

CITY OF SHEFFIELD

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – 1ST NOVEMBER 2023

COPIES OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THERETO

Question of Councillor Maroof Raouf to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

Q. Given the war crimes Israel is committing in Palestine at this current time, and the findings of the REC report do you acknowledge that raising the Israeli flag was not an appropriate thing to do?"

A. The Israeli flag was flown to show solidarity with the victims of an appalling terrorist attack that was committed by Hamas on October 7th.

I understand that not everyone agrees with this decision and I regret any hurt that flying the flag caused. I believe it is right that we now review our flag protocol.

Question of Councillor Ian Horner to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

Q. At the moment tree cutting is undertaken by several different parts of the Council. Does Cllr Hunt agree that it is time that all trees which are the responsibility of the Council should be maintained by one team in the council?

A. Management of our extensive network of street trees is undertaken by Amey via our city-wide highways maintenance contract, Streets Ahead.

A piece of work is currently being undertaken by the Neighbourhood Services Directorate Leadership Team to review policies for the management of trees which fall within the remit of the Parks & Countryside Service and the Housing Service. Consideration will be given to how a more consistent approach for the management of trees which the Council is responsible for could be achieved. I welcome this approach and look forward to seeing the recommendations resulting from the review.

Question of Councillor Tony Damms to the Leader of the Council and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt)

Q. Can the Leader and Deputy Leader make available to Council the duties and commitments they have performed in line with their roles during the previous month.

A. The roles and responsibilities of the Leader and Deputy Leader are set out in paragraphs 6.02, 6.03 and 6.04 of the constitution.

Every day the Deputy Leader and I are working hard with our colleagues to provide strong political leadership and strategic direction for the city, in line with the constitution.

Question of Councillor Tim Huggan to the Chair of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee (Councillor Dawn Dale)

Q. Do we keep and collect data on how many Children in Sheffield with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are not currently in full time schooling? If we do keep this data, what are the numbers of children with an EHCP and not at a School or Academy?

A. Based on the latest data (25th Oct 23), the numbers / percentages of EHCP pupils (Reception to Year 11):

In school	3,579	97.3%
Not in school	100	2.7%
Total	3,679	100%

When children have Education Health and Care Plans, their attendance is monitored through the Attendance and Inclusion Team based in Access and Inclusion. Officers from the team will discuss with schools the reason for absence and follow up if there is further support needed.

Family Intervention Service (MAST) can work with families where challenges in the family home are leading to poorer attendance/educational disengagement.

SENDSARS will follow up around Annual Reviews where attendance is of concern and ensure this is flagged to the relevant services to respond.

SENDSARS and Inclusion and Attendance Officers work in collaboration when children's attendance is worryingly low. Joint meetings take place each fortnight to ensure a supportive / helpful response is made to every family whose child is a persistent absentee.

When children are moving to the city SEND services work together to ensure children transition into the city and into education swiftly. A like for like placement has been allocated, and sometimes this will mean a school has to be directed to add a child to their school roll.

When a school place cannot be allocated / directed and interim package of education will be arranged to make sure the child is not disadvantaged.

Questions of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Chair of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee (Councillor Dawn Dale)

Q.1 What data does the council hold on the number of injuries to children occurring in schools?

A.1 The following information has been recorded from April – September 2023:

- 141 accidents/incidents to students
- 102 in Primary Schools
- 21 in Secondary Schools
- 17 in Special Schools
- 1 in Nursery

Q.2 What data does the council hold on the number of injuries to children on the way to or from school?

A.2 SCC do not hold this information.

Questions of Councillor Paul Turpin to the Chair of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee (Councillor Dawn Dale)

Q.1 I was horrified to hear that the government had reneged on the funding for urgent repairs to Abbey Lane school. Can you say how this essential work will now be funded?

A.1 Funding to rectify the RAAC work at Abbey Lane School will be funded from our school condition allocation. (£3.5 million per annum.)

We had already planned to progress removal of RAAC at Abbey Lane prior to this becoming a national priority. The promise of Government funding came after the work at the school had started. We asked the Department for Education (DfE) for retrospective funding, but we have been told that we won't get the money.

I share your horror at the government's current position. If we don't receive reimbursement from the DfE, we will have been financially penalised for acting on our RAAC at an early stage. Sheffield is putting our children's safety first before it became a critical national issue just before the start of the Autumn school term. We have made firm representations to the secretary of state to reconsider this position.

Q.2 What work has been done to prepare for the end of the Learn Sheffield contract in 2025?

A.2 A new contract with Learn Sheffield started in September 2023 and is in place for two years. We will review its impact at the midpoint in September 2024 and will then undertake a process of determining needs during the school year 2024/25 and whether a new or further contract with Learn Sheffield is required.

Question of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Chair of the Finance Committee (Councillor Zahira Naz)

Q. Has Sheffield City Council, as landowner, been consulted this year about any intended moorland burning by neighbouring landowners?

A. No.

Question of Councillor Fran Belbin to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)

Q. Why has the Housing Committee failed to make any meaningful progress on the Housing Strategy in the last year?

A. Work to develop the new Housing Strategy was started by a Task and Finish Group being formally established by the Housing Policy Committee in the 2022-23 municipal year.

Whilst members of the task group have had many useful discussions and provided collective insights into the framing of several difficult areas of housing practice – including equality, supported housing, access to housing, the private sector and decarbonisation – it has proved difficult to develop these ideas into a strategy. With hindsight, it has become apparent that the role is more suited to the Strategy & Resources Policy Committee because of the significance of the ambitions set out in the draft local plan and recognising that the future supply of housing will still have to come from the private sector. The remit of the Housing Policy Committee does not extend to spatial planning and the issue is therefore cross-committee.

Furthermore, whilst housing staff are able to service the Task & Finish group by providing housing-related expertise, an additional resource-set is required to carry out public consultation and convert the discussions into finalised strategies. It is in areas of work like this that we see the effects of cutting staff roles merely because they are not in the front line, as a direct result of many years of austerity.

Questions of Councillor Sophie Thornton to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)

Q.1 What was the average waiting time for a Council house repair issue to be resolved over the last three months, and what was the longest wait? Please divide this information by planned and responsive repairs.

