



Council Meeting  
Wednesday 22 November 2023

Public and Councillor Questions  
and Responses



Derby City Council



**COUNCIL – 22 November 2023**  
**PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

	Questioner	Respondent	Subject
<b>Public Questions</b>			
<b>A</b>	Kelechi Chioba	Cllr Martin	Care charges for disabled people
<b>B</b>	Derek Gould	Cllr Dhindsa	Waste disposal
<b>C</b>	Simon Bacon	Cllr Dhindsa	Maintenance of highways and pavements
<b>D</b>	Ruth Jackson	Cllr Hezelgrave	Child poverty and hunger
<b>E</b>	Eve Sacker	Cllr Hezelgrave	Respect between communities
<b>F</b>	Vanessa Boon	Cllr Martin	Funeral Poverty
<b>G</b>	Marios Doucas	Cllr Hezelgrave	Access to food banks
<b>H</b>	Emma Jones (i)	Cllr Shanker	Ethical debt policy
	Vanessa Boon (ii)		
<b>I</b>	Mair Bain	Cllr S Khan	Great British insulation scheme
<b>J</b>	Pip Nayer	Cllr Martin	Access to NHS dentistry
<b>K</b>	Kelechi Chioba	Cllr Hezelgrave	Race and disability discrimination
<b>L</b>	Derek Gould	Cllr S Khan	Air quality monitoring
<b>M</b>	Simon Bacon	Cllr Dhindsa	Contamination from bins on streets
<b>N</b>	Emma Jones	Cllr Hezelgrave	Hate crime
<b>O</b>	Mair Bain	Cllr Swan	Flooding and the climate emergency
<b>Councillor Questions</b>			
<b>P</b>	Cllr J Wright	Cllr Shanker	Ethical leadership
<b>Q</b>	Cllr Hassall	Cllr Shanker	Sister City relationship
<b>R</b>	Cllr Pandey	Cllr Dhindsa	Free bulky waste collection
<b>S</b>	Cllr Eyre	Cllr Dhindsa	Neighbourhood Board funding
<b>T</b>	Cllr Mulhall	Cllr Hezelgrave	Blue Badge backlog
<b>U</b>	Cllr Potter	Cllr Hezelgrave	Removal of disabled parking spaces
<b>V</b>	Cllr Smale	Cllr Swan	Spondon Flyer
<b>W</b>	Cllr Pearce	Cllr Dhindsa	Cabinet Member Meeting
<b>X</b>	Cllr Lonsdale	Cllr Hezelgrave	Community cohesion
<b>Y</b>	Cllr M Holmes	Cllr Swan	Sustainable transport and housing growth
<b>Z</b>	Cllr Care	Cllr Dhindsa	Footpaths in parks
<b>AA</b>	Cllr Eyre	Cllr Dhindsa	City centre pigeons

<b>BB</b>	Cllr Mulhall	Cllr Dhindsa	City centre anti-social behaviour
<b>CC</b>	Cllr Smale	Cllr S Khan	Spondon Woodside development
<b>DD</b>	Cllr Lonsdale	Cllr Dhindsa	Food waste
<b>EE</b>	Cllr Care	Cllr Hezelgrave	Highways hazard reporting
<b>FF</b>	Cllr Eyre	Cllr Dhindsa	Brown bin collections
<b>GG</b>	Cllr Smale	Cllr Whitby	Children's services focused visits
<b>HH</b>	Cllr Lonsdale	Cllr Hezelgrave	Support for asylum seekers
<b>II</b>	Cllr Smale	Cllr Shanker	Vacancy control

# Public Questions



**a) Question from Kelechi Chioba to Councillor Martin**

**The care charges on disabled people are too high leaving so many disabled people stop their care package and be in the hands of abusers; also some are being compelled to go into care homes because their support are too high; in Derby what are you doing to address this situation?**

Care charges for disabled people are determined on an individual basis in accordance with national regulations. These regulations are adopted in the Derby City Council Fairer Charging policy. People undergo a financial assessment to determine their contribution towards the cost of their care. People rarely pay the full cost of care and are allowed to keep income which they need to meet their living expenses in the community. The Council recognises the financial pressure on households during the cost- of-living crisis. However, allowances for people have increased to allow them to keep more of their income to meet their rising living costs. These allowances are reviewed annually. Any concerns regarding abuse should be reported to the Safeguarding Teams.

