

## Council Meeting Monday 28 February 2022

# Public and Councillor Questions and Responses



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## **Public Questions**

#### a) Question from Cecile Wright to Councillor Hassall

There are 'Green Savings' of £1.2m over 3 years identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan. As there are savings to be made here, such as reducing 'grey mileage' and increasing remote working, these savings should surely be reinvested into green initiatives such as improving active travel. How can the stated commitment to the Green Agenda otherwise be maintained?

The Council is required to set a balanced budget which needs to address cost pressures. Investment needs to enable the delivery of the Council priorities in the Council Plan, balanced against the requirement to make savings and efficiencies to deliver a sustainable Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Council Plan includes the Partnership Theme of a Green City with a series of ambitions for the city. Through our own resources, external funding and partnerships, we continue to plan to align resources and activity to protect and enhance our environment.

#### b) Question from Clare Wood to Councillor Pearce

As we are in a climate emergency and biodiversity is in sharp decline, why is Derby City Council proposing to cover a large part of the racecourse with artificial grass which has a large carbon footprint, emits toxic gas, creates toxic runoff, increases the risk of flooding and has a detrimental impact on wildlife?

We are extremely pleased that the Derby project has successfully been selected to be part of a national football programme to improve the quality of public sector football pitches in England.

Our key partner, the Football Foundation are funding 60% of all project costs.

The project provides an opportunity to regenerate the entire Racecourse site and create a vibrant, inclusive community hub.

The proposed improvements:

- Support the increased demand in football in Derby as identified in the Playing Pitch Strategy.
- Redevelop the existing building to be more energy efficient,
- Improve the play and recreation facilities for young people and families.
- Minimise impacts on the environment, which will be better than before, creating more habitat for wildlife, providing more places for nature to live in.

Biodiversity enhancements are proposed to further add to the green corridor from the north of the city.

A Climate Change Impact Assessment will be conducted, the outcome of the assessment will be used to inform final proposals.

#### c) Question from Pauline Inwood to Councillor Hassall

In the Climate Emergency we are in, I would have hoped to see, in my city's financial plans, evidence of the impacts of proposed new capital expenditure on the intention to reach net zero carbon targets, and on the natural environment. Instead, I see none in any of the capital projects. Where is the consideration of the climate emergency?

We continue to develop our strategic framework for our budget through the Council Plan and portfolios, including our Green City ambition which will help us to focus on our response to climate change.

Alongside this, as stated in the Medium Term Financial Plan report, we have a capital ambition that we want to contribute to economic regeneration, health and wellbeing, economic vibrancy, diversification and skills, job creation and the development of the city's cultural offer. Our Housing Investment Programme includes investment in green and low carbon improvements and new builds.

All these elements need to be supported by the Council if Derby and its citizens are to recover from the impact of the two most difficult years that many of us here have ever seen. It does not mean that our capital programme works in isolation, but it operates in the context of our Council Plan, including our green city aims and individual schemes and projects which will take this on board as they are developed.

- d) Question from Philip Hutchinson (i) and Bal Mahal (ii) to Councillor Hassall
- (i) The consultation on Eastwood Drive states that all roads must have a turning circle to stop cars having to reverse and to improve road safety. However, option 1 of the consultation provides no turning circle on North Street. Does the Council plan on ignoring their own road safety advice or is the suggested option to stop the rat run that it knows full well cannot be delivered?
- (ii) The re-design of A5111 Central Reservation Gap to create the 'Harbourage' at the Manor Road / Eastwood Drive junction is adding new road dangers as a result of changes to vehicle waiting positions. Derby City Council have confirmed in their Freedom of Information EIR 15252 06/09/21 disclosure that 'information not held' for Visibility Splay Testing and Approval. Local residents are concerned about the new road dangers caused by the forward visibility splay being significantly obstructed when the central reservation gap is occupied simultaneously by vehicles waiting to turn in opposite directions.

For the Road safety of 35,000 daily users of the A5111, will Derby City Council please confirm if the forward visibility for users of the A5111 Central Reservation Gap is approved to Road Safety Audit standards for a trunk road?

