



Derby City Council

**Council Meeting
Wednesday 17 September 2014**

**Public and Member Questions
and Responses**

COUNCIL – 17 September 2014
PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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Public Questions

A	Arron Marsden	Councillor Banwait	Alvaston Neighbourhood Board Letters
B	Arron Marsden	Councillor Afzal	Community Volunteer Training

Councillor Questions

C	Councillor Davis	Councillor Afzal	Kedleston Road Housing
D	Councillor Naitta	Councillor Hussain	Protecting Children from Abuse
E	Councillor Barker	Councillor Rawson	Market Hall Traders
F	Councillor Wood	Councillor Martin	Darley Park Concert
G	Councillor Ashburner	Councillor Martin	Assembly Rooms
H	Councillor Care	Councillor Banwait	Councillor Communications
I	Councillor Carr	Councillor Afzal	Future Waste Collection
J	Councillor Keith	Councillor Afzal	Community Events
K	Councillor Poulter	Councillor Afzal	Public Toilet Provision
L	Councillor Harwood	Councillor Afzal	Fly Tipping
M	Councillor Naitta	Councillor Martin	Nature Reserve Damage
N	Councillor Barker	Councillor Rawson	Car Boot Sale
O	Councillor Ashburner	Councillor Rawson	New Trees in St Peter's Cross
P	Councillor Care	Councillor Afzal	Kerbside Recycling
Q	Councillor Ashburner	Councillor Rawson	St Peter's Cross Refurbishment
R	Councillor Care	Councillor Afzal	Neighbourhood Working
S	Councillor Ashburner	Councillor Rawson	Toilets at the Spot

a. Question from Arron Marsden to Councillor Banwait

Why are Alvaston Labour councillors removing UKIP councillor's photos and information from letters being sent to residents signed by the Neighbourhood Board?

Are UKIP councillors also part of the Neighbourhood Board?

I have reviewed mailshots that have been sent out by my colleagues in Alvaston and can find no evidence of removal of the UKIP councillor's details.

The letters I have seen have been promoting Councillors on Patrol (COP) visits, which have been routinely carried out by Labour councillors, as a key part of their local engagement work, for a number of years. In addition, some letters have been sent by Councillor Bayliss, as Chair of the Neighbourhood Board, to update constituents on issues that have been raised within the ward.

I acknowledge that changes need to be considered in wards where more than one political party is represented (Alvaston, Derwent, Mackworth and Mickleover) to ensure that residents are always aware of the contact details for all three of their elected Members. To that end I have created a paper for the Members Steering Group, which will meet on Thursday 18 September, to set guidance on this issue and to secure savings in postage costs.

On the second part of the question, the answer is yes, of course the UKIP councillor is a member of the Neighbourhood Board.

b. Question from Arron Marsden to Councillor Afzal

Why is Derby City Council introducing layers of bureaucracy aimed at making it harder for valued community volunteers to perform tasks such as litter picking?

The question relates to the introduction of training to use litter pickers as highlighted on East Midlands Today (4 September).

The Council is not introducing extra layers of bureaucracy but is simply trying to ensure that volunteers working on its behalf are aware of a number of easily avoidable hazards. The 'training' widely quoted in the press is nothing more than a 10-15 minute conversation with volunteers about the hazards they may face and how to avoid them.

The briefing covers what personal protective clothing and equipment to use such as hi-visibility waistcoats, litter pickers, gloves and suitable footwear and clothing.

The briefing then goes on to explain about dealing with broken glass, what to do if drug litter or hypodermic needles are found and how to deal with fly tipped waste which may contain asbestos or dangerous chemicals. Hypodermic needles are not uncommon in littering in certain parts of the city, and a needle stick injury can have life changing consequences. Knowing the correct procedure when these are found is essential.

The briefing also covers some common 'do's and don'ts' around traffic awareness, overfilling bags, working next to water and dealing with people.

These are all simple recommendations contained within a briefing which aims to make sure that volunteers can identify potential hazards, know the correct way to deal with them and will make their involvement safe and enjoyable.

We are currently putting this advice into a simple hand out which individuals can be given prior to volunteering.

c. Question from Councillor Davis to Councillor Rawson

What representations are the Council going to make about the proposed 400 homes on Kedleston Road, taking into account that all Allestree schools are full and that there is no spare capacity in GP and dental surgeries?