**b) Question from Derek Gould to Councillor Dhindsa**

**What other methods does Derby City Council use other than landfill and recycling to dispose of waste collected by the Council?**

Recycling, composting and reuse are our preferred methods of managing waste.

Landfill is least desirable and not heavily relied upon. Relatively few tonnes are disposed of at landfill.

Instead, most black bin waste is disposed of at Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities, where value is recovered from the waste. Benefits include the production of energy, as well as the recovery of materials, and the use of by-products, for recycling.

Sometimes waste will be processed before going on to EfW to produce Refuse Derived Fuel. This presents another opportunity to extract recyclate.



**c) Question from Simon Bacon to Councillor Dhindsa**

**What action moving forwards will the Council be carrying out to maintain highways and pavements in relation to the growth of dense weeds in 2024, as in 2023 many streets in the Normanton ward look to have been rewilded which while of benefit to nature gathers detritus and leads to long term pavement and highway damage?**

Our teams work in line with a weed control strategy that recognises the issue you raise. It is important to control weeds appropriately because of the damage to infrastructure that could happen if we don't.

Street spraying and sweeping of weeds is predominantly motorised. This means that we are reliant on the street being free of vehicles and this is a challenge.

To try and help our grounds maintenance and locality teams, we are working to coordinate a deep clean next spring. This will target those streets that are most badly affected.

#### **d) Question from Ruth Jackson to Councillor Hezelgrave**

**I know Derby City Council is struggling with finances at the moment but I'm very concerned about children coming to school hungry and also in school holidays. They can't learn properly or focus on lessons if they aren't getting a hot nutritious meal every day. These children are going to bed hungry and waking up hungry. What do you think Derby City Council can do to help? It's not just families claiming benefits, but working families on low wages who are struggling with the rising cost of everyday living.**

We recognise the devastating impact that the rising cost of living is having on many families in Derby.

The Council is taking a partnership approach to supporting local people through a Cost of Living Coordination Group which meets monthly to implement our Cost of Living Strategy and monitor its impact.

There are a range of interventions in place to support communities across the city including:

- We've put together lots of useful information and advice on the Community Action Derby website ([www.communityactionderby.org.uk/crisis-support/help-with-the-cost-of-living](http://www.communityactionderby.org.uk/crisis-support/help-with-the-cost-of-living)) which provides help with rising costs including housing and rental support, food, clothing, toiletries and furniture needs, help paying bills, debt support, how to increase income and health and wellbeing. In addition to information available on the website, local residents can also call Community Action on 01332 346266 to ask for help, or email at [support@communityactionderby.org.uk](mailto:support@communityactionderby.org.uk). For deaf people and hard of hearing people there is a textphone - 07490 341584 and a BSL Signing service.
- A warm welcome hub network covering 46 locations across Derby provides a warm welcome, along with a hot drink and a meal, and other support to help with welfare and wellbeing. This includes the Better Together Café at the Council House and Community Café at St Philips which provides free meals to anyone who is struggling and hungry.
- The Food4Thought Alliance supports people in Derby who are experiencing food poverty, through food provision, signposting, education and advice.
- There are also targeted initiatives in place for some essential goods for example, heated blankets, air fryers, coats, uniforms etc.

- There are a range of grants targeted towards struggling families, including the Household Support Fund (which includes separate applications for support with energy bills and free school meal vouchers to assist with a child's food cost during holiday periods) and the Holiday Activity Fund. There are also benefits available for low income households such as Council Tax Subsidy, Discretionary Housing Payments and Local Assistance Scheme. For more information, please see the Council's welfare team - [www.derby.gov.uk/advice-and-benefits/welfare-rights-and-financial-advice/welfare-rights-advice/](http://www.derby.gov.uk/advice-and-benefits/welfare-rights-and-financial-advice/welfare-rights-advice/)

Ultimately, the Council is committed to tackle some of the underlying issues that are affecting children and families across the city. The Derby Poverty Commission has suggested a focus on child poverty which will be taken forward by the Resilience Board over the next few months, working with public, private and community and voluntary sector partners. This will include looking at short, medium and long term solutions to ensure that no child goes hungry in Derby.