Questions on this matter have been previously raised by the North Eastwood Campaign group which were answered in January and July last year. As my colleague Cllr Holmes explained at the time, this is being led, quite rightly, by the three Littleover ward Councillors supported by Council Officers. It has been agreed as a Neighbourhood priority by the Littleover Neighbourhood Board and the Councillors are all very activity engaged with the whole local community, including the campaign group representatives.

An action plan was drawn up and shared with residents and this is being worked through appropriately. Currently I believe there is a live consultation which sets out principles for any potential scheme and seeks to give a balanced perspective for residents to consider.

There are clearly pros and cons with different scenarios but at this stage there is not a design detail and any preferred scheme, once the results of the

consultation are known, we will of course need to address turning provision and general safety issues.

#### e) Question from Brendan Connelly to Councillor Barker

### Which councillors should attend and are entitled to speak at Council Cabinet?

All Councillors are entitled to attend any committee of the Council, and may address the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

Meetings of the Council Cabinet are attended by councillors appointed to the Cabinet by the Leader of the Council. The Council Cabinet Procedure Rules also confer a specific entitlement to either the Leader or Deputy Leader of each political group to speak but not to vote at meetings of the Council Cabinet.

#### f) Question from Mair Bain to Councillor Hassall

In the budget, "growth" is the spending priority with the greatest amount of investment (£230.763 million) when the survey results showed that growth is not a top priority for the people of Derby. Has any consideration been given to moving a portion of that money to address the Executive Scrutiny Board's recommendation to increase investment to replace gas heating or to improve energy efficiency in buildings to help address rising energy prices and meet the Derby Zero Carbon target date of 2035?

The Council Capital Programme includes a planned series of investments including modernisation or replacement of time expired or in-efficient Council and Community Assets. These business cases include an assessment of how they can become energy efficient and help reduce energy costs but more importantly reduce carbon emissions

The schemes detailed in the £230.763 million over the next three years will be a major contributor to helping the Council reducing its Carbon emissions.

#### g) Question from Ruth Coates to Councillor Barker

Looking at the green savings in the budget, there are 2 sections which deal with "redesigning " staff resources. Given the need to consider the carbon footprint and environmental effect of every single council decision, why is the number of staff working in this area being decreased when it should be increased?

In May 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency in Derby. The decision was unanimous across all political parties.

The Council's commitment to the environment can be seen in our Climate Change Strategy, our role in the Climate Change Commission and in the development of our Climate Change Action Plan. Council colleagues in all services are asked to consider the potential environmental impact of their work, and our Council reports rightly require us to consider and document the climate implications.

The savings proposals in the green portfolio highlight the opportunities in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to review how we can collaborate in a number of our services on the green agenda to deliver shared outcomes even more effectively, and how we can better align our services to do this. As the proposals are developed in future financial years, officers will consider all relevant options for the most effective way to continue to deliver this significant agenda.

#### h) Question from Brendan Connelly to Councillor Smale

Why is the Market Hall refurbishment known as Phase 2 costing £10 million more than you said in November 2020?

The November 2020 report provided approval for the Phase 1 refurbishment and the design work for Phase 2. This signposted a further report when Phase 2 design work had been completed. This report was considered and approved by Cabinet on 16 February detailing the indicative costs of the Phase 2 works and the confirmed receipt of Future Hight Streets funding for the Market Hall.

#### i) Question from Mair Bain to Councillor Hassall

The Air Quality Improvement project only received 0.063 million so why is the Council not funding improving air quality further by introducing clean air zones and other pricing measures to discourage polluting vehicle use and raise more funds to invest in public transport and active travel? This will also help the Council's efforts to reach the Derby Zero Carbon target date of 2035.

The funding indicated is part of the Roadside NO2 reduction project that was commissioned as part of the Government's action to tackle areas of exceedance against European standards as identified through a national model. The majority of this £10m scheme is now complete.

## **Councillor Questions**

#### j) Question from Councillor Testro to Councillor Williams

Some children's EHCPs include a requirement of a laptop and appropriate software to allow children to dictate some of their work. This is a duty of the Local Authority, so how is this being funded, which budget is this being funded from and is it adequate to meet the needs of every qualifying child?

