



Council Meeting  
Wednesday 25 November 2020

Public and Councillor Questions  
and Responses



Derby City Council

**COUNCIL – 25 November 2020**  
**PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

|                             | Questioner            | Respondent     | Subject  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|--|
| <b>Public Questions</b>     |                       |                |  |
| <b>A</b>                    | Nathalie Hollingworth | Cllr Webb      | Coronavirus measures in schools and public spaces  |
| <b>B</b>                    | Liz James             | Cllr Poulter   | NHS primary care patients in Sinfen                |
| <b>C</b>                    | Alison Martin         | Cllr M Holmes  | Markeaton Park replacement trees                   |
| <b>D</b>                    | Maggie Hird           | Cllr Williams  | Access to online learning                          |
| <b>E</b>                    | Emily Lonsdale        | Cllr Williams  | Free school meals                                  |
| <b>F</b>                    | Nathalie Hollingworth | Cllr Webb      | Availability of Covid-19 & blood tests at chemists |
| <b>G</b>                    | Emily Lonsdale        | Cllr Williams  | IT equipment for disadvantaged students            |
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| <b>I</b>                    | Cllr Peatfield        | Cllr M Holmes  | Highways England A38 scheme                        |
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| <b>M</b>                    | Cllr P Pegg           | Cllr Smale     | Refuse amenity site                                |
| <b>N</b>                    | Cllr Shanker          | Cllr Barker    | Market Hall refurbishment                          |
| <b>O</b>                    | Cllr Dhindsa          | Cllr Webb      | Vaccination roll-out                               |
| <b>P</b>                    | Cllr Care             | Cllr M Holmes  | Emergency Active Travel Tranche 2 funding          |
| <b>Q</b>                    | Cllr Repton           | Cllr Webb      | Mass testing in Derby for Covid-19                 |
| <b>R</b>                    | Cllr Shanker          | Cllr Holmes    | Assembly Rooms                                     |
| <b>S</b>                    | Cllr Dhindsa          | Cllr Webb      | Covid-19 Track & Trace                             |
| <b>T</b>                    | Cllr Hezelgrave       | Cllr Williams  | Youth unemployment                                 |
| <b>U</b>                    | Cllr Peatfield        | Cllr Smale`    | Sinfen waste plant                                 |
| <b>V</b>                    | Cllr Shanker          | Cllr Roulstone | Consultant and contractor costs                    |

# Public Questions

**a) Question from Natalie Hollingworth to Councillor Webb**

**Would the Council locally legislate for regular natural (not artificial) air ventilation of classrooms and indeed all homes as a remedy against Covid-19 as science shows this to be effective? And, also, “don’t talk” signs and “lower your voice” signs in shops or “talking spreads the virus” especially in shops because shop assistants encourage shopper to remove their masks so that they can hear them talk?**

Good ventilation is important in indoor settings to help to reduce the spread of coronavirus. As a Council we would not legislate but would promote the guidance available from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on ‘air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus pandemic’, and the advice for individuals on the Gov.UK website. The HSE recommend good ventilation through the opening of windows where possible and the use of fans to reduce stagnation of air. They describe the risk of air conditioning spreading coronavirus in the workplace as extremely low as long as there is an adequate supply of fresh air and ventilation.

All residents are advised to wear a face covering in shops unless they have a ‘reasonable excuse’ as defined by the law. There is a balance to be struck between reducing the potential for spread of the virus and effective communication, particularly for individuals with a physical or mental illness, impairment or disability, including where lip reading may be needed. This includes the wearing of face coverings and the loudness of our speech. It is important that we all work within these regulations but also understand that there are some who struggle to do so and that this is recognised in law.

