



Council Meeting
Wednesday 27 February 2019

Public and Member Questions
and Responses



Derby City Council

COUNCIL – 27 February 2019
PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

Questioner	Respondent	Subject
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Public Questions

A	Gaurav Pandey	Cllr Barker	Out of town taxis
B	Gillian Macpherson	Cllr Grimadell	Pear Tree Library Relocation
C	Douglas Lumley	Cllr Webb	Rent charges for Goods Supplied by Derby Homes
D	Judith Ainsley	Cllr Grimadell	St Augustine's Community Centre
E	Simon Bacon	Cllr Smale	Raynesway Tip Recycled Materials
F	Pauline Inwood	Cllr Smale	Traffic Proposals in Spondon
G	Simon Bacon	Cllr Smale	Blue Bin Recycling
H	Pauline Inwood	Cllr Grimadell	Plans for City Centre Swimming Pool

Councillor Questions

I	Councillor Bayliss/Rawson	Cllr Williams	SEND budget for Schools in Alvaston and Derwent
J	Councillor Peatfield	Councillor Smale	Waste Plant
K	Councillor Peatfield	Councillor Holmes	Assembly Rooms
L	Councillor Peatfield	Councillor Smale	Funding of maintenance and improvement of Derby's Road network
M	Councillor West	Councillor Grimadell	Queens Leisure Centre
N	Councillor Shanker	Councillor Holmes	Refurbished Assembly Rooms versus a new performance venue
O	Councillor Shanker	Councillor Poulter	Agreement between Conservative and UKIP
P	Councillor Care	Councillor Holmes	Budget to address global warming

Public Questions

a) Question from Gaurav Pandey to Councillor Barker

How many out of town taxis are plying in Derby? Is Derby a town with more out of town taxis than its own licensed taxis?

I have taken your reference to 'plying' as operating in the City.

There is no requirement for an operator or a proprietor of a vehicle licensed elsewhere to notify the Council it is working in its area so I'm afraid this number is not known.

We do know that hackney carriages licensed elsewhere can undertake private hire work for a Derby City Council licensed operator. We also know that a private hire operator licensed elsewhere can sub-contract work using their own licensed vehicles and drivers to private hire operators licensed by us.

The situation is far from ideal and like many other local authorities, we have raised our concerns about this nationally.

b) Question from Gillian Macpherson to Councillor Grimadell

What alternative options, including partnerships with community, voluntary, arts and education groups and organisations, were considered before Pear Tree Library was put on the Council's disposal list? Such groups and organisations may be eligible to apply for heritage and other funding.

The Pear Tree Library building was declared surplus to requirements as a consequence of the decision to relocate the library provision to St Augustine's Community Centre, and following consideration of viable alternative council uses by the council.

Thereafter adding the surplus building to the disposals list is part of the process for ensuring that all options are considered to achieve the best possible social, economic or financial outcomes.

The Property team is currently reviewing options, taking account of the location, condition and heritage status of the building, and assessing the various priorities to optimise benefits for the city.

This review will explore potential uses by community and public sector partners and seek any opportunities that can leverage funding for a sustainable refurbishment to enhance the heritage importance of this building.

The ultimate method of disposal is likely to be subject to conditions to ensure the building is brought back into use in a timely manner and the development takes account of community views and priorities.

c) Question from Doug Lumley to Councillor Webb

Rent charges for goods supplied by Derby Homes are unreasonably high in view of the fact that they are A PERMANENT ADDITION to the rent account.

In view of the average profile of Derby Homes' tenants, can this not be reduced to reflect a more accurate value of the goods supplied?

For example, sixty square meters of carpeting over a ten-year period would cost the occupant £4.34 A WEEK which totals £2256:80. The retail price of this quality of carpeting paid "up front" would be about £215

Furniture pack' charges (which includes carpets) are based on a combination of the initial purchase price, delivery and fitting of the items & disposal of old items, replacement and other costs. It is, therefore, important to include the full range of services associated with furniture packs and not just the upfront cost of the item when undertaking a comparison.

The Tenant is informed of the charges and that the charges will apply for the lifetime of the tenancy. Tenants can request a replacement item subject to fair wear and tear of items.

The Council has frozen furniture pack charges since April 2012 which has significantly reduced the real terms cost in recent years, and has just agreed to do so again next year.

For many tenants, especially those at the start of a tenancy with low income(s), access to the scheme means that they can have basic items supplied which they may not be able to afford otherwise.

All of these costs are met in full by benefits where the tenant is able to claim.

d) Question from Judith Ainsley to Councillor Grimadell

Given that the previous administration had earmarked Pear Tree as one of its remaining properly staffed libraries, recognising its essential role in the local community (as a petition signed by members of local schools and other organisations demonstrates), it is regrettable that the current Council gone back on this decision. Is it true that the existing groups at St Augustine's Community Centre were asked to leave, and can the Council guarantee that there will be no reduction in book stock at St Augustine's and also that the iconic Carnegie building will remain in public hands for the use of its local community?