**e) Question from Eve Sacker to Councillor Hezelgrave**

**Events in other countries can divide communities and cause tensions in the UK. Councillors in Nottingham promptly responded to terrorist atrocities in Israel and the subsequent conflict with calls for community cohesion. Derby has a small Jewish community including some Israeli families, as well as Palestinian families and Muslims who are all carrying pain from these events. How is the Council going to show similar leadership to Nottingham by calling for mutual respect, moderation and the protection of relationships between communities in the city?**

Derby is a city only strengthened by its rich diversity; a community made up of people with different backgrounds, faiths and life experiences. Whatever our backgrounds, I'm sure we can all agree that these recent events are deeply upsetting, and that we are united in condemning all acts of terror, wherever they occur.

I wish to reassure you that we are actively engaging with community representatives and partners to listen, and to support. This includes undertaking community risk assessments. We know that not all of those people affected by recent events will want to have formal conversations with the Council, so we continue to have regular contact with the Multi Faith Centre to feedback any concerns and needs that arise.

The Multi Faith Centre is a key partner in this space, and we know that they are working to agree a statement on behalf of the city's faith communities and partners; a statement encouraging everyone to join the hard but vital work of ensuring that strongly held sympathies and concerns across all our communities do not spill over into racial or religious persecution or intimidation, a message which the Council has supported.

As a Council we are continuously in contact with communities and partners, are also actively reviewing our Equality objectives, which will include a specific focus on cohesion between our communities. Through our officers, there will be renewed discussion with groups and organisations working in this arena to help us achieve that.

Work is going on to make the Faith Alliance even more inclusive of the many faith communities and congregations in our city, with new arrivals from abroad maybe bringing new faiths and spiritual traditions which are novel to the city. We would actively encourage all faith groups, established or otherwise, and regardless of the size of affiliation, to contact the Multi Faith Centre with a view to

finding out how they can join the Faith Alliance. This can only further and strengthen mutual understanding of all faiths and further strengthen mutual respect and relationships between communities in our city.

**f) Question from Vanessa Boon to Councillor Martin**

**What steps has the Council taken to address issues raised by the Funeral Poverty Alliance including local authority shortfalls in fulfilling public health funeral duties? (see report and public campaigns via <https://quakersocialaction.org.uk/we-can-help/helping-funerals/down-earth/funeral-poverty>)**

The Council's website holds information about Public Health funerals which can be found via the following link:

<https://www.derby.gov.uk/trading-standards-environmental-health/environmental-health/environmental-protection/public-health-funerals/>

Further information about Bereavement Services and support available can be found on this further link:

<https://www.derby.gov.uk/community-and-living/deaths-funerals-cremations/>

The Council has a statutory duty to carry out public health funerals where necessary and these can be arranged via our Environmental Health Team who will provide the family of the deceased with all of the information required, including where they can access grants via the DWP.

The Council has introduced an early morning lower cost cremation option to enable families to keep the cost of funerals down should they need and also provide information to families for funeral services who offer payment plans.

Bereavement Services have engaged with Derby Poverty Truth Commission to listen to communities and work together to provide support.

**g) Question from Marios Doucas to Councillor Hezelgrave**

**Food banks can provide a temporary lifeline to many, but usually a referral must be made to access them, for example by a faith group or a charitable organisation. Yet the barriers are plenty: what about those who practise no faith? Or don't attend charitable groups? Or who simply feel embarrassed? Or who live far away from such places? Can the Council help overcome any of such barriers and does it use non stigmatising language when discussing food banks?**

The Council is working closely with its partners to break down barriers when accessing essentials such as food and seeking help with the wider cost of living crisis.

The Derby Food 4 Thought Alliance supports people in Derby who are experiencing food poverty, through food provision, signposting, education and advice, irrespective of their faith or background, and without stigma or labelling.

The Council is committed to tackling the root cause of issues faced by Derby residents, including deprivation and poverty. We are working with partners to develop resilient solutions such as community shops / pantries which offer a more dignified model of enabling people, providing greater choice and a holistic package of support that's beyond just the simple transaction of getting a food parcel.