**b) Question from Liz James to Councillor Poulter**

**It has emerged that NHS primary care patients in Sinfín were left with no access to face-to-face GP appointments during the early part of the Covid-19 crisis.**

**Whilst I understand that this is now being addressed, I would like to ask how this was allowed to happen, thereby disadvantaging patients who were less able to afford to travel to alternative surgeries while other areas of the city were not affected in the same way.**

**Can the Health and Wellbeing Board reassure the citizens of Derby that this situation will not be repeated? Will the Health and Wellbeing Board please ask challenging questions of the Clinical Commissioning Group and ensure that all citizens of Derby are treated equitably in these difficult times?**

NHS Derby and Derby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is responsible for managing the primary care contract on behalf of NHS England and Improvement. Throughout the pandemic, our highest priority has been the safety and wellbeing of our patients and also our staff as the ability to deliver services depends on having the required number of staff available to provide them safely. Practices have undertaken risk assessments and measures have been put in place to ensure patients and staff are safe but this can be more complex in some scenarios, particularly where there are a number of different services sharing one site. Regrettably, a combination of factors early in the pandemic resulted in the Sinfín branch site being temporarily closed. The single most important factor was that a large proportion of staff had to self-isolate and the practice had to act quickly to protect the safety of patients and staff and to prevent the spread of infection.

The CCG endorsed this decision in conjunction with an assurance that proactive steps would be taken to ensure that patients were fully supported during the unavoidable period of closure. The support provided has included home visits where required, face-to-face appointments made available at the Hollybrook practice, telephone and online support offered throughout, prescriptions made available for collection from a nearby pharmacy, and patient sick notes posted out where appropriate. It is recognised that this will have been difficult for some patients and both the CCG and the practice apologise for any inconvenience caused as a result of this unavoidable situation but the safety of patients and

staff is of paramount importance at all times.

The Sinfin branch site has continued to be staffed by clinicians and vulnerable staff who must isolate or shield because the site layout means they have been able to work safely in separate areas but the restrictions have made it difficult to make the site safe, compliant and suitable for patient use. Work with other site partners has continued and protocols have now been developed to ensure that the practice meets all requirements regarding social distancing and other factors and that everything has been done to make it as safe as possible. The solution includes a staff member with responsibility for managing the locked door and safe queue management process which is critical in patient safety terms. As a result, the practice will be recommencing face to face appointments on 23rd November 2020 and this will include the delivery of flu vaccinations on site.

The CCG is keen to provide an assurance that every effort will continue to be made to deliver primary care services from the usual GP practice sites whilst recognising that we are living in unprecedented times which means that difficult decisions have to be made on occasions.

**c) Question from Alison Martin to Councillor M Holmes**

**Councillor Holmes has committed to planting trees to replace those cut down during the A38 works. Can Cllr Holmes tell us where those replacement trees will be planted?**

The A38 junction improvement works are being led by Highways England. The formal examination from the National Planning Inspectorate concluded over the summer and their Recommendation Report was submitted to the Secretary of State on 8 October. The Secretary of State has three months to issue their decision. That decision and the Recommendations Report will be published on the Inspectorate website:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/east-midlands/a38-derby-junctions/>

If approved, Highways England will be refining and working through their detailed designs for the scheme which will include tree planting.

**d) Question from Maggie Hird to Councillor Williams**

**What provisions are in place to ensure that children and young people without home broadband are able to access remote learning online, when isolating at home or unable to attend school?**

Clearly the best place for children and young people to be is in school and this has consistently been the Government's position since the start of the new school year. However, a great deal has been and continues to be done to try and ensure that as many children and young people as possible are able to access remote learning online when isolating at home or unable to attend school.

Government information and guidance has been summarised and provided to school leaders as soon as it is available; this includes links to training materials and webinars for school leaders and teachers to access to see good practice.

In the first lockdown, a limited number of laptops were provided to the Council and to Multi-Academy Trusts for disadvantaged Year 10 pupils. The Council also had a number to be allocated to children and young people with a social worker and the care leavers service. A partnership working group comprising social care, education and skills and the virtual school who work with children in care have been working to identify eligible children, check safeguarding implications and allocate laptops for their use. This work is nearing completion.

We quickly realised that the number of laptops was not enough, particularly for the disadvantaged students, and so these have been supplemented from schools themselves and through use of Bursaries and Pupil Premium Plus. This means that more children and young people have gained access. Linked to these laptops, there has been some provision of dongles.

It's also worth noting that where school leaders are knowledgeable about the connectivity of their families, they have made sure that paper-based learning is also available.



**e) Question from Emily Lonsdale to Councillor Williams**

**How many free school meals did the Council provide for eligible school children in Derby during the half term holiday?**

The Council facilitated meals for 127 children during the half term holiday through our partnership with Food4Thought.

