



Council Meeting
Wednesday 17 January 2024

Public and Councillor Questions
and Responses



Derby City Council

COUNCIL – 17 January 2024
PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

	Questioner	Respondent	Subject
Public Questions			
A	Vanessa Boon	Councillor Hezelgrave	Betting shops
B	Geoffrey Marshall	Councillor Hezelgrave	Settlement of Ukrainian refugees
C	Simon Bacon	Councillor Swan	Drain and gully clearance
D	Vanessa Boon	Councillor Shanker	Council Tax arrears
E	Simon Bacon	Councillor Shanker	Sinfin Waste Treatment Plant
Councillor Questions			
F	Councillor Evans	Councillor Dhindsa	Accessible play equipment
G	Councillor Kus	Councillor Dhindsa	Compactor days

Public Questions

a. Question from Vanessa Boon to Councillor Hezelgrave

With the Council's pledge to adopt the Socio-Economic Duty in mind, what is being done to address the high number of betting shops that have been allowed to target and profit from hardship, desperation and gambling addiction risks in the poorest areas of Derby?

To use a property as a betting shop needs planning permission and this will be assessed against the planning policies in the local plan where every case is treated on its own planning merits.

Our Public Health and Community Safety teams are undertaking work focusing on the harm caused by gambling and how it can be addressed. This will include looking at the patterns of inequality in harm caused by gambling and alcohol, the density of betting shop premises and location in Derby's more deprived areas. Findings will be reported through to the Health and Wellbeing Board later in 2024.

Derbyshire Healthcare Foundation Trust provide a regional gambling harms service and where relevant we refer and signpost citizens towards this service - <https://www.eastmidlandsgambling.nhs.uk/>.

b. Question from Geoffrey Marshall to Cllr Hezelgrave

How many refugees from the war in Ukraine have been helped to settle in our 'City of Sanctuary'?

Following the outbreak of the war, we welcomed our first Ukrainian guests in April 2022.

Since that date, we have welcomed 224 individuals in 105 households.

c. Question from Simon Bacon to Councillor Swan

Noting the high levels of rainfall and localised flooding on the city road network can you please tell me:

- a) How many drains (gullies) the council is responsible for in the city?**
- b) How many drain (gully) cleaning lorries the city council uses in the city?**
- c) How often each drain (gully) in the city is expected to be cleaned?**

a) Number of gullies – 43,244

b) Number of gully trucks – 1

c) Cleansing frequencies are either every 12, 24, 26 or 48 months. All gullies have been risked assessed and this gives us the recommended frequency. Gullies may be cleaned between routine cleans in response to enquiries or inspections.

d. Question from Vanessa Boon to Councillor Shanker

Is the high number of households in debt to the Council a sign that Council Tax is too high for the lowest-income homes to keep up and could relief be extended to more people to protect from debt and vulnerabilities including eviction risks?

The Government makes assumptions in its funding allocations to local government that councils will maximise Council Tax. As Revenue Support Grant continues to reduce, the Council received £75.795m in 2013/14 compared to £15.8m in 2024/25, there is a greater reliance for local government on local taxation.

Council Tax arrears are not increasing. At the end of December 2023, we had collected 79.74%, which is an increase of 0.11% on last year's collection rates.

The Council offers two schemes to support the payment of Council Tax:

- The Council Tax Support Scheme provides assistance of up to 70%.
- The Council Tax Hardship Scheme is part of the Single Discretionary Award Policy which also includes local assistance and discretionary housing payments. This scheme is for people in receipt of Council Tax Support with a continued demonstration of hardship.

e. Question from Simon Bacon to Cllr Shanker

The Deputy Leader of Derbyshire County Council Cllr Simon Spencer, the city council's partner council in the Derby and Derbyshire waste disposal contract, in an interview in November on BBC Radio Derby made various claims about the Sinfen Lane incineration plant project including the claim that it is his intention that the plant will reopen, that it will process waste in the most environmental way and deliver the services originally expected of it. When challenged via email by myself Cllr Spencer told me I should ask the Leader of Derby City Council about his comments - so Councillor Shanker what are your views on Cllr Spencer's comments in his Radio Derby interview?

My view remains unchanged as I also confirmed on Radio Derby about a week after Councillor Spencer's interview.

Member Questions

f. Question from Councillor Evans to Councillor Dhindsa

Recently a local resident to Alvaston offered to pay for a new disabled swing for Alvaston Park, the park his disabled daughter loves to attend. The resident was inspired by the new disabled toilets the council installed on the park which has given his daughter greater freedom to visit the park. He was planning on purchasing this state-of-art swing for their garden but thought if it were installed in his daughter's favourite park all her disabled friends could use it allowing more people less able than others to play together.

Unfortunately, the Council decided that it was not suitable in Alvaston Park and wanted it in Markeaton Park on the basis that Markeaton is fully staffed and Alvaston is not. The local resident has decided to go back to plan A and install it in his garden.

It is not often the Council is given tens of thousands of pounds to aid enhancements. Do you fully support this decision?

It is important to assure fellow members that the Council hasn't declined tens of thousands of pounds. My understanding is that the very kind offer was for the purchase of an accessible swing for an adult, which would cost around £10,000. The Council would need to fund the installation, which would be approximately £6,000.

The offer was very carefully considered by officers, fellow ward councillors and friends of the park. It was felt that the equipment needed to be where there were staff to assist and ensure its safe operation and use. Markeaton Park is the only park where we can guarantee that sort of support.

I agree that this is unfortunate, but practical considerations were needed. I am committed to improving the accessibility of Alvaston Park play area and have asked officers to develop plans with any appropriate funding that is available.

g. Question from Councillor Kus to Councillor Dhindsa

Will Compactor Days be regularly available again for Neighbourhood Boards to organise?

Compactor days are not available for neighbourhood Boards to book, they ceased following reduction of the budget in 2020.

In December 2023, the Council Cabinet considered options to help residents manage their waste and took the decision to implement two free weeks of bulky waste collections per year (to be delivered in spring and autumn), supported by opening up of the booking system at the HWRC on Sundays from April 2024.