



Council Meeting Wednesday 14 September 2016

Public and Member Questions and Responses



Derby City Council

COUNCIL – 14 September 2016

PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

Questioner	Respondent	Subject
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Public Questions

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B	Kate King	Councillor Hussain	City Point Street Cleaning
C	Rob Cooper	Councillor Rawson	Mackworth Play Areas
D	Betty Morrison	Councillor Rawson	Moorways Pool
E	Brendan Connelly	Councillor Eldret	Teaching Assistants
F	Simon Bacon	Councillor Russell	Sinfin Waste Plant Engagement
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H	Betty Morrison	Councillor Afzal	Alvaston Neighbourhood Forum
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Z	Councillor Graves	Councillor Rawson	Alvaston Play Areas
ZA	Councillor Graves	Councillor Repton	Voluntary Sector Grant Funding
ZB	Councillor Graves	Councillor Rawson	The Spot Refurbishment
ZC	Councillor Graves	Councillor Rawson	Football Pitches

*Where similar questions have been received, one written response will be provided, with each councillor given an opportunity to ask a supplementary question.

Public Questions

a. Question from Dorothy Skrytek to Councillor Afzal

Can the Council update us on the prosecutions of people in Allestree and Mickleover, for the felling or illegal pruning of protected trees?

In the last five years there have been no such prosecutions in these areas. However, as Ms Skrytek will be aware, we are pursuing action against unauthorised works to protected trees at the Cavendish. A PACE interview has been undertaken and further interviews under caution are anticipated to help build the case for the prosecution.

b. Question from Kate King to Councillor Hussain

At the beginning of the month Leacroft Road and Reeves Road in Normanton were litter picked, the drains were cleared, weeding of tenants gardens done, window frames and door frames painted, plumbers were there doing repairs and bin lorries were taking away rubbish from gardens/houses etc. All this was done free of charge, and then a food van was laid on giving away free pizzas, samosas and bottles of water.

Is it possible we could have these services at City Point as the only ones I've seen offering any litter support has been the UKIP clean team?

The work undertaken in Leacroft Road and Reeves Road was part of a wider urban renewal project to improve the local area and housing stock. The clean-up was organised by Derby Homes, which manages a number of properties within the area, and the work was carried out by volunteers from local companies and voluntary organisations. Local companies also donated materials. Streetpride removed the waste generated by the clean-up; this was the only direct cost to the Council.

Derby Homes also organised the refreshments as a 'thank you' to those engaged in the clean-up. Derby Homes currently has no plans to extend this approach to the City Point area, where it manages very few (if any) properties. However, other local groups or stakeholders may wish to mobilise voluntary support and organise similar events in their areas and Derby Homes would be happy to provide advice.

c. Question from Rob Cooper to Councillor Rawson

With the Council's three year budget in mind, is the Council planning to close play areas in Mackworth?

No, the council does not have any plans to close any play areas in Mackworth ward. There are three play areas owned and maintained by the Council, at Cheviot Street, Knightsbridge Recreation Ground and Handford Street.

The play area at Cheviot Street was a new play area installed in 2012 and we are also now having goal posts installed. In the same year the existing play area at Knightsbridge Recreation ground was re-furbished. There is currently a further scheme of improvements to Knightsbridge play area using Section 106 funding due to be completed in 2016/17. Handford Street play area was constructed in 2005.

Where possible the Council uses available funding from Section 106 agreements for improvements to open space and this often includes play areas. In addition the Council also adopts new play areas from developers along with a commuted sum for maintenance.

d. Question from Betty Morrison to Councillor Rawson

What is happening to the Moorways swimming bath and gym? In view of the fact that we have Olympic swimmers receiving medals, is anything being done to revitalise this centre?

The Council recognises the important role that sports such as swimming have on the health of our communities. The age and condition of the current swimming facilities in the city is such that we have announced ambitious plans to build a world-class facility at Moorways. The Council is making good progress with its plans for a new facility and is expected to have started building the new centre during 2018.

In the meantime, the Council is continuing to work with the city's performance swimming clubs to use Moorways Swimming Pool. This will provide our young swimmers with the opportunity to continue to develop their swimming and to continue to be inspired by the Olympic swimmers receiving medals.

e. Question from Brendan Connelly to Councillor Eldret

After Labour's Jeremy Corbyn recently visited Derby, he expressed his support to the teaching assistants and the way they have been treated by Derby City Council.

Will Derby City Council now treat these hard working and highly valued people, who provide a very important service to the children of this city, with the respect they deserve and reinstate the money they have lost to their salaries?

Yes, during his recent visit Jeremy did express support for both the teaching assistants and our position which he said he understood.

We have always treated these hard working and highly valued employees with the respect they deserve and have expressed our appreciation of the work they and all their colleagues do many times – I am happy to reiterate those sentiments today.

We have been in discussion with representatives of the School Support Staff and made a revised offer, on 9 September, and I am sure you will join me in hoping that this will bring the matter to a conclusion.

f. Question from Simon Bacon to Councillor Russell

At a recent waste plant community liaison group meeting held at the waste site on Sinfin Lane, the Waste Education Officer provided by Resource Recovery Solutions confirmed that she educated Derby school children that the plant was a recovery plant which is not true as current government legislation confirms that it is a disposal plant at the bottom of the waste hierarchy.

Is it acceptable for those providing education to impressionable school children to provide factually incorrect information in educational establishments?