A.1

Average Wait to Complete 2023	Responsive	Planned
Jul 23	21.75	119.16
Aug 23	26.54	117.38
Sep 23	23.43	126.86

The longest wait to complete a responsive repair that was completed in the last 3 months was 650 days. This was fire-stopping work to renew a front door. The delay was due to a recurring problem gaining access to the property.

The longest wait for a planned repair that was completed in the last 3 months was 960 days. This was a full window replacement to a property, which was delayed due to the tenant not allowing the work to go ahead.

Q.2 If a tenant was to submit a routine responsive repair today, how long would they be likely to wait for resolution?

A.2 The average number of days between a job being raised and the first appointment is currently 22 days. The time to resolve an issue fully will depend upon the nature of the repair and will vary significantly depending on the size and scale of what is required. In September 85% of responsive repairs were completed on the first visit, i.e. at present 85% of responsive repairs will be completed within 22 days.

Q.3 How many disrepair claims have been submitted in the last three months?

A.3 We have received a total of 226 new disrepair claims in the period July – September 2023

Q.4 What is the current number of outstanding or incomplete Council house repairs?

A.4 On 23rd October 2023 there were 13,075 open responsive repair jobs and 2,848 of these were overdue (21%). There were 8,036 planned jobs, of which 4,219 were overdue (52%).

In comparison at the same point last year there were 9,961 open responsive jobs of which 3,127 were overdue (31%) and 4,077 planned jobs of which 3,065 were overdue (75%).

Whilst demand for repairs has therefore increased significantly over the last year, the proportion of overdue repairs has fallen. The actual number of overdue responsive repairs has also fallen year on year.

Q.5 How many void properties are currently awaiting repairs to be made fit to relet?

A.5 398 (as at week 30).

Q.6 How much rent and council tax would the council have received, had these voids been occupied? Please provide this information for the last four quarters.

A.6 The est. average weekly rent is £94.39 on our properties and est. average Council Tax is £27.70.

The average rent loss per property is £1,133, the table below shows the rental income and council tax loss for the last 4 quarters.

Period	Average voids awaiting repair	Rental Income loss	C/Tax loss	Total
Q1 – 2023/24	353	400k	117k	517k
Q4 – 2022/23	344	390k	114k	504k
Q3 – 2022/23	340	385k	113k	498k
Q2 – 2022/23	440	498k	146k	644k
Total		1,673k	490k	2,163k

Q.7 How many residents are on the housing register for Council properties?

A.7 There are currently 22,777 households on the Housing Register. Out of these 10,210 have placed at least one bid in the last 12 months.

There are 944 households who have been awarded a priority and are in Bands A-C.

Q.8 What was the average waiting time on the Council house repairs phone line before answering each month in the last two months? What was the longest wait?

A.8 The average waiting time and longest call times are provided below for the last three months:

Month	Average Waiting Time	Longest Waiting Time
August	00:05:13	01:34:00
September	00:04:14	01:31:37
October	00:05:53	01:55:33

It is worth noting that the October figures were significantly affected by severe weather on Friday 20th October. When calls on that day and the following Monday are excluded the average wait time for October falls to 00:05:21 with the longest wait being 01:37:25. The average wait time for a call in October 2022 was 2:21:11 showing a year-on-year improvement in performance in the repairs contact centre.

Question of Councillor Rob Reiss to the Chair of the Housing Policy Committee (Councillor Douglas Johnson)

- Q.** I understand that a review of all council housing construction records to find evidence of RAAC is currently ongoing. Please provide a timescale for when this work will be complete.
- A.** In line with the RAAC report which was tabled at the Strategy and Resources Committee of the 18th October 2023, the Baseline Information Gathering to determine where RAAC is present within council homes will be completed by the end of November 2023 and all required works completed within a 12 month period.

Question of Councillor Joe Otten to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q. Given that the green permit scheme offers a large subsidy to vehicles some of which are only a little cleaner than average, do you agree that it is time to review the scheme so that it can be better value for money and only incentivises much cleaner vehicles?

A.

Thank you for the question. At the Transport, Regeneration and Committee on 14th June your Liberal Democrat colleagues supported an amendment to the workplan that would remove a review of Green Parking Permits from the workplan. This was proposed by Cllr Gamble-Pugh and seconded by Cllr Sangar and was the right thing to do. As a city, we need to boost the number of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV), which includes Electric Vehicles (EVs) and do what we can as a city council to incentivise take up.

As you will know, Sheffield City Council has declared a Climate Emergency and is working towards Sheffield becoming a zero-carbon city by the start of the next decade. Electric and other Ultra Low emission vehicles, alongside modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport, will be crucial to meet this goal, as well as contributing to improved air quality, and so health, in the Sheffield.

Currently 'Green Permits' are provided free of charge to vehicles that are classed as Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV)^[1] to park for free in Council run pay and display bays in the city centre (subject to terms and conditions). Anyone with an eligible vehicle can apply for one. They were introduced to encourage motorists to switch to cleaner vehicles to support the City's clean air ambitions.

The number of ULEV vehicles being registered in Sheffield and the UK is increasing, however barriers to uptake still exist. Price parity has not yet been achieved between electric and petrol and diesel cars, and with the recent increases in energy prices the green permit scheme currently continues to help incentivise this switch.

As you will know, one of the main barriers that people highlight to the uptake of EV vehicles is the availability of charging infrastructure, and we have recently launched consultation on locations for On-street Residential Charge points and we are working closely with South Yorkshire's Mayor Oliver Coppard on further funding opportunities through Governments Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund.

^[1] Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) are road using vehicles that are reported to emit less than 75g of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the tailpipe for every kilometre travelled. In practice, the term typically refers to battery electric, plug-in hybrid electric and fuel cell electric vehicles.

Questions of Councillor Tim Huggan to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 Is there a timescale for publication of the travel data on walking, cycling and car usage from the Experimental Active Travel Neighbourhood in Crookes, Nether Edge and Walkley, and will this data be made publicly accessible?

A.1 Thank you for your question. I am pleased to say that the data has been live since 14th September and can be accessed on the Connecting Sheffield website at the following links:

[Have Your Say Today - Crookes and Walkley Active Neighbourhood: Latest Updates - Connecting Sheffield \(commonplace.is\)](#)

[Have Your Say Today - Nether Edge Active Neighbourhood: Latest Updates - Connecting Sheffield \(commonplace.is\)](#)

Q.2 Has any progress been made on a designated Cycle route from the Hallamshire and Children's Hospitals to the Northern General Hospital?