**h) Questions from Emma Jones (i) and Vanessa Boon (ii) to Councillor Shanker**

- (i) Will this Council adopt an ethical debt policy, as seen in other councils such as Swansea, Manchester, Haringey, Westminster and Middlesbrough, and end the dehumanising practice of utilising bailiffs to recover debts from the city's most vulnerable residents?**
- (ii) At the last Full Council meeting, in response to public questions, the Leader of the Council pledged to explore the idea of an Ethical Debt Policy with better ways to help people who fall behind on Council Tax and alternatives to the harmful use of bailiffs, as has been adopted by other Councils including Manchester, Westminster, Haringey, Swansea and Middlesbrough; given the urgency of debt vulnerabilities worsened by the cost of living crisis and with high child poverty in our city, what steps have been taken to turn the words into action for the people of Derby?**

A new Corporate Debt Management Policy is on the Forward Plan, and is due to be submitted and considered at Council Cabinet on 10 January 2024. The new Policy aims to promote and support proper and equitable debt management processes for all major sources of income owed to the Council.

The Policy has been written:

- To ensure that debts are managed consistently and in line with the relevant legislation, best practice, and ethical collection activities;
- To help customers repay sums owed in a sustainable way and avoid future arrears;
- To proactively support and encourage engagement with our customers;
- To treat customers fairly, ensure individuals' financial circumstances, where known, are considered on a case-by-case basis and take into account the specific needs of vulnerable customers;
- To ensure due regard is given to Children's Rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child in respect of the impact of debt management processes.



**i) Question from Mair Bain to Councillor S Khan**

**To help reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions, what has the Council done to promote the Great British insulation scheme where home insulation is free or cheap to Derby residents and especially landlords?**

The Great British Insulation Scheme was launched in September 2023. It can provide a range of insulation measures to households. The eligibility is based on the properties Energy Performance Certificate rating, the Council Tax Band and total household income.

Information on the scheme has been shared and promoted through the following channels:

- via an Energy Briefing to all elected Members
- to Community Action Derby to disseminate with the voluntary groups they support
- with internal Council services including the Welfare Reform Team and the Healthy Housing Hub in Strategic Housing
- when the Council attends a Warm Welcome Hub or similar event, information on the scheme is provided.

It should also be noted that the Council is doing a great deal of good work in this area. It has successfully secured funding through the Green Home Grant LAD phase 1 and 2 for public and private sector, Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund rounds 1 and 2 for public sector and will soon be working up a street-by-street scheme to better understand the retrofit opportunities for private sector housing in the Normanton area. All of this work is designed to reduce fuel poverty in the city, address the cost-of-living crisis and reduce carbon emissions.

**j) Question from Pip Nayer to Councillor Martin**

**NHS dentistry is almost unattainable in the city, leading to financial hardship, emergency medical treatment, dangerous DIY dentistry, avoidable tooth loss, and thousands of accumulated hours of severe pain for residents unable to access this essential medical care. What is the Council doing about this?**

Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) is responsible for commissioning NHS dental services within Derby. This includes primary care dental services ('high-street' dental practices), specialist (hospital) and community dental services. Local commissioning of NHS dental services is constrained within the limitations of the national dental contract which has been in place since 2006. Across the country, increasing numbers of dentists cite growing dissatisfaction with the NHS contract, choosing to reduce or stop providing NHS dental care in favour of private care as a result. A government report published in May 2023 acknowledges the public impacts from reduced access to NHS care from this shift, recognising that this is a national issue affecting all areas of the country (1). NHS England has recently published plans for supporting commissioners to improve access to NHS dentistry over the immediate and longer term (2). The issues around access to NHS dentistry have been discussed at the Council's scrutiny boards and committees this year, and an item on dentistry tabled for discussion at Derby City Council's Health and Wellbeing Board in January next year (3).

Local government has a responsibility to assess the health needs of their populations and deliver initiatives to improve oral health and reduce inequalities. Locally, this role is overseen by the joint Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council oral health steering group, comprising of a range of system partners including ICS dental commissioners, dental professionals, the community sector, and Healthwatch. In response to the challenges around NHS dental access, the Council has distributed toothbrushing packs to foodbanks and other venues, supporting vulnerable people and families and commissioned oral health training to our children's workforce. The steering group is also currently piloting delivery of mobile dental treatment to individuals who experience multiple deprivation and/or homelessness. This helps to support dental access for our most vulnerable groups in the city.