This is funded by the Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG) and is allocated through the specialist teaching service. This budget is used to purchase equipment such as hearing aids, integrated transmitters, specialist chairs, laptops and various software to enable access to education for any learner with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

In 2021/22 we budgeted £75,900 for Capital Expenditure ICT (disability aids). As of the end of January 2022, £48,288 has been spent of this budget. By careful estimation this budget is adequate in meeting needs.

#### k) Question from Councillor Repton to Councillor McCristal

Following the motion passed at the last council meeting how are your plans going to uphold the will of Council and now provide a centrally located swimming pool to replace the ones at Queens that you plan to close very soon?

Following the Cabinet decision in December, progress on decommissioning the Queens Leisure Centre has been going very well. It is still on track to be replaced by the state-of-the art leisure facilities opening at Moorways Sports Village in Spring 2022, which provides sufficient pool water space to meet the swimming demand in Derby.

Cabinet is considering the proposals made at Council.

#### I) Question from Councillor Shanker to Councillor Smale

Now that you have increased the budget for the Market Hall from £25m in Nov 20 to £35 just a few weeks ago. what reassurances can you give me and the people of Derby that the Market Hall Refurbishment will be fully completed within this increased amount and there won't be need for yet more additional spend or a phase three?

The question is not accurate as the November 2020 report provided the funding for Phase 1 and the design costs for Phase 2, and stated that a further report would be brought identifying the costs of Phase 2 and the outcome of the Future High Streets Bid. This report was considered and approved by Cabinet on 16 February 2022.

The Market Hall project has progressed as two distinct phases of work, with Phase 1 covering the roof repair and restoration element, and Phase 2 covering the building transformation and additional public realm work to Osnabruck Square.

Phase 1 is being delivered within the approved budget and is scheduled to complete in June 2022 as per the construction programme.

Phase 2 is still in the design stage. RIBA stages 1 and 2 have been completed and signed off, and the contractor has now started RIBA stage 3. At the end of RIBA stage 2 approximately 70% of the costs had been market tested (based on the information available at that stage in design) which has provided a relatively high degree of cost certainty. The contractor operates under a 'price promise' design framework which means that design as per end of RIBA 2 is more progressed than would usually be the case and again provides a greater degree of cost certainty. The recent approval of funding for Phase 2 includes both a costed risk contingency and a significant client contingency set in-line with industry standards or specific technical assessments. Progression to RIBA stage 3 was based on a robust technical and cost appraisal over a number of months. It is not possible to fully ascertain the contract value until RIBA stage 4 has been completed, this is scheduled for Summer 2022

Phase 2 works include all work carried out to and within the building, and on Osnabruck Square. The phase 2 scheme presented to Cabinet on 16 February 2022 included an allowance for a basic clearing and making good of Osnabruck Square. This is within the scope of the project. If an enhanced scheme for this

area is progressed then additional funds would need to be sought to complete the work, as per the Cabinet report. This enhanced scheme is outside the current scope of the project and would therefore be the subject of a future Cabinet report and separate to the Market Hall refurbishment scheme if approved.

The Council has regular meetings with the contractor, Wates as well as regular meetings chaired by the Senior Responsible Officer which is the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources and S151 Officer.

#### m) Question from Councillor West to Councillor McCristal

#### When will you announce the opening date for Moorways?

Excellent progress has taken place on the Moorways Sports Village project and very pleasingly the construction is about to be finalised.

It is still on track to open in Spring 2022, the exact date will be announced with our successful leisure operating partner once their mobilisation plans for opening the venue are firmed up.

Everyone working on this project has achieved an amazing result, the building looks fantastic and feedback from industry colleagues has been that it is one of the best leisure facilities in the whole of the Country. We are very proud that this facility is in Derby and opening very soon for our communities to use.

#### n) Question from Councillor Peatfield to Councillor Hassall

## Can you update Full Council with progress on the High Street motion passed at January's meeting?

The regeneration of Derby's city centre and high street is a key Council priority. We recognise that we cannot do this in splendid isolation and have been working for some time now with partners to progress this agenda.

In direct response to the pandemic, the Council pulled together a city-wide recovery group to lead Derby's economic recovery from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The group has worked together to understand the economic impacts facing Derby, partnering with local and national agencies to offer support for businesses, sectors and investments hardest hit by the pandemic.