Existing groups have been asked to relocate on a temporary basis so that building works take place. When the library service start to carry out the day to day running of the St Augustine's Community Centre they will be very keen to help create a community hub, encouraging groups to rent space and create a vibrant social centre.

The expectation is that all the usable Pear Tree stock will be moved to St Augustine's. In addition, the foreign language material from the Central Library will move to the new library. After the move, should there be any residual stock left over, it will be transferred to the store at Blagreaves Library. This store was created as part of the library review for this exact purpose, and stock from here is circulated around the library sites.

How the Council is seeking to dispose of the former Pear Tree Library premises has been covered in a response to another Council question.

e) Question from Simon Bacon to Councillor Smale

Resource Recovery Solutions has run the Raynesway tip for a number of years now. Does the council know how much money it is missing out on yearly by allowing Resource Recovery Solutions to pocket the money from the recycled material collected at the tip.

The contract is specifically designed to encourage and maximise the recovery, reuse and recycling of materials brought to Raynesway HWRC. The material becomes the contractor's responsibility in order to incentivise performance which all parties benefit from. This is also effective in minimising and off-setting the cost of disposing of that waste which cannot be recovered.

f) Question from Pauline Inwood to Councillor Smale

I congratulate the Neighbourhood Board in Spondon for its proposal to introduce a NO ENTRY into Chapel St at the White Swan corner. This will improve road safety in the centre of Spondon. What other proposals does the Council have to reduce the dangers from traffic through the centre and elsewhere in Spondon?

I am very pleased that we have been able to successfully tackle this particularly area.

Although the mini roundabout and Sitwell Street have a very good record in terms of road safety, there was some evidence to suggest that problems occurred when vehicles had to give way to on-coming traffic on the narrow section of Chapel Street.

The improvement will create a better environment for pedestrians, offering more reassurance particularly to more vulnerable road users, such as those using mobility scooters and those with pushchairs.

This year, the Neighbourhood Board has selected a number of locations for consideration with a view to implementing yellow lines. The priority locations are where parked cars currently cause visibility and access issues for pedestrians and motorists.

The Neighbourhood Team is also continuing to work with a range of partners to try and address some of the concerns that are raised by residents and parents about the congestion outside the school gates at the start and end of each school day. This includes schools, the Council's traffic and transportation and parking teams and the police.

Derby as a whole has a very good record for road safety and my aim is to ensure that we make small local improvements, where necessary, to maintain and further improve both safety and the environment.

g) Question from Simon Bacon to Councillor Smale

Has the council got any proposals to expand what it accepts in the blue bin, to include material such as aluminium foil which is considered widely recycled and plastic plant pots which are now being pushed to be recycled?

Not at present. However, the council will soon be retendering the contract for the processing of recycling materials collected in the blue bin. This offers the ideal opportunity to consider the options available in terms of additional materials and the benefits of collecting these. Any decisions will need to be balanced against other factors such as potential cost implications, the reliability of markets and impacts on the desirability of our material in the long term.

h) Question from Pauline Inwood to Councillor Grimadell

What plans are there for a city centre swimming pool to replace the facilities currently offered at Queen's Leisure Centre, given its limited projected lifespan, as the single swimming pool of the Moorways plans alone will clearly not meet the needs of Derby residents?

The future of Queen's Leisure Centre will be subject to further work including consultation and information being gathered for a future cabinet report. Once this information is available further decisions can be considered at that time. The opening of the new Swimming Pool Complex at Moorways will deliver a much needed, improved and modernised swimming facility offer within the city and it is very pleasing that current plans are receiving a lot of very positive feedback.

Councillor Questions

i) Question from Councillors Bayliss (i) and Rawson (ii) to Councillor Williams

(i) Can the cabinet member confirm the reductions in the SEND budget for each of the schools in the Alvaston Ward?

(ii) Can the cabinet member confirm the reductions in the SEND budget for each of the schools in the Derwent Ward?

The consultation period on the SEND reductions for schools closed on the 22 February. We are currently analysing the responses and have scheduled meetings with the sector to enable us to consider the consultation responses and work together to provide a sustainable working solution for the City and our schools.

No details of funding reductions can be provided until the proposals have been further developed.

In terms of the 7% banding reductions proposed for special schools this has been proposed in the context of increasing the number of places at special schools. Special Schools funding has increased by £479,225 in 2019/20 to £17.1 million from £16.6 million in 2018/19

j) Question from Councillor Peatfield to Councillor Smale

Can you update me on when the plant will pass its acceptance tests and confirm there is still no independently issued acceptance test certificate as there have been complaints of smells on the first warm weekend of the year. What are the latest issues that keep the plant from working as allegedly designed?