At their Public Inquiry Amber Valley's Inspector has indicated that Derby City, South Derbyshire and Amber Valley should increase their joint housing allocations by 1,474 homes. As you know we don't have suitable land available to increase our figures, and South Derbyshire has said the same.

We have acknowledged Amber Valley's decision to identify these additional sites to meet the 1,474 homes, particularly as the need for these homes is generated by the City. Amber Valley's strategy of identifying this urban extension to meet part of Derby's unmet need is a direct consequence of the additional homes required by the Government Planning Inspector.

Detailed comments have also been made in respect of relevant planning criteria such as education, roads/accessibility and flood risk. In terms of education, as you will know this will be the responsibility of Derbyshire County Council but we have indicated that it is unlikely that city primary schools will be able to accommodate pupil numbers from this development.

d. Question from Councillor Naitta to Councillor Hussain

It is disappointing to hear the news about the revelations in Rotherham about child sex grooming, and I am also aware of the good work Derby City Council and partner agencies are carrying out in the city, with safe and sound being at the forefront in combating the perpetrators.

Can the Cabinet Member reassure me that Derby is still leading on protecting children from abuse in the city?

Derby has substantial recent experience in tackling the exploitation of a number of girls and young women in the city. Derby's success in detecting this abuse and successfully prosecuting the perpetrators has helped to highlight the issue nationally. Our frontline Early Help and Social Care provision play a key role in preventing and protecting young people from sexual exploitation. We continue to give high priority to protecting children from this form of exploitation and our joint strategy has been developed to take account of learning from other areas and the relevant National Guidance. This work continues to be a priority for the Safeguarding Children's Board and all partner agencies and we are making progress with prevention, protection and prosecution of child sex exploitation. However there can be no complacency in our approach to safeguarding across the city.

e. Question from Councillor Barker to Councillor Rawson

Noting an identified call from potential 'start up' Market Traders for small trading units within the Market Hall, can the Cabinet Member explain why there is a reticence to facilitate this need and reduce the size of vacant units to meet the aspirations of new traders, and not only ignore a potential increase in income but also miss an opportunity to kick start and revitalise a vibrant market experience in this historic building?

The size of stalls at the Market Hall has been an issue of concern during the economic downturn. However, due to the poor state of repair and fragility of the fire detection/alarm system in the Market Hall, the firm advice from Property Services has been that any works that would involve alterations to the system (such as splitting stalls) should be avoided until such time as it is replaced. Whilst it is understood why this may have led to a perception of reticence, the actual reason for delaying works has been to protect the safety of existing traders and the public whilst a capital scheme to replace the fire detection system has been set in place.

It is pleasing to report that works to replace the system have now commenced and it is anticipated that when completed, the splitting of stalls, although also problematic for other reasons (e.g. asbestos surveys, ability to split electrical supplies etc.), will be a more realistic proposition.

In the interim, officers are currently liaising with two potential traders whose prospective tenancies are reliant on the provision of smaller stalls.

Going forward, Markets officers are also in discussion with colleagues in Property Services to draft a service level agreement, which will include this type of work and enable works to be carried out more quickly and to agreed timescales.

f. Question from Councillor Wood to Councillor Martin

Did you enjoy this year's Darley Park concert?

This year's Darley Park Concert was attended by an estimated 35,000 people. In my opinion, it was one of the most successful concerts staged in the 23 years I have been attending.

Thanks to the talents and hard work of Sinfonia Viva and Derby Live staff, the music, lighting and fireworks were all excellent. The Rolls Royce Choirs, along with the Big Adventure Theatre Group, also performed extremely well.

The Council thanks again Rolls Royce, East Midlands Trains, and Classic FM, for their contributions to the concert.

g. Question from Councillor Ashburner to Councillor Martin

When is it intended to make a decision on the future of Derby Assembly Rooms?

The Council has made a decision that the Assembly Rooms will be closed for a minimum of 18 months following the serious fire in the plant room on the roof of the building in March.

The Council wishes to see a cultural facility in the city and officers are working through all the various options, including refurbishing or replacing the building. These options are being considered in the context of proposals for wider city centre regeneration.