A.2 Thank you for your question.

Funded from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement we are developing options to bring forward an active travel corridor between the Northern General Hospital and the city centre. This will link into the existing and developing routes in the city centre and will enable onward journeys via the recently improved link along Wellington Street, through Broomhall (utilising the improved crossing of the ring road, and historical low traffic neighbourhood).

We appreciate there is a small gap in the network to cross Glossop Road to make the connection into the hospital campus. We also understand that there is a desire to create a route that is more direct via Netherthorpe and Neepsend (though this will have more topographical challenges for those cycling). We are currently developing an active travel network plan, and this will highlight routes that could complete the connection. The plan will also set out how we will prioritise the delivery of routes to build an enhanced active travel network for Sheffield and one of the criteria we will use is the likelihood of usage. This plan is due to be complete in Summer 2024, although I am keen to work on a cross party basis with other members of the committee to see how this could be brought forward, if possible.

Questions of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 What is the council's assessment of the city's response to the recent flooding events?

A.1

Thank you for your question and for joining me at the completion event for the Upper Don (Loxley) Flood Scheme Completion Event. It is important to acknowledge that this is a scheme that has been overseen by many different committee chairs and cabinet members and we should thank you for the work that you did on this project, whilst you were in post. I should also acknowledge the work done by Gill Furniss, as local MP in this regard.

In answering your question, I must start by sharing my sympathies for those more severely affected in neighbouring communities, not least in Chesterfield and Catcliffe in Rotherham. We have not escaped unscathed, but the impacts of Storm Babet in Sheffield have been significantly reduced by the investments we have secured, and the wide range of flood reduction and mitigation works we have carried out across the city since 2019.

We have unfortunately seen a small number of homes and businesses directly affected by the flooding, minor damage to some flood assets, damage on highway assets and notably to rights of way and parkland areas including the Rivelin and Porter Valleys. These areas have been made safe and full assessment of the repair needs are now underway.

Our major schemes on the Lower Don Valley and the recently completed works on the Upper Don Scheme on the River Loxley performed well and protected significant numbers of properties from flooding. Levels on the River Don at Meadowhall were approximately 700mm higher than the onset of flooding would have been before the scheme, without it Meadowhall Road and surrounding areas would have been underwater. Levels in the Loxley were also several hundred millimetres above levels that had previously caused flooding and no properties were flooded.

But it's not just these major schemes that have made a difference. Property level protection, removal of poor-quality screens and the creation of a flood relief channel through Ecclesfield Park have all contributed to flood risk reduction, we did not see any repeat of the problems seen in the upper reaches of the Blackburn Brook catchment in 2019.

We have also seen water accumulating in our recently completed upstream nature-based storage solutions in locations like Limb Brook and Whirlow fields. Alongside continued expansion of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) across the city we are incrementally improving our city's resilience.

Our Emergency Procedures, prompt closure of our flood gates (and well-established communication with Meadowhall in instigating their own emergency plans) and the activation of our tactical flood plan all ensured we were as well prepared as we could be for the worst impacts. Close working across council departments and with Amey Streetsahead alongside our Local Resilience Forum links with wider professional partners also contributed. Our review, monitoring and exercising of this response and learning from experience continues to develop.

Q.2 Is Sheffield prepared for the increasing probability of flooding events due to climate change?

A.2 Our major scheme investments have been designed with climate change allowances built in and as we expand our nature-based solutions across the wider catchment, reduce run off through Sustainable Drainage measures in new development and look for opportunities to influence land use across the catchment we will continue to build Sheffield's resilience.

Several challenges remain. Our major schemes still have funding gaps to close and some of the interventions proposed in some parts of the city have not demonstrated themselves to be cost beneficial. I understand that a letter from South Yorkshire's Mayor Oliver Coppard is due to be sent to central government highlighting the funding gaps in the South Yorkshire Flood Programme and calling for action.

As you may know, currently flood grants are prioritised by central government towards internal property flooding. As climate change makes flooding more frequent and severe, we must focus our investment on reducing the risk of water getting into people's homes and businesses. We are likely therefore to see more frequent flooding of farmland, parkland and other open spaces. We also have a number of roads across the city where removing the risk of flooding entirely is unfortunately just not practicable or cost effective.

It is my view that the city's resilience into the future needs to be about more than just infrastructure investment. Ensuring residents and businesses are aware of their flood risk, signed up to Flood Warnings where available and aware of appropriate flood plans and property level interventions where appropriate will significantly reduce the impact of any flooding.

Our most recent flood event, again saw a number of vehicles stranded in flood waters. We want to avoid this in future. Messaging from partners, notably South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service, warning of the dangers of this did get circulated, highlighting this risk.

I am pleased that we are working in partnership with the Environment Agency and Defra on Flood Awareness Campaign messaging and resources for this coming winter to help raise awareness of flood risk and what people can do to prepare and to keep themselves safe. We are already

talking to the Local Area Committees (LACs) about this campaign, which I know will have support from all councillors.

Questions of Councillor Alexi Dimond to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 Since rejecting Council Officers' advice to retain the Archer Road modal filter, residents, parents, children, and a teacher from a local school have expressed their dismay and highlighted that the lives of children who now walk, cycle and wheel to school (since the installation of the filter) will be put at risk. Does the Committee regret its decision?

A.1 Research across the country suggests that the implementation of active neighbourhood type interventions can sometimes have a beneficial impact on road traffic collisions, specifically the frequency and severity of them.

However, the report that the committee considered included pre and post implementation comparisons of casualty numbers in an around the Nether Edge area between June and December in 2021 ('pre') versus June and December 2022 ('post'). You will be aware that the information available to date does not suggest the Nether Edge Active Neighbourhood project has had a significant impact on personal injury collisions. All but one of the pedestrian/cyclist casualties in 2022 were on Abbeydale Road.

When asked about their perceived impact on the safety of walkers and cyclists the attitudinal survey responses were varied. However, more responses said there had been a negative impact on people's perception of safety of walkers and cyclists.

Q.2 How will the Committee mitigate the risk to children using Archer Lane and ensure that they can still safely walk, cycle or wheel to school?

