and Lantern Parades were not allowed and interaction with local community planning was limited. A review of the planning is now taking place which will include analysis of the impact on emergency services, these findings and any learning will then be fed back into the planning for next year's Dark Nights period.

Q.16 What work has been done to measure the effect on air quality during the 5th November period?

A.16 The Council measures air quality via real time (24/7) monitors, which provide information on nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) at six different locations in the city. Monitored air pollution results from these locations can be accessed via the following link: <https://bit.ly/2IE8Nb4>

Air pollution levels were elevated during the period from 00:01 (am) on 4th November to 23:59 (pm) on 5th November. The results show that the NO₂ levels can be deemed to be Low (DAQ Index 3) as the highest monitored hourly mean concentration was 145µg.m⁻³ (µg/m³) on the morning of 5th November. The particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) levels were however moderate (DAQ Index 5 and 4) as their highest monitored daily mean values exceeded 50µg.m⁻³ and 35µg.m⁻³ respectively, both occurring on 5th November.

Q.17 What work has been done to investigate local options regarding bylaws with fireworks?

A.1 As an enforcement body our professional institute (The Chartered Trading Standards Institute) has taken a policy line, to work with the Office for Product Safety & Standards to encourage;

- the use of only 'safe' fireworks by the public (CE marked fireworks from reputable sources) – Trading Standards having enforcement responsibility for the rules regarding firework safety,
- ensuring fireworks are not sold to children or to the general public when they are commercial grade and
- fireworks are used safely (following the instructions that must be on each firework) and not at a time or in a way that causes nuisance to others.

Q.18 What work has been done to research the effect on animals during the 5th November period?

A.18 We haven't done any research ourselves into the effects on animals, but the attached from the RSPCA is exactly what was requested. It's relatively recent (2019) and almost every fact presented is cross referenced.



Bang out of order -
fireworks frighten ani

Questions of Councillor Bob Pullin to Councillor Mark Jones (Cabinet Member for Environment, Streetscene and Climate Change)

Q.1 How many city-centre events using diesel generators were held on Council-regulated sites (Barkers Pool, Fargate, Tudor Square, Surrey Street, the Peace Gardens, Pinstone Street, The Moor) between the 1st of January 2019 and the 5th of January 2020? Please specify the names of the events and their number of days duration.

A.1 On council led events that there were diesel generators at Cliffhanger, The Fringe At Tramlines, Out Of This World, Christmas Lights, a number of fairs in 2019 and the Christmas Market. Where available and possible to supply safely mains power is used – eg the climbing wall sound system at Cliffhanger, the main stage at Christmas Lights, the illusion shows in front of the town hall at Out of This world and in the Peace Gardens at The Fringe At Tramlines, Armed Forces day and Out Of This World. However, the supplies are in limited areas and at large crowd events and with the size of supply of mains power limited on some sites (ie Devonshire Green) there are some aspect of the events where it would not be possible to safely use those supplies.

- Half term fair – 7 days – February 18th to 24th February
- Cliffhanger – 2 days – estimate 10 to 12 generators (some diesel, some LPG) across the city centre sites
- Sheffield By The Seaside – 30 days – 1st August to 30th August
- The Fringe At Tramlines – 2 days – estimate 25 generators (some diesel, some LPG) across the sites
- Out Of This World – 1 day – estimate 12 generators (some diesel, some LPG) across the city centre sites
- Christmas Lights – 1 day – estimate 12 generators (some diesel, some LPG) across the city centre sites
- Christmas Market 49 days - 16th November – 3rd January

Q.2 For how many days in total were events held on these sites in the above-specified period?

A.2 Estimate 92 days. It should be noted that they vary vastly in size, attendance, duration and infrastructure with events including Remembrance Sunday, electric bikes launch, Indian New Year day of dance, Armed Forces Day, Chance To Dance, Invictus Trials, Sheffield Makes Music, St Lukes Night Strider, Pinknic, Christmas Lights, Sheffield By The Seaside, Half Marathon, Battle of Britain parade, etc.... (NB World Snooker Championships and DocFest have not been included as they are mainly indoors so may skew the figures – they are 15 days and 10 days if need to be included).