One of many successes of the group has been using the Government's Additional Restrictions Grant to repurpose key buildings in the city centre, evidenced most recently by the opening of BamBoom Cloud's offices – who have created almost 100 jobs, and refurbished a beautiful building laid empty for many years. We are looking to build on this success by exploring how we can establish a longer-term grant scheme to assist property owners to accelerate bringing empty properties back into use.

Building on the Recovery Group's success, there are plans afoot to embed a longer-term group to focus on the city centre and our high streets. This would focus on:

- Developing a coherent programme for the city centre (rather than just a series of projects) and ensuring delivery against that programme
- Prioritisation of future projects/interventions
- Alignment of the city centre programme with priorities of key partners and local/regional strategies

This group would harness the expertise, insight and resources of our key public and private sector partners including Marketing Derby, Homes England, Historic England, D2N2 LEP, Environment Agency, and more.

We recognise that there are key stakeholders – including residents – who need to have their voices heard in a much more engaged way, and we are exploring ways to enable this.

In terms of potential future sources of funding for the rejuvenation of the city centre, we are anticipating further details of the long-awaited UK Shared Prosperity Fund from the Government in the next few weeks, and visual improvements to high streets has been suggested as a possible priority for this fund.

This is a huge agenda, and I say a key priority for the Council. I'd be happy to give you more detail about emerging actions outside of this meeting.

#### o) Question from Councillor Lonsdale to Councillor Webb

Regarding the nearly £1m savings by reviewing adult social care, as required by the Care Act 2014. Presumably we are already doing annual reviews, so how will doing these this year suddenly create savings over and above any savings from previous years?

Due to the high demand and reduced social work capacity during the lengthy Covid-19 pandemic, it has not been possible to undertake annual reviews during this period of time. Coming out of the pandemic period we can revisit these customers with a view to reassessing their needs and taking an asset-based approach to their social capital and personal resources now available to people, due to ending of the Covid-19 restrictions. We shall also look at maximising the use of telecare and community equipment to meet needs.

Our aim is to continue to meet all eligible care needs that cannot be met in another way, to keep people safe and independent at home.

#### p) Questions from Councillor Dhindsa to Councillor Poulter

After 12 years of austerity cuts, under a Conservative led Government, Derby continues to have one of the highest inequality and outcomes when we compare the life chances, health and wellbeing of those living in the most deprived communities with those in the most affluent. For example, 12 years ago, someone living in Allestree would expect to live 10 years longer on average than someone living in Normanton. Now this gap, shocking as it was, has grown to 19 years.

The Government has finally published its so called levelling up strategy and plan to tackle inequality. Can the relevant Cabinet Member tell us what this will mean for Derby and its residents? What additional funding will be made available to meet the needs of our most deprived communities and to reverse the ever widening inequality faced by so many?

The Council recognises the importance of tackling inequalities across our city to improve the life chances and living standards of Derby citizens.

The Council has placed Resilience at the heart of its new Council Plan and is prioritising resources to reduce inequalities and create healthier and wealthier residents, empower strong and independent communities, and create a safe city, where those that need support can access it at the right time.

Derby City Council is also part of the Poverty Commission which is looking at the underlying causes of inequality.

The Levelling Up White Paper is a significant set of proposals from Government and represents a step forward in addressing geographical disparities in funding, productivity and growth. Whilst a number of funding streams have been identified in the White Paper, both new and existing, the Council is still being notified of the specific budget allocations.

I am pleased to note that Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council have been recognised in the White Paper as national 'Levelling Up' leaders with the Government and have secured a County Deal.

Though figures have not yet been announced, the deal will bring extra investment to the area, alongside the transfer of specific powers in areas like transport, bus services, housing and skills from central Government to a local level, giving greater autonomy to local leaders over decision making and funding.

The Council alongside Derbyshire is also exploring options with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to fully exploit the opportunities provided by Levelling up through the devolution framework.

We are committed to working with regional and local partners and communities to make sure that Derby secures greater resources and flexibilities through Levelling up, thereby maximising the opportunities to improve outcomes for citizens in our city.