A.2 Our local safety programme will continue to be prioritised using collision data. As a result of the decision taken by the committee, it is our intention is to make the current temporary crossings permanent. This has been overwhelmingly welcomed by residents.

As a council, we have an established process for dealing with highway improvement requests. Having this process ensures that highways improvements are dealt with equitably across the city, which is essential given the 13 years of funding cuts to the Council as a whole. Importantly, it also ensures that requests are heard equitably from areas of the city that may have high levels of need but are less likely to be able to amplify their voices. Road safety is of concern everywhere, but it is notable that some of

our most pressing road safety concerns are in our most deprived communities.

Q.3 How did the Committee's decision contribute to road safety in Sheffield?

A.3 As mentioned in the answer to your first question, the information available to date does not suggest the Nether Edge Active Neighbourhood project had a significant impact on personal injury collisions. During its implementation, the overall number of collisions did not change. In relation to Archer Lane, there were no collisions between June and December 2022. This compares with 4 collisions in an equivalent six-month period in 2020 on Crookes Valley Road (between Harcourt Road and Oxford Street) which has led to this location being a high priority site and a Local safety scheme is currently being designed which will be implemented in 2024.

Q.4 How did the Committee's decision contribute to meeting our net zero by 2030 target?

A.4 A scheme of the scale of the Active Travel Neighbourhood was unlikely to have a notable impact on overall air quality because any perceptible change in transport related pollutants would require a significant change in motorised vehicle counts, which was not the case.

Question of Councillor Maroof Raouf to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q. Should children have safe walking routes to school?

A. Yes, and that is why the road safety team is continuing to deliver data-led road safety initiatives around engineering and education, as well as working with our partners in South Yorkshire Police for enforcement. As you may know, we deliver bespoke education interventions to provide children with the tools they need to walk to school safely – these are mainly delivered in person, but we are currently looking at expanding our capacity to reach more children with key messages using digital platforms.

We continue to deliver Modeshift Stars, School Streets, 20mph part-time advisories outside high-priority schools, and 20mph zones in residential areas. We do all that we can to work with Schools and Local Area Committees (LACs) to implement safer crossing points, signing, and lining where most needed. I am happy to work with you and other colleagues on this.

We are reviewing our approach to School Crossing Patrol Warden

recruitment, hoping to get more posts filled. These provide such an important service to the community.

Although most parents and drivers abide by the law, we know that inconsiderate drivers parking outside schools are an issue for many, so we are working with our colleagues in Parking Services to enforce the lineage and signage we have implemented, and we are also looking for opportunities to develop an education package that could aid schools in changing the behaviour of the few parents who carry out this inconsiderate behaviour.

We are currently reviewing road safety data in line with our approaches making sure we continue to be able to deliver a robust targeted response that is both reactive and proactive. This will be further explained in the Action plan at the start of 2024.

Questions of Councillor Julie Grocutt to the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

I have been contacted by a constituent who is concerned about the ability of the Council to intervene in a timely manner when there are contraventions of Tree Preservation Orders. There is an online form for members of the public to submit information of any breaches. They then receive an automated reference number.

However, my constituent believes that when it comes to suspected contravention of the Trees Regulations, there really needs to be a quick way to contact a relevant Officer, because once trees have been mutilated or felled the damage cannot be rectified. There needs to be a way to secure timely intervention to stop and prevent damage, loss and degradation.

Having emailed Councillor Miskell on 14th September and not yet received an acknowledgement or answer, I am now submitting as members' questions:

A. Thank you for the question. You did copy me into a message with a wider distribution list. This contained a request for both Cllr Gilligan and me to get back to you with further information. Please accept my apology for not responding to this. I will reply in full within the next few days and apologies again that this was missed. I have however answered the questions that you have raised below.

Q.1 **Is the current process of receiving information from members of the public regarding Tree Preservation Orders that are likely to be damaged or destroyed sufficient to ensure that the trees can be saved?**

Thank you for your question on this important matter. Reports of potential breaches of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) from the public are often the only way we can know what is being done to privately owned trees across the city. I am assured that response times are generally very quick, but I am keen to hear the views of constituents on this matter. However, as you will appreciate, damage can inevitably occur in the time it takes to arrive on site and inform people that their actions could constitute a potential breach of regulations, and that they should cease.

If it is suspected that a protected tree is being worked on without consent, the information below is the process that should be followed:

Check if the tree is protected by looking at the online map in the link below:
[Protected trees | Sheffield City Council](#)

Check if consent has been granted for the work (consent lasts two years).
[Search, view and comment on planning applications | Sheffield City Council](#)

If it is suspected that work is being carried out without consent, report the issue to Planning Enforcement
[Reporting a planning enforcement issue | Sheffield City Council](#)

Planning Enforcement can then make necessary checks.

I am assured that the procedures that we have in place with regards to responding to, investigating, and prosecuting TPO transgressions is in line with other similar councils in the country.

I hope this helps answer some of the questions raised by your constituent and I am happy to set up a meeting with you and others to discuss this further, if this would be helpful.

Q.2 What data do we have in relation to breaches of Tree Preservation Orders for the past 12 months?

A.2 We have had 23 enforcement cases since 1st November 2022 in relation to tree work. Unfortunately, we do not have specific breakdowns of which of those were Tree Preservation Order (TPO) matters.

Questions of Councillor Julie Grocutt to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 Following a constituent contacting me regarding a road traffic collision they were involved in while cycling on the tram tracks, what is the Council's position on cycling on tram tracks?

A.1 Thank you for your question on cycling.

The council is aware of the issues regarding cycling on and across tram tracks, developing the 2017 Action Plan as a first step to tackling the issue, and developing some minor interventions (signage) where funding allowed. This is a matter that predates my tenure as chair of this committee.

It is important to say that we are concerned that when government funding is available for active travel, it never goes as far as we need it to deliver the safer changes that we need for cycling in the city. I am sure that you will agree with me on this.

On a local level, we do consider accidents of this nature in the development of schemes, but these types of injuries are often isolated and do not meet the specific location hotspots that determine our local safety scheme programme. We try to sign cyclists away from the tram tracks for this very reason. Longer term we aim when funding allow is to build parallel routes to the tram network. In most cases because of the limited width of the highway it does mean these routes may not be immediately adjacent. For example, we have developed the Leavygreave/Portobello route to run parallel to Glossop Road, and West Street tram route, and on the southern side cyclists can use the much quieter Division Street corridor, or even Wellington Street which has been improved recently for active travel. In all cases this will require significant funding, which is often not forthcoming from central government who frequently deprioritise towns and cities in the north of England.