Q.3 How many diesel generators is it estimated were used in total at these events throughout the above period?

A.3 We do not have that figure as it is not recorded but it would mainly be the bigger events (detailed at questions 1 and 2) that would have generators. Many of the smaller events will not require power or will have access to mains power for small PA systems.

Q.4 What is the estimated amount of pollution created by the diesel generators.

A.4 Unfortunately, we do not have this information as the exact number, fuel usage and type of generator is not tracked at the moment.

Q.5 Please give a specific estimate of the pollution created by an event of one day's duration using some 16 generators of an average generating capacity of 100 kva (diesel consumption 20 litres per hour) for an operating period of 12 hours.

A.5 Estimating emissions as requested is not straight forward and would not tell us much about the levels of pollution people might be exposed to.

The Air Quality Team have been monitoring nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution levels at Fargate since 2018 and at Barkers Pool since 2003. During this period pollution emissions from all events using generators were monitored. The annual average pollution level monitored so far has never been greater than 36µg.m⁻³ (36 microgram per cubic metre) which is below the 40µg.m⁻³ (40 microgram per cubic metre) level not to be exceeded to protect health. During 2018 and 2019 respectively at Fargate the levels monitored have been 30µg.m⁻³ (30 microgram per cubic metre).

Q.6 Are you aware that over 30 years ago large events were run on city centre sites, including children's and adult fairground rides, without the use of generators?

A.6 The city centre has never had the infrastructure across all sites to run on mains power especially that needed for some of the bigger events so generators have always been used to some extent. Some areas though did have small supplies which could power a number of fair rides etc such as on the Moor.

Q.7 What steps are the Council taking to seriously reduce city-centre air pollution at its own and or licensed events?

A.7 All new event spaces/areas of new public realm will have power supplies installed. Any event that requires power more than is available will be encouraged to minimise use of generators and where needed encourage the use of LPG generator conversions.

Specifying that generators should be in good condition and state of repair and that any participant using generators found to not be in a good condition (and therefore more pollutant) may be advised that they will have to be swapped by the safety officers

As part of every event plan, transport and the climate emergency will be referenced and have a specific plan in place to minimise negative impacts.

Q.8 When does the Council anticipate it will once again return to only promoting/licensing city-centre events with a zero-pollution output, setting a gold standard practice, which puts the health of its citizens and visitors as its top priority?

A.8 Officers are working towards the Council's Zero Carbon pathway target of 2030 and new infrastructure projects like the Future of the High Street fund are looking at

power supplies as part of the build. Clearly to produce a zero-Carbon output investment in city centre infrastructure must feed into the city centre events objectives. We will continue to keep up with newer technologies like solar power and utilise these for events as they become available and more able to generate the power required.

Question of Councillor Douglas Johnson to Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Governance)

Q. What is the estimated current funding received from the EU, directly or indirectly, per year?.

A. Answer awaited

Q. Will you provide copies of the latest versions of the brexit impact assessments?

A. Please [see here](#) for details of the impact assessment as it stands – it is up to date but will undoubtedly change further – this will also be included in the report that is due to go to Scrutiny on 17/12

Question of Councillor Alison Teal to Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Governance)

Q. What is the current status of the Big City Conversation? What work, if any, is planned between now and the impending referendum in May 2021?

A. Answer awaited

Questions of Councillor Paul Turpin to Councillor Abtisam Mohamed (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills)

Q.1 How much is Taylor Shaw being paid to provide grab bags in schools?

A.1 See below

Q.2 How much was Taylor Shaw paid to provide food parcels during the lockdown?

A. 1&2 Grab bags are an exceptional intervention to respond to an emergency situation. We didn't enter a specific contract for individual grab bags rate. The payment for this is part of the overall monthly contractual payment to Taylor Shaw for school meals. Because of Covid related protection applied around supplier relief

arrangements, limited take up of “paid for meal by parents” and school closure, it is not possible to split costs between grab bags and standard meals. Overall, the grab bag will cost the same as a standard school meal and we can provide the total spend across the period if required.