In the meantime, negotiations continue to take place with the insurers and events have been reprogrammed where possible. The Comedy Festival and Beer Festival were delivered in the Market Place over the summer with the Folk Festival taking place there at the beginning of October.

h. Question from Councillor Care to Councillor Banwait

I understand that some councillors are now using Neighbourhood staff for door to door visits and delivering leaflets, letters or cards. Some, I'm told, now only do this having stopped engaging with their residents and electors through Neighbourhood Forums.

Has the budget for such councillor/ward communications been extended beyond the previous £500 per councillor per year? If so, to how much, and to which budget is this now being charged?

A councillor's ability to communicate with residents, be it on a one to one basis or as a larger group (street, area or whole ward) through letters or leaflets is important. Significant increases in Royal Mail charges in recent years should lead every councillor to look at costs and ensure value for money on mail-outs.

Some councillors are using the resources available to them, to have letters hand delivered, but this would never be to the exclusion of other important tasks of Neighbourhood Officers.

The £500/councillor limit has not been reported on since the budget was centralised into Business Support, but recent budget monitoring has shown a clear need to reduce our postage costs.

As already mentioned in an answer to a question from a member of the public, I have created a paper to set out my thoughts on this issue to be presented to the Members' Steering Group tomorrow.

i. Question from Councillor Carr to Councillor Afzal

Are the reductions in recycling caused by the removal (both implemented and proposed) of the separate recycling bins from parts of the city, a preparation for a return to a single bin system when the Sinfin Waste Plant becomes operational?

No - there is a small pilot in a limited number of streets in Arboretum where communal recycling bins have replaced the individual recycling bins for each household. Prior to the pilot the area experienced high levels of contamination of the blue and brown bins. There was also a problem with large numbers of bins on streets. This has been greatly reduced by introducing a weekly refuse collection and removing the blue and brown bins and replacing them with the communal recycling bins.

This pilot is completely unrelated to the development of the new waste plant at Sinfin. The new waste plant will only process the waste that the city and county cannot recycle. The city will continue to maintain a kerbside recycling system and encourage residents recycle as much of their waste as possible.

j. Question from Councillor Keith to Councillor Afzal

Will the Cabinet Member join me to both congratulate and thank the many local groups and volunteers across the city who have worked hard to organise successful community events this year. I am sure you will agree that local fayres, fetes and other similar events are vital in bringing local communities together and in many cases to raise money for charities and good causes.

Can the Cabinet Member detail what more the Council can do to support these events in the future?

The number and variety of community events organised by local people is wonderful and I congratulate everyone who has been involved organising them.

I would like to thank the many local residents who worked hard to support these events which demonstrate the diversity of our communities and the many things that unite us.

The Council will continue to support local communities in a variety of ways, through community buildings, the involvement of neighbourhood officers and grants. The local groups and individuals who organise these events often ask us for advice and help with practical issues and we remain enthusiastic about supporting them whenever we can.

k. Question from Councillor Poulter to Councillor Afzal

The public of Derby consider that the provision of good quality public toilets is important to young families, the disabled and elderly that visit and use our city centre. Would the Cabinet Member please detail his plans to ensure the reinstatement and enhancement of public toilets across the city to a level that could be considered appropriate and essential to serve a vibrant city such as ours?