I am pleased to say announce that we will soon be introducing an interactive cycle map to promote cycling in the city. We intend to highlight routes for people to bypass tram tracks but appreciate that in some cases this may not be possible for some journeys. In which case we will highlight the tram track issue.

Q.2 How many accidents have cyclists been involved in on tram track across the city each year for the last five years?

A.2 A written answer will follow in response to this question.

Q.3 Does the Council have any plans to update its 2017 Tram/Cycle Action Plan?

A.3 We are currently producing an ambitious active travel network route plan that will help us determine active travel route development priorities for the next decade or so. Interaction with the tram tracks will be a key consideration of this plan and is something that the committee will be mindful of when bringing forward future schemes.

Questions of Councillor Nighat Basharat to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q.1 Recent weather has caused severe flooding and disruption for the people of Sheffield. The science tells us flooding will be more common in the future due to the effects of climate change, has council discussed the impacts on our local areas that are at risk of flooding?

A.1 Thank you for your question and the work that you have done with constituents on this issue. If we could refer you also to our answer to the question from Cllr Dougals Johnson on the same subject.

We have in place a thorough tactical Flood Plan for the city which was activated on Friday 20th October. Our key response and technical teams are aware of the key flood risk areas across the city and emergency procedures were activated, flood plans actioned, and flooding avoided to many properties as a result of our investments, procedures and improvements since previous floods.

The committee has been briefed previously on both our role as Lead Local Flood Authority on reviewing and regulating flood risk matter as well as leading on the delivery of our flood programme which I detail the response to the second part of your question.

We will be reviewing our response and the flooding that has occurred in the event to consider both potential mitigation and to ensure improved response in future events.

Q.2 What preventative measures have been put in place to mitigate the impacts for residents and avoid damage?

A.2 As you may know, we continue working in partnership with the Environment Agency to improve flood protection for the city. The Lower Don Valley Scheme (completed in 2017) and the recently completed Upper Don Phase 1, Loxley, Scheme both worked to protect property from significant flooding in this recent event. Business case development continues on the Upper Don Phase 2 in the Neepsend and Shalesmoor areas and on the Sheaf & Porter catchments Scheme. A full summary of our programme can be found here; [Flood protection schemes | Sheffield City Council](#)

We are also developing nature-based solutions at site such as Whirlow Fields and continue to expand the provision of Sustainable Drainage measures through new development city wide.

Our city's flood plan will be reviewed following recent events to consider improvements and any potential mitigation.

Question of Councillor Minesh Parekh to the Chair of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee (Councillor Ben Miskell)

Q. What proportion of the stones from Fargate are going to be reclaimed and reused for alternative building purposes; and have projects been identified for their usage?

A. Thank you for your question and interest in the regeneration of the city centre. Sheffield city centre really is on the up!

Whilst we all love to see cobbles, they are now not a popular choice as a surface for heavily pedestrianised areas like Fargate. Feedback during consultation and information events has highlighted the difficulties for a wide range of users when the surfaces are uneven. This is a particular problem for some people with disabilities and we have a duty to make Fargate an inclusive space for all.

However, I am pleased to say that the regeneration of Fargate has sought to reuse the cobbles around the new planting and drainage beds, allowing the council to retain the important link to the history of the area. The project team is looking at options to reuse the rest of the cobbles on other City Centre sites, which is something that I fully support. Any stones over and above these requirements will be provided to reclamation yards for use in important projects elsewhere. We do not want them to go to waste!

You may also be interested to know that the old Yorkstone that is being lifted from Fargate will be partly reused in the centre of Fargate – about 30% of the total area. Excess stone has been offered to our highway's contractor Amey for use in repairs and maintenance across the City Centre. Any stone over and above these requirements will be provided to reclamation yards for use elsewhere.

Questions of Councillor Douglas Johnson to the Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q.1 Does the council have any policy on using powers under the Traffic Management Act to impound vehicles owned by persistent bad drivers, where at least three penalty charge notices have been issued for illegal parking and where these remain unpaid?

A.1 Department for Transport statutory guidance defines a 'persistent evader' as having three or more unpaid PCNs per vehicle, which have not had appeals made against them within the timescales allowed by the regulations, or which following the rejection of an appeal have then remained unpaid.

This guidance recommends that local authorities adopt strong enforcement policy against persistent evaders, with the removal of the vehicle as a beneficial option as the keeper of the vehicle then has to provide evidence of where they live at the time of collection.

Sheffield City Council policy is to remove the vehicles of persistent evaders to prevent abuse of parking restrictions by drivers who may otherwise ignore these. Council policy is to remove vehicles which are causing the most serious impact on traffic flow or road safety.

The priority for the removal of vehicles is as follows:

- (a) Vehicles parked in contravention of a restrictive parking regulation (such as on a yellow line, zig zag lines for a school keep clear marking / a road crossing, or bus stop clearway) in a manner that is causing obstruction to traffic flow, or danger to other road users (including pedestrians, or in a restricted cycleway).
- (b) Vehicles contravening a signed temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) preventing waiting and loading to enable works to take place on the highway or nearby.
- (c) Persistent evaders parked where parking is restricted.
- (d) Persistent evaders parked in a parking place in contravention of a restriction.
- (e) Non permitted vehicles parked in a disabled bay.

In accordance with statutory guidance vehicles displaying a valid Blue Badge or diplomatic vehicles with a registration plate that is personalised or marked with a D would be relocated rather than removed. Diplomatic vehicles with an X plate may be removed if they are a persistent evader.

For special events where a signed TTRO has been implemented vehicles may be relocated rather than removed to the pound after a PCN has been issued.

Q.2 If not, does the council intend to take any action to use these powers?

A.2 The council already takes action under this policy which has been in place since March 2021.

Q.3 There has been a spate of cars being abandoned on sections of the tram network. These take some time to clear and quickly have a major disruptive impact on the tram service. Do you think we should use our emergency powers to quickly clear tram routes by removing abandoned vehicles?