### **k) Question from Kelechi Chioba to Councillor Hezelgrave**

**In terms of cost of living being on the increase, it's hard for disabled asylum seekers to be able to survive living on asylum support considering their disability needs. What is Derby City Council doing about this given its Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate race and disability discrimination?**

Responsibility for providing support to individuals claiming asylum is governed by legislation. It is the responsibility of the Home Office to meet accommodation and support needs of asylum seekers. This can be in the form of accommodation, financial assistance and provision of food.

Our understanding is that asylum seekers can apply for an extra payment(s) to meet an essential living need that is not already adequately covered by the standard asylum support payments and cannot be met by any other source of support. The Home Office must decide that the need is essential and different from the needs of asylum seekers in general or that it is an essential need which is common to all asylum seekers, but which is more costly to meet because of the particular circumstances of the applicant. The request must be made via Migrant Help. Migrant Help is the point of contact for independent advice and guidance, eligibility advice and assistance in making applications for people seeking asylum in the UK.

Section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and paragraph 6 of the Immigration Rules specifies the welfare benefits that a person who is subject to immigration control will be excluded from claiming. This is referred to as 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF).

However, notwithstanding the NRPF status, there are several limited circumstances when the Council's duties and powers may be engaged under the Care Act 2014, in which event the Council may provide accommodation and financial support to adults with care and support needs who have no recourse to public funds. This is because 'care and support' is not classed as a 'public fund' for immigration purposes. Subject to being eligible for care and support, there is scope for the Council to provide:

- Care and support at home or in the community which could include equipment or assistive technology
- Accommodation in a care home or a care setting
- Information, advice and advocacy

Recognising the unique situation disabled asylum seekers may be in, I will commit to making representation to the Home Office and Government that this needs urgent review.

**I) Question from Derek Gould to Councillor S Khan**

**Why don't Derby City Council do pollution level checks in Derby, mostly Sinfen, Osmaston and Normanton?**

The term 'pollution' is wide-ranging and can mean a great many things. Principally, pollution is the introduction of harmful substances into the air, land or water. Pollutants can be natural, such as volcanic ash, or they can be created by human activity, such as waste, noise, odour or vehicle emissions.

The Council and partner agencies (especially the Environment Agency) are involved in monitoring a wide range of pollutants. This includes direct monitoring carried out by the Council, for example nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in the air (results published annually and on the Council website), through to indirect monitoring via regulations enforced by the Council and its partners, for example under the Environmental Permitting regime.

**m) Question from Simon Bacon to Councillor Dhindsa**

**The City Council claims it costs them £450,000 in contamination costs when handling the co-mingled dry recycling in the blue bins. Much of this contamination can be linked to bins left on streets by residents even when they have the ability to return them to their properties. How is the Council going to tackle this issue having consistently failed to get bins off streets in recent years? I speak from experience as a Normanton ward resident.**

All areas of the city produce some level of contamination. While bins on streets may be a relatively minor contributor in a few areas of the city, contamination is mostly experienced due to the householder putting the wrong things in the blue bin.

The Council's waste minimisation team supports residents with information on how to recycle and the council runs regular communications campaigns to support this.

Where bins are persistently left out on streets the Council has taken action to address this as part of wider community based clean up campaigns.

**n) Question from Emma Jones to Councillor Hezelgrave**

**What steps will the Council take to counteract rising hate crime levels towards the LGBTQ and BIPOC communities, particularly now as far-right actors are stirring up division and scapegoating both nationally and in Derby communities?**

The Community Safety Team actively monitors community tensions and the impact of local, national and international issues on our communities. We work with partners to engage with communities and community leaders to seek resolutions to issues.

We deliver several activities aimed at raising awareness of hate crimes and how to report them and access support services. We co-fund the Stop Hate UK third party reporting line for the city, providing a valuable mechanism for people to report hate crimes and access support.

We are involved annually with supporting a range of awareness raising activities to tackle hate crime and to build understanding, such as Hate Crime Awareness Week, pop-up events in community locations to raise awareness and signpost members of the community to support, working with partners on Refugee Week, and Show Racism the Red Card - working with Derby County Community Trust and Show Racism the Red Card to host an event for local schools.

Under the Prevent Duty, we will shortly be delivering awareness sessions for communities, parents and frontline staff on the extreme right wing. Increasing awareness, how to challenge and where to get advice and support.