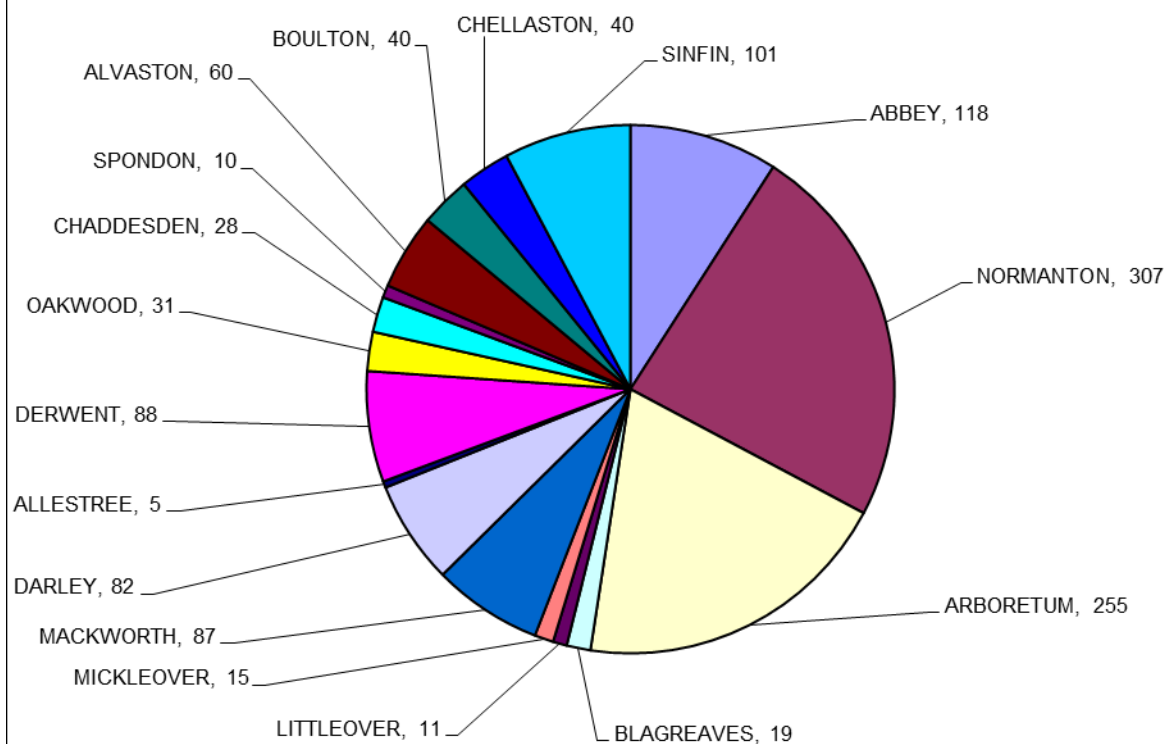
The unprecedented scale of the budget cuts faced by the City Council requires us to make major reductions in spending to achieve a balanced budget. This will require some very difficult decisions. We have launched a major consultation – the Big Conversation – with the people of Derby to ask them for their priorities for the future and where they would be prepared to see reductions in services. We will listen carefully what the people of Derby say in response to this consultation, together with all of the information available to us in forming the plans for the future of services.

I. Question from Councillor Harwood to Councillor Afzal

Would the Cabinet Member please supply a ward by ward breakdown of the number of calls for service in relation to incidents of fly tipping in the past six months, together with the associated costs to the Council?

WARD	No OF FLY TIPPING SERVICE REQUESTS 1 MARCH - 31 AUGUST 2014
ABBEY	118
NORMANTON	307
ARBORETUM	255
BLAGREAVES	19
LITTLEOVER	11
MICKLEOVER	15
MACKWORTH	87
DARLEY	82
ALLESTREE	5
DERWENT	88
OAKWOOD	31
CHADDESSEN	28
SPONDON	10
ALVASTON	60
BOULTON	40
CHELLASTON	40
SINFIN	101
TOTAL	1297

NUMBER OF FLY TIPPING SERVICE REQUESTS 1 MAR - 31 AUG 2014 -1297



We do not have a breakdown of the costs by ward.

It should be noted that not all requests result in the removal of flytipping.

- There may be duplicate reports for the same incident.
- The flytipping may be removed before street cleansing crews attend.
- The flytipping may be on private land and not the responsibility of the Council to remove.

m. Question from Councillor Naitta to Councillor Martin

Is Derby City Council going to repair damage done to the nature reserve and, if yes, when?

There are currently no plans to do any further work on the nature reserve as there is no budget identified.

n. Question from Councillor Barker to Councillor Rawson

Will the Cabinet Member explain to Council and the people of Derby why the ever popular weekend car boot sale held on the cattle market site is no longer operating and what projected annual loss of revenue does this cause to the Council?

The car boot sale has been temporarily closed since May 2014 because the officers who previously staffed the event on a casual overtime basis did not wish to continue to do so.

Since then, a new staff structure has been established, revised job descriptions and person specifications have been drafted and the posts have been evaluated under the NJC scheme. Regrettably, attempts to recruit to the newly created posts have failed to attract either the necessary quality or quantity of candidates. As an interim measure, pending a further review of staffing arrangements, officers are currently in advanced negotiations with contractors to run the car boot with the aim of re-opening it by the end of September 2014.

The temporary closure of the car boot sale has resulted in an unbudgeted pressure of approximately £40k for 2014/15, which is being managed within the Markets Revenue Budget.

o. Question from Councillor Ashburner to Councillor Rawson

What long term measures are intended to be made to keep the three new trees in the 'St Peter's Cross' development alive?