**f) Question from Nathalie Hollingworth to Councillor Webb**

**Would the Council arrange for chemists (by whatever means) to be able to take Covid-19 and other blood tests from local residents because the reduced service by GPs is overwhelmed and not within walking distance for many without cars and with winter arriving fast demand will increase?**

**Local GPs would welcome this move as progressive but are not of the character to petition. (It could operate during the rest of the pandemic however many years this could be?)**

COVID-19 tests for current infection are throat and nose swabs. These are processed through the national testing programme run by the Department of Health and Social Care and we have three walk-through sites to deliver this in the City, along with the drive through site at Toyota. These walk-through sites have been specifically chosen to increase access for those areas of the city with the lowest levels of car ownership. We monitor use and capacity of these sites and have plenty of capacity to meet the current and increased winter demand. GPs do not currently undertake COVID-19 tests in practice. They are able to undertake these as appropriate through their 'red hubs'- services available for those with COVID symptoms who need to be seen face to face.

Currently blood tests are only used as part of the national survey for Coronavirus antibodies. Local blood testing services for other purposes are contracted through the NHS. They review the demand and provision and commission providers directly to deliver this. Although we are asked for input and opinion when these contracts come up for renewal, this is not within the remit of the Council.

**g) Question from Emily Lonsdale to Councillor Williams**

**What progress has been made with providing Laptops and appropriate IT equipment to students who are disadvantaged, as promised by the Government?**

The full allocation of laptops as provided by the Government, totalling 72 to allocate to disadvantaged Year 10 students, have been passed on to the appropriate schools maintained by the local authority. This would be in addition to disadvantaged Year 10 students who attend academies; in this instance laptops are passed directly to the Multi Academy Trusts and the Council does not have access to this information.

This roll out occurred during the first lockdown in the spring. The Council quickly realized that the number of laptops was not enough, particularly for the disadvantaged students, and so these have been supplemented from schools themselves and through use of Bursaries and Pupil Premium Plus. This means that more children and young people have gained access.



# Councillor Questions

**h) Question from Cllr Repton to Cllr Roulstone**

**Due to DCC's multi-million pound financial "blackhole" in its projected budget, how many jobs are likely to be lost as a result?**

The impact of the current pandemic on Council's financial sustainability is a national as well as a local issue and has recently been scrutinised by the House of Commons Select Committee. Locally, Cabinet considered a report on the 9 September 2020 detailing a modelled MTFP gap and strategy for proposing a 2021/22 Budget.

The term 'blackhole' is disingenuous to the residents of Derby and the Council's successful response to the current challenges and I would request that Cllr Repton desists from using this emotive term.

The Cabinet will be issuing a budget for consultation in mid-December detailing budget proposals and their impact. This will include the number of Full Time Equivalent for each proposal which could include both occupied posts and vacant posts. These will then be subject to the usual engagement with staff and trade unions. It would not be appropriate to pre-empt this process in providing a figure to Council at this stage before the issue of the Budget for consultation. The budget process has sought to minimise and mitigate against job losses wherever possible.

**i) Question from Cllr Peatfield to Cllr M Holmes**

**What is the Administration's opinion of the 4-year Highways England A38 scheme?**

Most Councillors will be aware that works on this section of the A38 are something that have been talked about since the 1970s. Successive political administrations have been supportive of improvements that will solve historic problems constraining both our local and the national road network, by separating long-distance traffic from residents making local journeys.

Of course, the construction over four years will be challenging, but it would bring a very significant investment of around £200m into our region.

**j) Question from Cllr S Khan to Cllr Smale**

**Can this administration assure us that they will continue to fully support and resource neighbourhood managers and officers so that they can continue to carry out the excellent work and support they are giving to residents? Their work is greatly appreciated by the residents and ward councillors.**

Thank you for your question Councillor Khan, and for recognising the excellent and important work officers do to support and empower communities in our city.

The Neighbourhood Managers and the team have indeed led on some excellent pieces of work. This includes coordinating a community based clean up projects and compactor days. This excellent work the Council and voluntary sector has done to support residents throughout the Coronavirus pandemic is something we can all be proud of and we could not have achieved this without our excellent Neighbourhood Teams.