#### q) Question from Councillor Martin to Councillor Eyre

Last year the Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner secured Home Office funding of £500, 000 for crime prevention measures in the West End of Derby, involving the installation of CCTV cameras to assist with that. How are the CCTV cameras now monitored to help with crime prevention?

Thank you for your question Councillor Martin. The CCTV cameras installed as part of the Safer Streets project joined the Council's established CCTV networks and are monitored from the CCTV suite along with all other cameras.

#### r) Question from Councillor Lind to Councillor Smale

In relation to the Household Support Scheme, please can the Cabinet Member responsible tell me why according to the most recent figures given to Councillors this month, the council had only spent 820k out of the 1.4 Million that has to be spent by the end of next month, why does the council have so much money left the people of our great city are struggling and why is this Tory administration choosing to implement over restrictive criteria for eligibility?

#### The £2.224m Household Support Scheme for Derby covers three elements:

- 1. £750k for Free School Meal (FSM) vouchers over the period 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022
- 2. £70k grant to extend the reach of existing city-based schemes that provide support for vulnerable families and individuals, and
- 3. £1.404m in financial support across 8,500 claims supporting vulnerable households and individuals

## The positive impact of the Household Support Scheme to date, can be summarised in the following way:

- 1. Free school meal vouchers has been completed with:
  - a. £753k spent on FSM vouchers
  - b. Issued to schools in October 2021, Christmas 2021 and February 2022
  - c. Distributing 51,000 FSM vouchers at £15 per voucher to schools,
  - d. With 250,000 meals provided for school children in Derby
- 2. £70k support grant for existing city-based schemes
  - a. has been distributed to organisations across the city
  - b. with awards still being made

- 3. Financial support:
  - a. £1.06m spent to date
  - b. With 6,395 successful claims covering
    - i. 2.398 households without children and
    - ii. 3,997 households with children
  - c. 4,598 claims have been unsuccessful
  - d. Scheme is on track to fully utilise £1.404m funding, across 8,500 claims by 31 March 2022

#### Eligibility criteria:

There are two parts to the financial support element of the scheme:

- 1. Referrals via trusted partners
  - a. These are assessed by trusted partners as qualifying for support
  - b. Helping to ensure the scheme reaches vulnerable households and individuals in a wide range of vulnerable circumstances
- 2. The online application forms requires the following to help ensure the scheme is focused on those in most need:
  - a. evidence of a qualifying benefit, and
  - b. a reasonable income and expenditure statement

The eligibility criteria also protect the integrity of the scheme, by identifying and removing fraudulent claims, ensuring more of the funding reaches those in most need.

#### s) Question from Councillor Care to Councillor Hassall

Energy-using equipment that emits carbon dioxide and will last more than 13 years (to Derby's zero carbon target of 2035) needs to be depreciated by a maximum of 13 years, and preparation made for it to be replaced before 2035 with a zero carbon alternative.

How is this being considered as part of the Council's Capital Strategy? It may already be particularly relevant for purchases or renewals of equipment such as cremators, building heating systems (including swimming pools) and possibly specialist vehicles.

The Council has developed several policies over the years that support good practice in our infrastructure asset management and maintenance.

We continue to improve these within the context of changing national legislation and guidance, and our own overall plan as an organisation, to achieve net carbon zero.

#### t) Question from Councillor Repton to Councillor McCristal

At the last full council meeting you promised to provide me with the net capital and revenue costs for the marketplace venue. You failed to do this as promised so can you now this evening provide these for myself and the public to see?

Officers are still working on a comprehensive Return on Investment figure to enable a full response to your question given the wider impact on the city economy created from the Market Place and 'Derby Loves You' venue.

However, I can confirm that there were no capital costs associated with the venue and that the net revenue costs to the city council were £329,500.

#### u) Question from Councillor Shanker to Councillor Hassall

What independent financial assessment of the still secret Becketwell Performance Venue deal has been completed to demonstrate value for money for Derby?

The new performance venue at Becketwell is scheduled to open in 2025 and attract over 250,000 visits and generate over £10 million GVA per year. We have secured a 30-year lease with the international operator, ASM Global which will bring a full programme of events and conferences to Derby.

Assessments of both the venue and the operator were undertaken as part of the decision to progress the new Performance Venue at Becketwell.

