



Derby City Council

**Council Meeting
Wednesday 25 January 2012**

**Public and Member Questions and
Responses**

**COUNCIL – 25 JANUARY 2012
PUBLIC AND COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS**

Questioner	Respondent	Subject
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Public Questions

A	Mark Tittley	Councillor Skelton	Daily Home Care Service
B	Dorothy Skrytek	Councillor Poulter	The Derby Play and Recycling Centre and the Furniture Project
C	Maggie Attenborrow	Councillor Skelton	Steps for the Future Performing Arts Group
D	Simon Bacon	Councillor Poulter	Raynesway HWRC Vital Earth Soil Improver
E	Colin Underhill	Councillor Holmes	Air Quality Management Area Monitoring Points
F	David Gale	Councillor Hickson	IT and Transformation Strategies
G	Mark Tittley	Councillor Poulter	Alvaston District Centre Regeneration Project
H	Simon Bacon	Councillor Holmes	Sinfin Waste Treatment Plant Enquiry
I	Colin Underhill	Councillor Jones	Library Opening Hours

Councillor Questions

J	Councillor Graves	Councillor Williams	Foster Carers
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a. Question from Mark Tittley to Councillor Skelton

Currently Derby City Council social services provide an excellent Daily Home Care Service for elderly vulnerable residents living in Derby. Members of staff working in this section of social services are, I understand, being invited to take voluntary severance as part of the Council cuts. What guarantee can the Council give that this service will be maintained at its current excellent level by the City Council, 12 months from now?

Derby City Council now operates a Home Care Enablement Service. This service offers new older and disabled customers a time limited period of support (usually up to six weeks) to help them gain or regain skills in independent living.

At the end of this period many people no longer require help. In future those that do will be offered a Personal Budget which they can use, or ask the Council to use, to arrange on-going support. If home care is required this will usually be via a Home Care Agency or by employing a Personal Assistant.

The Council does not intend to be the provider of long term home care in the future. Instead it will further develop its role in ensuring that alternative providers are available and offering services of good quality.

However, where existing customers wish to continue having a service with the Council we will try and accommodate this where possible but will not be taking on any new long term customers.

b. Question from Dorothy Skrytek to Councillor Poulter

The Derby Play and Recycling Centre and the Furniture Project are two excellent schemes which reduce, reuse and recycle, in line with the UK Waste Hierarchy (Incineration and landfill are at the bottom of that hierarchy). They are examples of Sustainable Development, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework definitions. If these projects are lost to the people of Derby, as a result of funding cuts, how can the City Council act within the definition of Sustainable Development - that is 'saving resources for future generations' and seeing items reused and recycled, in line with the Waste Incineration Directive and the Waste Prevention Programme ?

The Play and Recycling Centre was established in March 1992. It is a registered charity whose main purpose is to promote and facilitate the recycling and reuse of non-toxic waste materials to reduce the amount of waste going into landfill.

The Derby Furniture Project a registered charity since 1987 helps people in need within the Derby area by providing recycled, essential furniture, electrical goods, bedding and clothing. They also help families in need with second-hand clothing. Referrals are made by social services.

At the Council Cabinet 27 September 2011 Councillors took panel recommendations to cease funding the two organisations above. The Council then entered into open consultation with the organisations affected, service users and stakeholders to fully assess the proposal to stop funding – this consultation ran until 31 Dec 2011 in accordance with best value guidance and Compact principles.

There has been a large response to the consultation and the Council is now looking at the report from the Consultation Team on the responses and will be assessing and recommending to Councillors the way forward at the Council Cabinet on 21 February.

Once Council Cabinet has decided on the 21 Feb any organisations that are not recommended for continued funding, they will still be funded for a further three months in line with Compact principles and Funding Agreement requirements.

Despite the potential for ending our support to these two organisations, the City Council's Waste Management Team over the next 18 months will develop waste minimisation, re-use and recycling initiatives as part of a Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy with Derbyshire County Council.

During which time how the Council might promote, engage, develop and fund these types of projects will be explored.

c. Question from Maggie Attenborrow to Councillor Skelton

I would like a question asked at the January Council meeting regarding the group Steps for the Future.

We are a performing arts group for adults with learning differences, physical differences and mental health issues. We have worked several times over the past three years with Derby City Council Learning Disabilities Team, performing at the Assembly Rooms, Riverside Conference Centre, Darwin Suite and many more venues. We have received a fee each time we have performed, which I believe makes us a professional group.

In June we submitted an application for Grant Aid from the City Council which was not successful. We lost all funding. We are a group with a four year track record of growth and sustainability, delivering a personalised service, and supporting our students to apply for personal budgets.