The new trees and planting will receive aftercare as part of the main contract that will mean that the trees will be watered and cared for from now and for the next twelve months ending at around this time next year.

In parallel, the Regeneration Team are working with the St Peter's Quarter BID to establish a sponsorship regime with local businesses for them to pay for the aftercare, with the aftercare being undertaken by Streetpride.

Should this not come to fruition then there is funding available for the aftercare to be covered by DCC's Regeneration Programme.

p. Question from Councillor Care to Councillor Afzal

Media reports suggest that Mackworth councillors may unilaterally decide that some of their residents should no longer be provided with a kerbside recycling service, but instead have weekly black bin collections.

What impact would this action have on the Council's budget, and what would the implications be if all councillors decided to take this action?

A pilot scheme involving a weekly collection of refuse has been running in a small number of streets in Arboretum. The pilot was introduced because the layout of the street made it difficult for residents to put their bins away which resulted in a large number of bins on streets. The area also experienced a high level of people putting the wrong material in blue and brown bins which contaminated whole loads of recyclable material which then had to be disposed of as land fill. New local bring sites were provided which enabled residents to recycle their waste.

The areas covered by the pilot now have less litter and far fewer bins left out on the streets on non-collection days. There has been no significant impact on the refuse collection budget as the resources formerly used to collect blue bins have been deployed to collect black refuse bins. Since much of the material previously collected in blue and brown bins was contaminated the impact on the disposal budget has been relatively small.

If other areas face the same issues as the pilot area a similar approach could be considered, including providing local bring sites for recycled material. This would apply to a very limited number of streets in the city and the benefits and costs would be carefully considered by the Cabinet Member.

q. Question from Councillor Ashburner to Councillor Rawson

Why has the Council failed to allow for the needs of those with limited vision in the St Peter's Cross refurbishment by including low and inconspicuous seating, without tactile guide paving?

We have not failed and there are a number of particular measures incorporated into the design of the space to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities, for example:

- The use of high contrast materials. For example, black stone on light stone.
- The artwork etched into the bench tops creates a contrast both in texture and finish.
- Overhang of the bench top has been minimised to make sure that a blind person guiding with a stick can find the edge.
- The benches have contemporary arm rests to aid people getting from a seated to a standing position.
- The benches are graded to provide different heights due to the overall contouring of the space.
- The new space is less cluttered than the original making movement within the space easier, in particular for people with disabilities.
- The granite stone gives a better ride comfort than the previous materials.
- The levels in the new space are of a reduced gradient.
- The dark granite channels are added to give better guidance for partially sighted people.

r. Question from Councillor Care to Councillor Afzal

Adjusted for inflation, what is the cost of the current neighbourhood structure, including the additional neighbourhood staff and the cost of other staff time for attending the ward meetings they facilitate, compared to that based on the previous Area Panels?

The current neighbourhood structure in relation to staff costs is £706k, this includes 4 Neighbourhood Managers, 17 Neighbourhood Officers (3 are seconded from Derby Homes) and 50% of a Head of Service role.

It is not possible to put a value on partnership contributions in terms of other staff time, given the range and varying levels of partnership working across all 17 neighbourhoods.

The costs of Area Working, adjusted to current equivalent pay levels was £725k. This figure is based upon: 1 Head of Service, 3 Area Panel Managers, 4 Neighbourhood Co-ordinators, 3 Community Development Officers, 1 Community Development Manager, 1 Communications Officer, 1 Analyst Post and 1 Administrator.

In addition to the costs of Area Working set out above there were additional costs at that time for Neighbourhood Co-ordinators, Anti-social Behaviour Officers, Community Development Officers and Community Safety Officers. The activities carried out by these staff are now covered by the front-line Neighbourhood Officers at considerably less cost.

s. Question from Councillor Ashburner to Councillor Rawson

Is it expected that the demolition of the Spot toilets will force customers out of the St Peter's Street shops into the INTU centre?

The INTU centre has safe, attractive and accessible toilets. Indeed, the accessible toilets have received very positive press and media coverage. It is not intended that people will be forced away from St Peter's Street as a result of the toilet closure, indeed the St Peter's Quarter BID have supported the proposals for The Spot throughout the development of the project.