A.3 The Supertram operator already has a contract in place to remove vehicles from the network. The council's contract to remove vehicles is also with a contractor, it does not have an in-house vehicle removal operation. The contract with Parking Services to remove vehicles requires an attendance on site within 1 hour of the call being placed, which is unlikely to speed up the removal of vehicles when compared with current recovery rates by the Supertram operator.

The use of abandoned vehicle legislation and the powers this gives would also not speed up the removal process that already exists for the Supertram operator. The placement of a vehicle that blocks the tram network requires an instant response, whereas the process of tackling an abandoned vehicle normally needs a vehicle to have been in situ for 3-4 weeks before consideration can be made to class it as abandoned.

Q.4 Will the council use its statutory enforcement powers under section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and consider serving an abatement notice on those responsible for the recent outbreaks of moorland burning that have affected large numbers of residents in the city?

A.4 A written response will be provided.

Questions of Councillor Paul Turpin to the Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q.1 In October full council you responded to my question of "what percentage of household recycling bins are contaminated?" with the percentage of waste that was contaminating. What is the percentage of bins?

A.1 This isn't a data set we directly record and the data we do hold that allows for some analysis of this is unverified data taken from the collections crew records. Having recently done some analysis for the purposes of an FOI request we can supply the same data which is to say in analysing collection

data in October the data shows a that around 1.2% of recycling bins were identified as contaminated during the collection process.

Q.2 Also in October you said that food waste had a calorific value of around 2200MJ/tonne compared to packaging which was around 8900MJ/tonne. Can you clarify if the 2200MJ/tonne is the net value after the 70-80% water content has been removed?

A.2 The calorific value of 2200MJ a tonne is the wet weight value. So the value reflects the processing of a tonne of food waste and the calorific value is reflective of the element of that tonne of food waste that burns as fuel.

Q.3 How much energy is used in order to remove the water content to the point where energy can be extracted from the food waste?

A.3 We have had to refer this question onto Veolia for response on, they are looking into this to determine if there is a value they can attribute to this and we will feed back further from there.

Q.4 A carbon impact assessment of the food waste trial was requested and accepted by the former head of waste services during a WSS policy committee meeting, but this has not been undertaken. Can this be done now?

A.4 This isn't our understanding of the discussions. It's our understanding that it was agreed that given the trials limited timeframe a carbon impact assessment was not undertaken and that such assessments would instead be undertaken for plans on the full role out of food waste services, using the evidence gathered from the trial to help produce this.

Q.5 Can a comparison of anaerobic digestion and composting be undertaken to compare emissions and carbon footprint.

A.5 If WSS Committee wish to commission this then we can look into undertaking some work on this.

Questions of Councillor Garry Weatherall to the Chair of of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q.1 Can you let me know the total figures for the fines since the introduction of the Clean Air Zone and the figures for the Bus gate on Arundel Gate?

A.1 The Clean Air Zone launched on 27 February 2023. Up to 30 September 2023 - 81,818 PCN's have been issued.

The Arundle Gate bus gate started issuing warning notices on 3 April 2023. 46,366 PCN's have been issued since 3 June 2023.

Prior to launch going live with the bus gate:

14 signs were installed on site with Information about the upcoming bus gate and a QR code for people to find more information about the consultation.

A digital tool which sent information about the bus gate to mobile phones around the Arundel Gate area was used.

"Bus gate operational from 20th March" signs were installed on site

Letters were sent to stakeholders, businesses and elected members.

A press release was issued to the media, which was shared by a number of local and regional outlets and shared on Sheffield City Council social media channels.

A video was produced to explain the changes and shared on social media. A further video was produced to explain how drivers can access Norfolk Row and surrounding areas.

Warning notices were issued for two months between 3rd April and 7th June. The warning notice advised motorists: "Sheffield City Council are currently sending warning notices to registered keepers whose vehicle is seen in this bus lane. Full enforcement of this bus lane is due to commence soon. Future contraventions may result in the issue of a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) which you would have to pay or appeal. Bus lane PCNs are currently £70 (discounted to £35 if paid within 14 days). However, on this occasion you are not required to pay a charge."

Regular updates and reminders about the bus gate have been provided on council social media channels to raise awareness.

Sheffield City Council has been working with businesses and organisations in the area, such as Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield Theatres, to develop more effective ways of informing their visitors and customers about these changes.

Figures for the number of vehicles passing through the gate and issued with a PCN are currently only available up until 15th October, a total of 11 days. During these 11 days, there was an approximate 41% reduction of non-permitted vehicles driving through the bus gate. This is very early data and the Council will continue to monitor the figures to identify whether this reduction continues.

Q.2 Are there any targets been set by the Council on processing the number of fines and collection of such?

A.2 No. Legislation for enforcement does not allow the setting of targets for the number of PCN issued. Statutory Guidance sets out the time scales the council must work to when collecting fines, but does not set targets for collection.

Question of Councillor Barbara Masters to the Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q. In the time since Greystones Road was resurfaced in April this year, Yorkshire Water has had to deal with water leaks on six occasions. This has resulted in road closures and disruption to the hourly bus service. These leaks cause great inconvenience to road users, distress to bus users who rely on this service, and threatens the integrity of the new surface. The hidden costs to the council must be significant.

When one repair is completed, it seems another is needed in close proximity. The pipework is old and from experiences here and elsewhere it would seem more cost efficient overall for Yorkshire Water to replace whole sections of pipework rather than doing this piecemeal. The disruption to people living and working in Sheffield due to these road works has both an economic and environmental cost, with greater journey times and more idling traffic.

The council can plan with Utilities for work to go ahead to limit disruption, but what power does it have to ensure utilities such as Yorkshire Water carry out work, such as pipe replacement, to prevent a series of failures in the system that lead to successive disruption and associated cost?

A. The Authority can require utility companies to maintain their apparatus in the street. (Section 81 New Roads and Streetworks Act). S81 powers are used to bring visible defects to the attention of the utility if they have been reported to or identified by the Authority. This is most often a failed or sunken manhole cover or other piece of visible street furniture. The Authority cannot require Yorkshire Water to proactively replace sections of water main.