Another area of activity is a school's programme - building resilience to online and real-world messages around hate and discrimination. We are also delivering a programme of grass roots work to understand community sentiment to help shape our responses.

Our response needs communities to work with us. Where a hate crime takes place, it should be reported to the police for a response and action.

**o) Question from Mair Bain to Councillor Swan**

**The recent disruptive, damaging and record breaking floods in Derby and Derbyshire were caused by extreme rainfall which was made more likely by human caused climate change. Why did the Council's news posts on the website around the floods not mention the links between increased heavy rainfall, record breaking flood levels and the climate emergency?**

The flooding on 20 October was unprecedented. The River Derwent reached its highest level in Derby since recording began in 1935. In fact, five of the top ten highest river levels recorded in the city have happened in the last five years. I am certainly comfortable to say that this is made more likely because of climate change.

During the flood, with three severe flood warnings in place, our statutory duty was to respond to the presenting emergency, with very limited resources we were focused on keeping people safe. Although, I would draw your attention to the Newsroom story, [Defending Derby from its river](#), published on 24 October, where Councillor Shanker said:

*“Again, I would like to thank all the Council teams who continue to work tirelessly to get Derby back up and running after the extreme flooding we saw last weekend. While my heart goes out to anyone who was affected – and we’ll be sharing information about support schemes as and when they become available – it is encouraging to see how well our flood defences have worked. We will continue to work to secure funding to protect our city against the effects of climate change, which is becoming a reality.”*



# Member Questions



**p) Question from Councillor J Wright to Councillor Shanker**

**Councillor Shanker, you led the disrespectful action against the office of the Mayor in May, in September you failed to challenge and subsequently sanction the demeaning statement to a fellow councillor by one of your group. Do you consider this ethical leadership?**

I don't agree with the statement you make in your question.

It's for the public of Derby to judge my leadership.

**q) Question from Councillor Hassall to Councillor Shanker**

**Does the Leader of the Council consider the continuation of the Sister City relationship between Derby and Hebron City put in place by this authority in 2014 to still be appropriate, given the current Hebron Mayors' association and subsequent conviction for murder for a gun attack in Hebron on Israeli settlers on 2 May 1980 where six people were killed and 16 wounded?**

Although the Council has not actively participated in its Sister City relationship with Hebron since 2014, the agreement remains significant for many residents and communities in Derby.

The agreement pledged to promote tolerance, respect and understanding between peoples, as well as encouraging cultural and educational exchanges. I'm unsure why anybody would disagree with those sentiments; I sincerely hope that no councillor is seeking to make political capital out of the human tragedy unfolding in the Middle East.

**r) Question from Councillor Pandey to Councillor Dhindsa**

**Can the Cabinet Member share with councillors the progress of a free bulky waste service in line with Labour's May 2023 Manifesto?**

A report is on the agenda for December Cabinet.

**s) Question from Councillor Eyre to Councillor Dhindsa**

**Can the Cabinet Member confirm whether any changes are planned in the upcoming budget regarding the amount of Neighbourhood Board funding available for each ward, for each year?**

There are no planned changes to Neighbourhood Board funding.

**t) Question from Councillor Mulhall to Councillor Hezelgrave**

**Can the Cabinet Member tell me when they expect the backlog of blue badge applications/renewals to be cleared?**

With the additional staff that have been transferred to the team and the improved processing in place, we calculate that the backlog will be cleared by mid-January 2024.

**u) Question from Councillor Potter to Councillor Hezelgrave**

**Many disabled people are concerned about the removal of disabled parking spaces in and around the city due to development work. Can we have assurances that these disabled spaces will be reinstated or increased after completion of the works?**

As you are aware, specific equalities impact assessments (EIA) are carried out for individual schemes. Our teams also work with the Access, Equality and Inclusion Hub to engage independent people, who have a range of access needs, as part of a formal consultation or as schemes are in development.

A good example is the scheme at the Spot where new blue badge spaces have been created on Gower Street providing level access. The Access Hub was instrumental in the addition of spaces for wheelchair accessible vehicles. These improvements create a smoother and safer transfer than previous provision in the area.