On Tuesday 22 November, there was a big event in the Assembly Rooms called Your Life, Your Choice, highlighting how social care is changing in Derby. We were invited to have a market stall at this event and we were also requested to produce a “workshop”. We agreed to both in order to showcase our service.

Why did the Council think it proper to hire the drama group Moveable Feast, (a group which features students with learning disabilities) from Co. Durham to perform at the Your Life, Your Choice event, when Derby has its own learning disabilities performing arts group? A group the Council has used several times in the past! The group from Co. Durham were paid a fee plus expenses. Should not this fee have been awarded to a local group?

We invited Moveable Feast to perform at the event as they have a national reputation for producing inspirational drama and they have been commissioned by Government Departments and the NHS to produce pieces of educational theatre around personalisation. These pieces have been performed at over 80 training and consultation events and have been well received.

The Your Life, Your Choice event was aimed at all users of Adult Social Care. Due to the planning timescales, we chose two pieces from Moveable Feast’s programme which address a number of issues relevant for older people and people with learning disabilities.

Your Life, Your Choice was a new and ambitious event which aimed to showcase providers’ work. We offered Steps for the Future a stall to promote their activities. Steps were also one of a small number of providers who we invited to run a workshop. Steps for the Future were consulted on the best time of day to run a workshop to fit with the members of their group and this was timetabled for 12 noon. The programme for the hall was finalised later. It is regrettable that this was not cross-referenced with the workshop

timings and this is a learning point for officers. Whilst there was a clash, the Moveable Feast performance at this time was about personal budgets and older people. There was certainly no intention to snub Steps for the Future.

One of the aims of the day was to make people aware of local services, but there were also many other aims to promote personal budgets, provide information and advice, allow networking between providers, showcase real experiences of people from other parts of the country, and bring subject matter experts into Derby.

Of course we shall consider Steps for future work where appropriate.

d. Question from Simon Bacon to Councillor Poulter

The City Council's Raynesway HWRC site is currently selling a Vital Earth soil improver product to the general public at £2.00 per bag which is cost price. The RRP of the product when sold by businesses in Derbyshire is £4.99 - how can it be acceptable for a local authority to market retail products directly to the public directly undercutting local businesses?

The site operator at Raynesway Civic Amenity site is selling a Vital Earth branded soil Improver which contains a 0-10mm grade green compost and Vital Earth have indicated that the recommended retail price for this product is £3.99 per bag. The soil improver is also being sold at Civic Amenity Sites across Derbyshire.

The purpose of having the soil improver available at Civic Amenity sites for sale is to encourage the use of non-peat compost as well as to promote the "virtuous circle" that is, organic garden and food waste being collected in Derby's brown bins, having been composted, can now be used in gardens across the City and County.

The contractor that operates Raynesway Civic Amenity Site is required to sell this material throughout the year and takes the financial risk for all expenditure and income accrued. The price has been set by the operator and is not subsidised by the Councils.

People tend to use Civic Amenity sites for the purpose of getting rid of their household waste, and the purchase of any bagged compost/soil improver is initially likely to be impulsive. A pricing structure that offers value for money is more likely to generate interest and sales and help raise residents' awareness of the availability and use of this type of product and the benefits of "closed loop recycling".

Therefore, setting the current price of £2.00 per bag has to be a careful balance so that not only can non peat compost be adequately promoted for use in Derby's gardens, but also it could stimulate a future demand for the product across the domestic horticultural sector which could ultimately be of benefit to the many garden centres across the County.

Since the introduction of the scheme 1,952 bags of soil improver have been sold at Raynesway and 8,079 at other sites in the County.

The City and the County Council will continue to monitor this initiative and if necessary review the pricing structure in conjunction with the operators of the Civic Amenity sites across the City and County.

e. Question from Colin Underhill to Councillor Holmes

Derby has existing AQMA's; Derby has the associated monitoring points in place along the old Inner Ring Road route. Predicted figures were included in the "Connecting Derby" statement of case and, after reading the recent article in the Derby Telegraph, I presume that there is a plan in place to site the new monitoring points. Would the Council please advise me as to when this will come into effect?

New air quality monitoring points have already been added to the programme to take into account the changes to the inner ring road and completion of Connecting Derby.

Diffusion tubes are now located at points adjacent to both Mercian Way and Lara Croft Way. The real-time monitoring station at the Abbey Street/Burton Road junction (serving the old inner ring road route) is no longer required and will be de-commissioned.

Other monitoring points remain unaffected.

A further review of monitoring points is due to be carried out in April to assess whether any existing tubes should be relocated or if additional tubes are required.