It is clear, that there is a continued need for community-based working in Derby and I am fully supportive of this approach. This is why we need the Neighbourhood Team to deliver that and we will always support them.



**k) Question from Cllr Hussain to Cllr Webb**

**How many care homes in Derby are likely to experience extreme financial difficulties or become financially unviable without additional financial support from the government, because of a significant drop in their income caused by a lack of demand for residential care beds?**

Derby care homes are privately operated businesses and have already received significant financial support from central and local government for infection control and operating costs, £3.1m. This financial support is set to continue to the end of March 2021.

In general, whilst occupancy levels did fall at the height of the first peak of the pandemic, they have now recovered to operationally viable levels. I am not aware of any care home closures in Derby for financial reasons. This situation will remain under review and Council staff will be in contact with any home that expresses difficulties and support them in the normal way. I am very proud of the leadership role that Council staff in adult social care and public health have played to support the sector in providing continuity of care for vulnerable people.

**I) Question from Cllr Hezelgrave to Cllr Williams**

**How many children and young people in Derby were eligible to receive free school meals immediately prior to October half term? How many free meals for those who are school-aged did the Council and allied agencies provide during that half term week?**

There were 9,271 children and young people eligible to receive free school meals in Derby.

The Council facilitated meals for 127 children during the half term holiday through our partnership with Food4Thought.

**m) Question from Cllr P Pegg to Cllr Smale**

**Can you tell the people of Derby when you are going to remove the booking system for the Raynesway Recycling Plant in line with Derbyshire County Council and the District Councils including Burton - upon-Trent?**

Thank you for asking this question Councillor Pegg, waste disposal is an important neighbourhood issue and I am pleased to be discussing it.

Officers recommended a booking system at the Household Waste Recycling Centre to enable adequate social distancing to take place. Residents are able to dispose of frequently presented materials safely from their own disposal bay and a clearly defined one way system enables safe disposal of the less frequent items.

Feedback from the site operator and the local businesses indicates that the changes have made a positive impact on the site and officers have therefore recommended that the system is maintained.

**n) Question from Cllr Shanker to Cllr Barker**

**Having sanctioned huge amounts of Derby taxpayers money to this project when will you be open and transparent on what its being spent on?**

Expenditure on the Market Hall transformation project is fully documented in the published Cabinet paper of the 11th November 2020 thereby being fully transparent to scrutiny.

**o) Question from Cllr Dhindsa to Cllr Webb**

**It is clear that to tackle the Coronavirus risk to health and life, producing and applying a robust and effective vaccination programme is going to be critical to protecting the residents of Derby long term. What assurance can the Council give on how prepared we are to administer any vaccines available and to do this speedily and to all.**

Administration of the coronavirus vaccine is a responsibility of the NHS and is being led by them locally. We are working with them through the Local Resilience Forum to ensure we can offer any support as needed. This has included the use of the Arena as a facility for vaccination.

The NHS have been asked to have all plans in place for the beginning of December so that, as soon as the appropriate approvals for the vaccinations are in place, they will be able to rapidly start delivery.

As a Council we are planning our communications to support the campaign alongside our NHS partners.

**p) Question from Cllr Care Cllr M Holmes**

**It is good news that the Council has received Emergency Active Travel Tranche 2 funding. How and when is it intended to engage with councillors and the public to develop the detailed implementation of these schemes?**

It is good news that the Council has been awarded a further £776,000 for schemes under what is now the Active Travel Fund.

The award comes with additional conditions requiring participating local authorities to publish a consultation plan for each of the schemes. The plan will be published on the Council website and shared with the Department of Transport. This is a requirement before funding is released.

The Department of Transport will be producing a survey template and further consultation guidance. From the information they have already provided, they are challenging local authorities to engage in ways that reveal the usually silent opinion of communities.

The intention of the Government with this second round of funding is to seek to implement permanent schemes, rather than temporary, and which are accepted by the wider community. The implementation of schemes is not under the same time constraints as the first tranche which was intended to fund emergency measures.