**v) Question from Councillor Smale to Councillor Swan**

**Can the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation make a commitment to Spondon Residents that any additional money from BSIP funding will be allocated to Spondon to help reinstate the Spondon Flyer?**

At present there is limited funding available for the direct financial support of our bus services and it is not possible to solve every issue in all parts of the city. Our Bus Partnership is, however, being asked and is working on a review of our network. One of the aims is to establish which routes could be potentially funded, with a view to rebuilding the local bus network for the benefit of communities.

I am fully aware of the connectivity concerns in Spondon, and other wards such as Mackworth, where service reductions have left communities underserved. I intend to make these areas a high priority on the Bus Partnership agenda.

**w) Question from Councillor Pearce to Councillor Dhindsa**

**On Wednesday 15th November, there was a scheduled Cabinet Member Meeting to discuss the Bereavement Services Fees & Charges. Can the Cabinet Member give an explanation as to why this didn't take place please?**

A verbal response will be given.

**x) Question from Councillor Lonsdale to Councillor Hezelgrave**

**With international events causing tensions in our community, has Derby City Council any plans to organise opportunities for all communities to come together and show their support for each other? Events such as a vigil for peace for example.**

We are currently in discussion with the Multi Faith Centre and plans for an interfaith Prayer Vigil to bring all communities together.

The date, time and location need to be agreed and we will share this widely once confirmed.

**y) Question from Councillor M Holmes to Councillor Swan**

**When considering housing growth in the Derby Urban Area, how important is the delivery and support of sustainable transport options; cycling, walking and public transport?**

As a member of the Planning Control Committee, you know that each planning application must be considered against the criteria of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets Government policy in relation to planning and of course transport is an important part of that.

Any significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable. The NPPF says that transport issues should be considered so that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued.

As you are aware, sites are considered on their individual merit and all aspects are weighed in the balance to assess the overall impact and benefits of each scheme. Highways is only one aspect and planners and the Planning Committee must take into consideration issues such as the impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network.

**z) Question from Councillor Care to Councillor Dhindsa**

**Some paths through parks and open spaces are important for people commuting on foot or by bicycle. Some are also signed as part of the Sustrans national network. What is the Council's policy about keeping these safe and accessible (e.g. clear of leaves and mud) even if they aren't adopted highway?**

The network of paths used for commuting which go through our Council parks and open spaces is very extensive. I agree that many can get muddy at this time of year but our Grounds Maintenance Team carry out regular works to keep these routes accessible.

**aa) Question from Councillor Eyre to Councillor Dhindsa**

**Does the Council have any plans to take steps to reduce the number of pigeons in the City, particularly the city centre, in light of the damage they have caused, most recently to the Guildhall clock?**

The Guildhall clock stopped working due to a fault with the motor and has now been repaired.

However, we were not able to undertake the repairs until pigeon guano had been removed, as it is classified as hazardous waste.

Where guano build up occurs on buildings, it causes damage to surfaces; pigeon mitigation measures are installed on buildings where there are known pigeon colonies, to prevent roosting and reduce guano build up for example on the Council House and the Quad.

There are no specific plans in place to reduce the number of pigeons in the City Centre.

The Council is seeking to reduce the impact of pigeons particularly around the River Gardens by discouraging the leaving of food for birds which can attract both pigeons and rats.

**bb) Question from Councillor Mulhall to Councillor Dhindsa**

**St Peter's Street is fast becoming a no go zone in Derby city centre, with increasing reports of anti-social behaviour, substance abuse and a growing number of homeless people. What measures will the Cabinet Member take to ensure that St Peter's Street is a pleasant and above all safe place for the residents of Derby to enjoy?**

We are working with partners on a collaborative and cohesive response to issues in the St Peters Street area, including collaborative patrol strategies, increased enforcement action, improvements to CCTV, support for individuals and improvements to the street scene.

A new City Centre Summit has been established and is attended by a range of partners including Derbyshire Constabulary, the Business Crime Reduction Partnership, Business Improvement Districts, Probation Service, and Public Health. Its aim is to deal with community safety issues which affect the city centre.

The City Centre Summit will draw on the strengths of working in partnership to improve issues, whether they are a result of the actions of individuals or associated with particular places.