The development agreement and operator agreements remain confidential.

### v) Questions from Councillors West (i), Naitta (ii) and Peatfield (iii) to Councillor Smale

## i) What alternatives to the Sinfin Incinerator are being considered for Derby's waste and recycling given the inability for that site to function properly?

Alternatives are being explored as part of the development of full businesses cases: to rectify and use the facility, or to close the facility and dispose of the city's waste using a third party. These will be presented back to Cabinet in due course.

ii) Given the current energy crisis and the monetary rise in fuel the recycling centre in Sinfin is still not working and not going to be for a while yet.

#### Can the external and internal lighting be reduced to save costs?

This request has already been made to the council regarding the waste treatment facility and is being explored.

### Can we also look at additional sites in the city where savings could be made?

Options for the city's waste disposal will be considered as part of the development of the business cases. This will be presented back to Cabinet in due course.

#### iii) Why is there increased activity at the Sinfin Waste Plant?

The activity on site relates to the ongoing preservation and maintenance activities but has not increased.

These activities are undertaken on a regular basis (daily, weekly and monthly) and is an ongoing process. Examples of activities include running and checking machinery, hand turning rotating equipment, preserving equipment and health, safety, and compliance checks. Preservation and maintenance activities can typically comprise several hundred different activities each week.

#### w) Question from Councillor Martin to Councillor Pearce

St Alkmund's Green in Darley ward was previously a school playground and is now a designated town green. The space remains a neglected area, covered in tarmac. In line with the need to create more green spaces in the city, will the Cabinet member commit officer time and funding to transform it into a true green space for the benefit of local residents and wildlife?

This area currently has Village Green Status rather than being formally designated as Public Open Space.

The space currently has mature trees on the site which provide important habitats for wildlife with other self-set vegetation colonising the site, particularly around the periphery.

There have been requests to fund improvements using S106 funding for Darley Ward, however as the area is not formally designated as Public Open Space, it is not possible to allocate Public Open Space contributions for this purpose.

That being the case, a positive way forward could be for the local community to get involved and fund-raise to improve the site.

#### x) Question from Councillor Shanker to Councillor Hassall

The North Eastwood Road Safety Campaign have made clear that their preferred option to improve road safety and stop Eastwood Drive from being used as a rat run is to close the road between Eastwood Drive and Manor Road. Why has the Council ignored residents and issued a consultation that fails to include the preferred option of the Road Safety Campaign?

As I have explained in my response to public questions and as you are yourself aware, this matter is being led by the three Littleover ward Councillors supported by Council Officers. It has been agreed as a Neighbourhood priority by the Littleover Neighbourhood Board.

I understand that the Councillors are all very activity engaged with the whole local community, including the campaign group representatives.

#### y) Questions from Councillor Dhindsa to Councillor Pearce

Markeaton Crematorium and Bereavement Services have been set challenging targets in today's budget papers, to make £750K savings/cuts. How can this be achieved when business and income is being lost to strategically built new and modern crematorium, by another Local Authority, to compete with ours. The need for a new and modern City Crematorium is urgent and evident for many years. Why has there been a delay in implementing a plan to invest to maintain and increase our income and quality of service to those who use it?

Thank you for this question about crematorium councillor Dhindsa. You will no doubt be aware that the facility is ageing, having been built in the 1950s. We have recently invested in a new cremator to ensure consistency of service delivery and we are in the process of assessing what is needed to bring the facilities up to a modern standard.

The Council recently engaged with the Association of Public Services Excellence to review the facility and will be bringing some recommendations to cabinet in due course.

#### z) Questions from Councillor Dhindsa to Councillor Pearce

On the 24 January 2022 the Communities Scrutiny Review Board resolved to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Streetpride and Public Spaces that the Council considers reintroducing compactor days. Before your administration made cuts to the budget in Streetpride for this year Compactor Days were a huge benefit and success to many neighbourhoods where fly tipping and waste blighted our streets. When will this recommendation be implemented?

Thank you for this question Councillor Dhindsa. I have asked officers to carry out a full assessment of the impact of compactor days to enable cabinet to make a decision based on the data, and have asked for this to be brought to the next Cabinet meeting for consideration.