Ofwat (www.ofwat.gov.uk) is responsible for regulation of the water industry, this includes each companies' "Operational resilience" which is the ability of an organisation's infrastructure, and the skills to run that infrastructure, to avoid, cope with and recover from disruption in its performance. It is about reducing the probability of water supply interruptions and wastewater flooding, as well as mitigating the impact of any disruption through efficient handling, good communication and quick recovery.

Questions of Councillor Barbara Masters to the Chair of the Waste and Streetscene Policy Committee (Councillor Joe Otten)

Q.1 How many roads in Sheffield have been closed at least twice since April this year because Yorkshire Water has had to repair successive leaks?

A.1 Yorkshire Water has made 255 applications to close streets to undertake works on water main bursts (or other emergency/ urgent works) between 1st April and 26th October 2023.

39 of these requests involved closing a road on more than one occasion.

Q.2 How many officer hours are taken up in ensuring the public are properly notified and appropriate diversions are in place?

A.2 No specific record is retained of officer time taken on these actions, this is site and circumstances specific, other Authority resources can be brought in as required. These can include, but are not restricted to notification through Authority Press team and the use of Traffic Variable message signs around the city.

Utility companies are responsible for notifying customers whose supplies are affected by their works, or residents of properties whose frontage will be affected during works (ref Code of practice for the co-ordination of street and road works).

For more general movement of the public around areas affected by utility works then signage on site should provide information on who is working at the site, and how that utility can be contacted.

Information that utility companies provide on their works is now "open source data" which anyone can access through <https://one.network/public>

Q.3 Who is responsible for ensuring bus users are notified of disruption to their services?

A.3 For planned works Utility companies should notify the Authority before any works commence. If planned works affect a bus service then Officers will contact SYMCA who in turn advise affected service operators, and through the Travel South Yorkshire web site the public that a route will be affected <https://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/en-gb/newsupdates/roadworks>
<https://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/en-gb/newsupdates/disruptions>.

With Emergency works legislation allows utilities to start their repair before notifying the Authority. As an example if a water main bursts on a Friday afternoon Yorkshire Water are not obliged to inform the Authority until 10am

on the following Monday Morning.

Yorkshire Water has been asked to alert the Authority network management team via email when they have emergency works requiring road closures together with details of the closure and diversion. These are then passed to SYMCA if they have not already copied into this correspondence.

Information that utility companies provide on their works is now “open source data” which anyone can access through <https://one.network/public>

Q.4 Does Yorkshire Water compensate the council for these hidden costs?

A.4 The only costs recoverable from Yorkshire Water are in the “Permit fee” (permit to work in the highway), the level of this fee is determined by National Regulations, and is only meant to cover costs recovery.

If the road must be closed to allow works to repair a burst water main the Authority must process a traffic order to authorise that closure. A fee to cover the administrative cost of processing a temporary traffic order can be made to Yorkshire Water, however this is only a cost recovery exercise.

Q.5 What is the expected life of a road resurfaced in its entirety before ‘wear and tear’ should become an issue?

A.5 There are many factors that affect how long a road surface may last. It depends upon its construction as the surface layers is one of many layers that form the entire structure of a road. Traffic volumes, weather and how many times and to what extent it is opened by utility trenches and how well they are reinstated afterwards is also relevant. No road surface will last for an indefinite period however if it is structurally sound below the surface layer, with low traffic volumes and few trenches/openings these will last the longest assuming the original surfacing material was laid at the appropriate temperature, thickness and the material was manufactured in accordance with its specification.

There are two main types of surfacing, a thin surface dressing laid over the top of an existing carriageway to seal the surface and prevent water penetration. The other main surfacing is ‘resurfacing’ which is typically up to 100mm in depth and can be overlaid or the old surface planed off and then a new surface laid. The thin surfacing lasts typically no more than 6 years and a full surface course around 10 years.

Q.6 If a repaired surface fails before this time who pays for it to be made good?

A.6 As explained above, the many variable factors related to surface deterioration means it is difficult to put an exact date for a resurfaced road to last. If, however, a newly laid surface fails within a short period of time

such as within a year or few years we would question whether the surface materials were manufactured and laid in line with guidance. The way that the Streets Ahead contract works, is that all of the work is at the contractor's risk and therefore if a surface fails it is replaced by Streets Ahead and they carry out annual condition surveys to ensure that all roads meet a standard in terms of its surface condition and ride quality.

Question of Councillor Minesh Parekh to the Chair of the Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee (Councillor Angela Argenzio)

Q. What discussions has the Health and Wellbeing Board had around exploring (i) green social prescribing and (ii) cultural social prescribing; and in what ways has the Council proactively supported and advanced these efforts?

A. It has been long understood that health and wellbeing is determined by the circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work and age as well as medical support. Therefore education, employment, housing, social networks are as important to the life chances and living with long term good health and wellbeing.

In Sheffield we have a long history of community anchor and other voluntary sector organisations working alongside primary care to support the social determinants of health.

People Keeping Well is the Council and ICB's joint grant funded community wellbeing approach (approx. £1.5m).

PKW is a series of 17 partnerships led by eleven community organisations. Funding is allocated based on the indices of multiple deprivation of the City's 100 neighbourhoods to contribute to the following elements/outcomes:

- Resilient Communities (support partnerships, capacity building of the community organisations and people enabling people to shape their own communities and stay connected)
- Community Wellbeing (targeted support for people who are at risk of declining health and wellbeing due to social reasons eg 1:1 and groups)

PKW support green and cultural via a variety of activities – here are a couple of examples:

- The timetable of activities at SOAR which include green and cultural activities [North Sheffield Activity Directory \(soarcommunity.org.uk\)](http://soarcommunity.org.uk)
- Darnall Allotment [Darnall Allotment Project | Sheffield | Facebook](#)

Follow the link for more information about [PKW](#)

NHS Green prescribing pilot: In 2020 the government announced they would fund seven Integrated Care Systems (NHS) to test and learn green and blue prescribing. The South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw ICS were one of the successful ICBs in securing funding for this.

More information about the green prescribing project can be found [here](#) and the national evaluation can be found [here](#).

The pilot has just ended and the partnership (Sheffield included) are in the process of developing a business case for NHS England / DH to seek further funding.

Art / This is Us Project: The ICB recently funded a project of which SCC facilitated and enabled where a Mind Art therapist worked with a range of VCS organisations to develop art and exhibit it. More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Questions of Councillor Barbara Masters to the Chair of the Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee (Councillor Angela Argenzio)

Residential care home provision is expensive, but so is home care. Every case is judged on need as is right.