**cc) Question from Councillor Smale to Councillor S Khan**

**Has Derby City Council had any engagement from Erewash Borough Council in both the Planning Department and Traffic and Transportation Department regarding Spondon Woodside that is currently going through the planning process and if so, what has been discussed?**

The Council has responded to the planning consultation made by Erewash Borough Council on this site. Our letter dated 16 November raises several points of concern and I would be happy to supply a copy to Councillor Smale.



**dd) Question from Councillor Lonsdale to Councillor Dhindsa**

**With brown bins going to monthly collection what does the Council suggest residents do with food waste which would otherwise go in the brown bin?**

Reducing the frequency of brown bin collections to monthly over the winter was a change introduced in the 2022/23 budget. Customers will receive just four fewer collections.

Organic waste tonnages significantly reduce over the winter period, making a monthly collection a much more efficient option. The schedule has been organised so that brown bins are collected the fortnight following the festive period.

The Love Food Hate Waste campaign has lots of ideas on how to reduce food waste in the first instance, which is a much better option for the environment and our finances. Alternatively fruit and vegetable waste can be home composted. More information is available in the reducing waste section of the council's website.

**ee) Question from Councillor Care to Councillor Hezelgrave**

**What is the route for members of the public to report a highways hazard when the switchboard is closed? My attempts to make Darcie understand or get past Darcie on Saturday were futile. Do we have to bother the Police to report urgent issues to the Council at weekends? If so, how should the public know this?**

Highways issues can be reported through our website at any time of day, although Darcie should route urgent, out of hours highway concerns. We are aware, however, from feedback that there are some issues with call routing out of hours and this is being addressed by the Highways and Digital Teams.

**ff) Question from Councillor Eyre to Councillor Dhindsa**

**Given the changes to the brown bin collection service over the winter months, what will the refuse collection teams be doing on the week that brown bins are not being collected?**

This change was made as part of the 2022/23 budget approved by the Cabinet at the time.

The savings put forward will enable the council to reduce agency usage and enable permanent waste collection staff to complete the essential programme of health and safety and mandatory CPC training.

**gg) Question from Councillor Smale to Councillor Whitby**

**Derby City Council's Children's Services have had a series of "Focus Visits". Can the Cabinet Member give updates on the inspection and thoughts on how they proceeded?**

As part of Ofsted's Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework every local authority receives a four yearly judgement inspection with the inspectorate undertaking annual Focused Visits in between the main judgement inspection. Derby's judgement inspection was undertaken in March 2022 where the overall judgement for Derby's children's services was rated as 'outstanding'.

On 25 and 26 October Ofsted carried out its first Focused Visit since the last judgement inspection. Focused visits concentrate on an area of anticipated good practice or possible concern. The focus of the visit was on the quality and impact of Child Protection and Child in Need Plans.

The letter summarising the outcome of the Focused Visit is published on 29 November. Some key observations noted by Ofsted during their visit to Derby included:

- Derby knows itself well, and leaders and managers have a strong oversight of practice and experiences for children and young people
- Children and young people are receiving support at the most appropriate threshold for them
- Visits are timely, and direct work is making sure that we capture the voices of young people, with their wishes and feelings shaping plans
- Children and young people benefit, and are making progress, because of the support that they are receiving
- Professionals across all Early Help and Children's Social Care services work innovatively and creatively to compliment social work practices, supporting families to better outcomes
- There is a learning culture in Derby, and professional development, alongside wellbeing is a priority.

**hh) Question from Councillor Lonsdale to Councillor Hezelgrave**

**With the recent decision by the government to stop using hotels to house asylum seekers. What is the Council doing to make sure that all asylum seekers resident in Derby are being housed appropriately and are being supported through the process?**

We have not received notification that the hotels in the city are being closed and expect their use will continue for some time.

At the point that they are closed, it will be the responsibility of the Home Office to secure alternative accommodation for those still awaiting a decision on their asylum claims. The accommodation service for asylum seekers is contracted to Serco and the advice and support element, to Migrant Help. Both contracts are held by the Home Office.

Those who are granted leave to remain are supported to contact Housing Options to discuss their housing needs and are provided this service as all residents are entitled to.

**ii) Question from Councillor Smale to Councillor Shanker**

**Can the Leader confirm how many vacant jobs has been created since the freeze on recruitments was announced by the current administration, and how many total vacant posts there is across all departments?**

No recruitment freeze has been initiated by my administration.