We are still waiting to hear from the Independent Certifier as to whether the acceptance tests have been passed or not. The Environment Agency continue to monitor the site and all reports are looked into to see if they can be attributed to the site and if so what the cause was.

There is a current repair being undertaken on one of the lines and Interserve continues to carry out work on the site whilst we await the outcome of the acceptance tests. Depending on the outcome we will then know if the tests have to be undertaken again or the project moves on to the next phase of testing.

k) Question from Councillor Peatfield to Councillor M Holmes

There are additional figures in the budget for the Assembly Rooms that were not in the December 2018 comparison cost, including the subsidy for years 1- 4, how much will the refurbished Assembly Rooms cost per year averaged over 15 years?

The anticipated revenue cost per year averaged over 15 years for the Assembly rooms is £377k.

Due to the significant potential of the Conference, Events and Performance venue that we are committed to delivering for Derby and the right management being put in place, I believe that this subsidy can be significantly reduced.

However it is financially prudent to ensure that officers offer robust financial detail at this stage.

I) question from Councillor Peatfield to Councillor Smale

What action has been taken so far to carry out the motion passed on 23 January 2019 regarding the proper funding of maintenance and improvement of Derby's road network?

Since the last full council on 23 January myself and the Highways Team have met up with the Department for Transport to discuss funding for our roads. We had a personal visit from the Transport Minister who was impressed with Derby's progress including our plans and new Highways Asset approach. He has also provided some useful counsel to assist us in future bids.

The discussions that took place specifically talked about how we can invest with new technology to help repair our roads along with lobbying for further funding in the next financial year.

Since then, a report to cabinet is being written for next year's programme of carriage and footway repairs. This will be approved by myself at the next Cabinet meeting on 13 March.

Derby have also been asked to comment on proposals for longer term, sustainable funding that have been produced by the Local Government Technical Advisory Group (LGTAG), this proposal is being presented to an All Party Parliamentary Group for Highways in a couple of weeks time.

Currently no contact has been made with the LGA but following the approval of the Cabinet report the Highways team along with myself will open dialogue with the LGA and I will be more than happy to provide you with an update on the progress and provide an update to the Communities Scrutiny Committee.

m) Question from Councillor West to Councillor Grimadell

Cllr Poulter has stated that Queen's Leisure Centre is "nearing the end of its life". What reassurances can you offer the swimmers of Derby that Queen's will not close before the new Moorways in Osmaston is open?

As you may be aware, in 2016, a decision was made to commence maintenance works which were completed to the Queen's Leisure Centre (QLC) Family Pool roof in June 2017. This was in order to prolong the life of the facility by up to five years, until 2021, whilst the design and build of the new Swimming Pool Complex at Moorways was developed. Progress on the new swimming pool project continues which is currently due to open in late 2021.

The current expectation is that QLC will remain open and will continue to deliver valuable services until the new Swimming Pool Complex opens. The risks associated with the aging property are widely known and active involvement from colleagues in Property Services will help to reduce the risks and associated impacts to swimmers as much as possible.

n) Question from Councillor Shanker to Councillor M Holmes

Can you demonstrate and publish a Net Present Value (NPV) calculation that compares a refurbished Assembly Rooms versus a New Performance venue?

A financial model comparing a refurbished Assembly Rooms versus a New Performance venue was produced as a background paper to the Cabinet report considered in December.

An NPV calculation will be produced for the refurbished Assembly Rooms Business Case in due course.

o) Question from Councillor Shanker to Councillor Poulter

Will you publish the written agreement between the Conservatives and UKIP so that residents can see what you have promised each other for UKIP's support for your administration?

There is no written agreement between the Conservative Administration in the City and any other political group.

p) Question from Councillor Care to Councillor Holmes

Work by the 'Think Tank' Green House is showing that taking action to address the Climate Emergency that is global warming also pays off in terms of jobs and the local economy. How will the budget you are proposing for Derby achieve these environmental and economic imperatives or what changes will you be proposing to the budget to achieve them?

No single budget round can entirely deal with the issues highlighted by environmental 'Think Tanks'.

However, as you know, the council is committed to minimising the generation Carbon Dioxide and the use of materials harmful to the environment.

It also considers environmental and economic imperatives in all our direct functions and operations the council seeks this from suppliers and contractors.

The council also promotes environmental stewardship more widely through economic and regeneration projects and regulatory functions and has successfully secured many millions of government funding and will continue to do so to drive this commitment forward.

There are no changes proposed by the current administration to the budget that is being considered by council this evening in regard to our commitment in this area.