Consultation with local councillors, community engagement, and consultation with MPs will be done using the government templates ahead of schemes being implemented. It is possible that some schemes will be started as experiments, however consultation will be on-going during the experimental period and clear support and benefits will have to be demonstrated before any scheme becomes permanent.

Further guidance on the details is expected to be published by the Department for Transport in the next few weeks.

**q) Question from Cllr Repton to Cllr Webb**

**What is Derby City Council's current attitude regarding the benefits and limitations of mass testing in Derby for Covid 19?**

The national mass testing programme is currently piloting a number of different programmes, to understand the benefits and risks, and we are continuing to consider the learning from these pilots. The pilots include an offer to use lateral flow testing for a whole population as in Liverpool, but also targeted community testing including high risk workplaces, NHS frontline staff, care home visitors and schools. Emerging evidence indicates that such programmes are most effective when targeted to populations who have higher rates of infection. It is also important to remember that lateral flow testing is only part of our Public Health response to coronavirus including symptomatic testing, contact tracing and enforcement.

Derby City Council have expressed an interest in undertaking lateral flow testing within the community and are currently considering the emerging evidence and consulting with local partners to understand how these can be used for the greatest benefit for the City. This consideration will take into account any implications from the move to national tiers after the 2 December.

**r) Question from Cllr Shanker to Cllr Holmes**

**What is the real reason that this administration is struggling with the demolition of the Assembly Rooms that you committed to re-open by now?**

A verbal response to be provided at the meeting.



**s) Question from Cllr Dhindsa to Cllr Webb**

**It is clear that COVID19 will not disappear anytime soon, despite positive progress being reported on vaccines identification and production. It is well established that an effective test, track and trace system will be required. We also know that government's centralised track and trace system has been wholly inadequate despite promises made. Even if it does work as promised and required a complimentary local track and trace system needs to be set up if we are going to reach 80% plus positive contacts. What assurance can the Council give in terms of how this is being resourced and what progress has been made to have this working before lockdown is ended on the 2nd December 2020.**

Derby City Council have been working with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England to develop a Local Contact Tracing Partnership. This is part of a national roll-out following a number of pilot models being delivered in some areas of the country. Our local team began this work on the 23 November, covering half of the City, and will be rolled out to cover the full City over the next two weeks.

Positive cases will be passed to local teams if the national team have been unable to contact them and local teams will ensure that any contacts details are entered into the national data system. Vulnerable individuals who are asked to self-isolate will also be offered guidance and support to help them through the period if they need it.

Funding for this has been provided within a grant from National Government.

**t) Question from Cllr Hezelgrave to Cllr Williams**

**You reported a figure for Derby of 21 per cent youth unemployment at last Full Council. Can you provide an update on this figure, and how does the actual number of NEETs this month compare with November 2019?**

The total number of young people in Derby aged 16-24 on 'out-of-work' benefits in October 2020 was 2,560. This has remained stable at 21% of the total number of people (of all ages) in Derby on 'out-of-work' benefits.

In November 2019, the total number of people aged 16-24 on 'out-of-work' benefits was 1,105.

Comparing like-for-like, October 2020 versus November 2019 therefore shows a year-on-year increase of 132%.

**u) Question from Cllr Peatfield to Cllr Smale**

**The Sinfin Incinerator shutdown on the 2nd August 2019, why has there not been any formal update on this at Cabinet despite millions of pounds of taxpayers money still being ploughed into it.**

Thank you for your question Councillor Peatfield. The contract with RRS was terminated on 2 August 2019. Work to preserve, maintain and assess the condition of the waste treatment facility at Sinfin continues. It is a complex issue and it is important we understand the facility's capability and how it fits into the councils' long term waste strategy.

**v) Question from Cllr Shanker to Cllr Roulstone**

**Can you please provide a breakdown on how much money is being spent on Consultants and temporary Contracts by Derby City Council.**

**Agency Staff**

The spend on Agency Staff via the main council Matrix contract is as follows:

2019/20 £5,127,919 representing 245,077 hours

2020/21 (to Q2) £2,715,813 representing 131,423 hours

**Consultants**

The spend on consultants' fees is as follows:

2019/20 £4,171,525 (hours not known)

2020/21 (to Q2) £2,012,656 (hours not known)