Q.1 However, given the constraints on the budget is there a point at which it makes more financial sense to pay for care home provision than to pay for adaptations and constant care in a person's home?

A.1 CQC Assurance will assess the Councils delivery upon our Care Act duties and in particular our outcomes and it's noted as part of the CQC Assurance - the local authority must have effective budget oversight, accountability, and governance. It assesses the impact of any budget reductions and whether the level of savings required will affect its ability to meet statutory duties, including comparison with regional and national benchmarking groups. Its to note a report will be brought to December 2023 setting out our current position.

Equipment and Adaptations are funded through the Disability Facilities Grant. The Grant is provided from Central Government and is ringfenced to fund equipment and adaptations identified by Occupational Therapists for people and children living in their own occupied, private rented or registered provider homes.

Our approach, in line with our Care Act 2014 duties, is to undertake an assessment of an individuals needs and this then informs the support provided. We work to support people to live as independently as possible in their own homes – utilising informal, community support, assistive technology, and formal care. We also consider the individuals choices as to how they receive their support – for example a council commissioned service or direct payment and the best value offer of support that meets a person's eligible needs.

Q.2 Who would make the decision in such a case, the council or the person needing care?

A.2 As adaptations to a person's home are funded separately the cost of an adaptation would not be a deciding factor as to whether a person's offer of support is support in the community, extra care housing or in a residential setting.

The decision as to whether the offer of support that will meet a person's eligible needs is specific to the needs and circumstances of each individual.

Questions of Councillor Minesh Parekh to the Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee (Councillor Richard Williams)

Q.1 Through the Environment Act 2021, every planning permission granted will require biodiversity net gain (BNG) of 10% from January 2024. Has the Council identified a pipeline of BNG projects - including the restoration existing sites and creating new green spaces - that it would like to see funded through this?

A.1 The Council is supporting the establishment of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is being led by the Combined Authority. This will include a pipeline of sites that BNG contributions could be directed towards. In addition, the Council is currently undertaking work to identify which of its own sites could be used to support the BNG objectives, including the rural estate.

Q.2 How will ward Councillors and community organisations be engaged to identify potential sites to support for nature restoration through BNG funds?

A.2 The Local Nature Recovery Strategy involves input from a significant number of stakeholders who have been engaged by the Combined Authority to contribute to this work.

Q.3 How is the Council using Natural England's Urban Greening Factor tool to identify opportunities and priorities for BNG?

A.3 Council Officers to provide a written response by the end of this week.

Q.4 Does the Council hold data for urban canopy cover on a ward-by-ward basis? Will it share a breakdown and give a commentary on relative lack of canopy coverage by ward and IMD.

A.4 Yes – the Council uses a tool from Forest Research, Woodland Trust that uses data from 2018. This provides information on a ward by ward basis with percentages of cover etc. The link is available [here](#). Canopy cover across the city varies due to land use, ie the East of Sheffield is more industrial than the West of Sheffield, the city centre is dominated by roads and buildings.

Questions of Councillor Garry Weatherall to the Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee (Councillor Richard Williams)

Q.1 What is the average time for a cremation or burial taking?

A.1 Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide this data at present. Bereavement Services is in the process of transitioning onto a new IT system which, once complete, should enable this information to become reportable (hopefully by the end of this year). This performance measure is planned to be incorporated in the service performance monitoring moving forward.

The service observes that Hutcliffe Wood Crematorium is booking approximately two weeks in advance on average. The Crematorium is operating nearly to capacity about 5 days ahead, this then tapers to about 70% capacity at the two-week mark, before services become more readily available beyond that.

City Road Crematorium follows the same trend; however, the crematorium is only operating at about 70% capacity in total.

There is availability for burials within the same week and it is normal for burials to be booked less far in advance.

For all services the popular service times are booked further in advance as people wish to wait for their preferred service time.

Bereavement & Coronial Services to provide a written response by the end of this week.

Q.2 It was brought to Council's attention that it was taking weeks to complete has this improved?

A.2 I'm not sure when this was highlighted to Council. Winter pressures affected availability last winter and staffing pressures have affected services this summer. At present these issues are not affecting service provision.

Question of Councillor Joe Otten to the Chair of the Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee (Councillor Richard Williams)

Q. Brunsmeer FC have applied for a shipping container from Fargate. When can they expect a response?

A. A report is scheduled to go to Strategy and Resources Committee on Monday 20 November 2023 which will include the recommended projects.

Question of Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed to the Chair of the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee (Councillor Martin Smith)

Q. Your Labour colleagues on the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee blocked a free Christmas parking scheme for the City Centre. Your colleague Cllr Miskell stated his support for a free Christmas bus offer at the last Full Council, but his Labour colleagues on Waste and Street Scene blocked such a proposal from being referred to the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Committee.

Now we are aware that the annual Christmas lights switch on is unlikely to go ahead, due to the works on Fargate. Are you concerned that these failures by this Council will negatively impact on businesses during the busiest trading period of the year?

A. I note that this question was originally addressed to the Council Leader, and share your concerns around the impact of these measures on traders at Christmas.

Our small businesses contribute an enormous amount to Sheffield in economic activity and jobs, and a disproportionately high amount of earnings are taken at Christmas.

As a Council, we should be doing everything in our power to support our small businesses after a long, challenging period for them, and I was disappointed to see Labour members on the Waste and Street Scene committee block proposals for free car parking in the City centre at Christmas, and object to a proposal to incentivise free public transport over Christmas. These decisions are short sighted and let down our business community.

The decision to cancel the Christmas lights switch on scheduled for Sunday 19th November was taken on the grounds of safety for those who would have been attending. The event normally attracts 35,000-40,000 people over the course of the day, with a peak audience at switch on of circa 15,000.

With the continued development taking place in the city centre of the future high streets scheme, the areas to the top of Fargate and bottom of Barkers Pool will not be available for the event date, thus rendering the “central area” for the switch on event not being available for use.

Sheffield City Council's major events and safety team have looked at alternate options and locations for the switch on, with none providing the required space and location to deliver an event of the size and scale to the required standards the Safety Advisory Group would endorse.

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