However, priority will still be given to monitoring air quality around our Air Quality Management Areas.

f. Question from David Gale to Councillor Hickson

Given the evidence highlighted to all three group leaders of the £20 million cost to Derby's taxpayers caused by duplicated spend on IT infrastructure and missed savings from the transformation programme, what steps have members taken in response to ensure proper scrutiny and governance over the IT and Transformation Strategies?

Derby City Council has already devoted a considerable amount of time and effort in considering and responding to you regarding the development of our IT Strategy.

As Leader of the Council and Chair of our 'one Derby, one council' Strategic Transformation Board, I am satisfied that...

The current ICT Strategy is an appropriate one.

There are good and legitimate reasons for departing from the previous strategy.

The Council has robust governance arrangements in place to manage and monitor the delivery of the overall transformation programme.

g. Question from Mark Tittley to Councillor Poulter

When will Derby City Council decide to action the completion of the Alvaston District Centre Regeneration Project, which was commenced and then stopped partially completed several years ago?

When the district centre improvement programme first began it was mostly funded from the Local Transport Plan. In general, improvements to district centres have relatively minor transport benefits compared with other mainstream transport schemes, although the wider regeneration and community benefits are recognised. For these reasons other capital funding was sought to complete the last phase of improvements at Alvaston District when £350,000 was allocated from Growth Point.

In recent years there has been a significant reduction in capital budgets and consequently it has not been possible to progress as many projects and programmes as previously. Currently no budget has been allocated for Alvaston District Centre and it isn't possible to provide a start date for future phases.

h. Question from Simon Bacon to Councillor Holmes

The City Council's Planning Department has to defend itself at the new Sinfon incinerator inquiry in 2012. To this end why has the City Council ignored the availability of the other parties that should be seen to be on the councils side - those being Sinfon, Spondon and all Against Incineration, Derby Friends of the Earth and the Sinfon Councillors and put forward an unacceptable start date of June 12th 2012 which the inspectorate has now agreed to.

The Planning Inspectorate has stated that the inquiry should be held as soon as possible in order to keep uncertainty over the future of the site to a minimum.

It has been necessary for the Planning Inspectorate to set an inquiry date that is inevitably not going to be to everyone's satisfaction.

In a letter to all parties, including yourself Mr Bacon, I understand that the Planning Inspectorate regrets having to set an inquiry date that they know will not be convenient for some of those concerned.

However, the parties may wish to discuss with the Inspector, at the pre-inquiry meeting, the possibility of a timetable being set that can mitigate some of the concerns expressed to date.

It is therefore not a date that the City Council has set, neither have we ignored the availability of other parties or were in any position to set the timeframe. That is all determined by the Planning Inspectorate as per the due and proper process of the enquiry.

i. Question from Colin Underhill to Councillor Jones

I recently accessed the new opening hours for the Derby City Library and was surprised to find that the current opening hours are 38.5 and the new hours 31! There are no weekday opening times after 5pm!

I understand that the reason for the change is budgetary. The Government Department; M.L.A.(Museums, Libraries & Archives) states in paragraph 2. "In today's society it is unforgivable..... Providing access to library services means opening libraries at times when the community wants them open-late closing and weekend opening should be the norm".

Would the Council please advise me as to why it has reduced the library hours contrary to Government recommendations?

The Central Library opening times that were quoted in the Cabinet paper on 13 December 2011 and which have been publicised since then on the Council's website and in the library itself are that from 23 January the library will be open for 33 hours not 31. This will include opening until 7pm on Tuesdays.

Experience shows that the use of library services is less in the evening than either the morning or the afternoon. With this in mind the decision was made to reduce from two to one evening at the Central Library.

Every library in the City will still be open one evening until 7pm as well as on Saturday morning. For this reason and because the reduction in evening opening is based on well established patterns of use the changes agreed by Cabinet on 13 December do not conflict with MLA or government guidelines. It has also been agreed that a user consultation exercise will be conducted in the autumn to see if the new opening patterns introduced need to be fine-tuned within the budget available.

j. Councillor Graves to Councillor Williams

You will be aware that the council is struggling to find foster carers to meet the growing demand of looked after children and that the council spends more on agency carers. You will also be aware that many social workers give up some of their free time to canvass for new carers, so concerning is the situation. Who then allowed a large advert to be placed on the council house hoardings for Barnardos seeking new foster carers? Why has the council not placed a large advert themselves?

I am sure you will say that Barnardos have paid for such an advert and that counts as income, but from an economic sense it seems mad that we allow a private fostering agency to advertise for foster carers generating some income only to pay it out many times over for private foster places

Councillor Graves thank you for your question.

I can confirm that a Council Officer mistakenly agreed with our Contractors BAM Construction that they could allow Barnardos, one of their selected charities for this year to advertise on the hoardings.

We have asked BAM to remove these posters and we will be replacing them with adverts for the Council's fostering service.