The Waste Education Officer provides short education sessions with local schools at which she talks to children about reducing the amount of things that we consume, re-using them where possible and re-cycling them when we have finished with them. In addition she tells the children about how the new Waste Centre will work; including separating out materials (plastics and metal etc.) for recycling from the residual (black bin) waste delivered to the plant. She also tells them about the process by which the plant generates electricity from the waste that is left, thereby recovering energy from the waste. The talk is in plain English suitable for young children and the Education Officer does not make any claims about the technical status of the plant. This clarification has already been provided to Mr Bacon.

g. Question from Rob Cooper to Councillor Rawson

At a previous Council meeting the then Mayor of Derby, Councillor Paul Pegg, announced a war memorial was going to be built in Mackworth.

Can the Council please give an update on how this is proceeding?

This work is proceeding to plan and detailed design is close to completion, including the structural foundations. Fabrication will be carried out over the winter months, with installation being carried out in the early spring. The memorial will be located in the 'open space' opposite the parade of shops, in a location accessible to all.

I would like to thank Councillor Paul Pegg for leading this important initiative on behalf of residents in Mackworth.

h. Question from Betty Morrison to Councillor Afzal

The Alvaston Neighbourhood Forum allowed residents to voice their concerns and contact their councillors. Please could it be reinstated?

Although funding for Neighbourhood working has been significantly reduced due to Government funding cuts, Alvaston, as a priority neighbourhood, will still receive support from the Neighbourhood Team albeit at a reduced level. Engaging local residents will continue to be a priority and this can be achieved in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, a neighbourhood forum.

Other approaches, such as 'Councillors on Patrol', may be more effective in some neighbourhoods. It is the role of the Neighbourhood Boards to identify and agree the best ways to engage their communities. I would suggest that you contact Councillor Paul Bayliss, the Chair of Alvaston Neighbourhood Board, to share your views with them.

i. Question from Brendan Connelly to Councillor Banwait

After recent press coverage Councillor Banwait said 'he has done everything he can' to create a better working relationship within the council.

Does he now think that personal attacks by him within the council chamber to fellow councillors are now over and can he give assurances his recent behaviour will stop?

Verbal response to be provided.

j. Question from Simon Bacon to Councillor Afzal

The council is failing to bring under control the dire situation in areas such as Normanton and Arboretum in relation to waste and fly tipping which is forcing long term residents from their homes creating a social vacuum. When is the council going to get a grip of the situation and make serious steps forward to capture and punish those who treat the city's streets like a landfill site?

The ongoing waste issues within some parts of the inner-city wards are complex. Whilst there is some fly-tipping and littering, there are also problems with 'side waste' and bulky items left on the street. To address these problems requires a combination of education and enforcement, which in turn requires a considerable input of resources by the Council. In recent years this input has been made increasingly difficult due to unprecedented government budget cuts resulting in significant staffing reductions in all departments, including Waste Management, Regulatory Services and Neighbourhood Management.

Nevertheless, the Council has strived to continue to address these issues by:

- Removing waste accumulations as quickly as possible
- Arranging bulky waste collections in key areas
- Investigating fly-tipping incidents and taking formal action where there is evidence to support this
- Seeking support from local residents to identify culprits
- Providing advice to local residents, businesses and community groups

Whilst we will continue to do this, it is important that local communities are engaged in this process and work with the Council to identify and tackle those responsible for waste problems.

Councillor Questions

k. Question from Councillor Evans to Councillor Afzal

Can the Cabinet Member responsible for the road / land adoption process of the City Point development in Wilmorton please explain why this development has still not been adopted? What action will be taken to bring this long standing issue to a satisfactory conclusion? The residents are fed up of the situation and why Derby City Council has not adopted this established development.

The 'City Point' development has a S38 highway adoption agreement entered into by three developers, BDW Trading and Morris Homes, (BDW is a trading name of Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes) dated 22 October 2009. It is one agreement which covers all the highway adoptable areas. To enable the adoption to take place, the site must be completed in its entirety with all obligations laid out in the S38 agreement met by the developer(s). To date, these obligations have not been met and this has delayed the adoption process.

Throughout the life of this development, the Council have regularly received complaints relating to inconsiderate double parking and match day parking. This problem has been apparent for a number of years, and when the development was completed in February 2014 and placed on its '12 months maintenance stage', Derby City Council advised the developers that they would need to undertake certain tasks within that 12 month period to enable adoption to take place. One of these recommendations was to investigate and progress the need for parking restrictions.

Unfortunately, despite some early positive discussions, this has not materialised, with the developers only re-entering dialogue late last year. Meetings were held between DCC, Councillor Bayliss and representatives from Barratt Homes. Following this, costings/estimates were provided by DCC, at the request of Barratt Homes, to undertake the required Traffic Regulation Order investigation and if necessary proceed to implementation. As yet, we have not received any confirmation that the developer(s) are willing to meet their obligation under the terms of the legal agreement to meet the costs of the TRO. This is complicated further by the need to agree this with all developers.

Should the site be adopted without the TROs being funded by the developer (which is a requirement of the signed S38 agreement), then any future schemes would need to be funded entirely by the City Council. The initial cost estimate for the works was circa £25,000.

Also an area of existing highway requires 'stopping up' since highway land has been included within property boundaries; the council is progressing with this. We have been working on this with a view of getting a court date booked as soon as possible to enable this to take place. Again, the developer has been aware of this for approximately eight years but did not pursue it in a timely fashion.

We continue to actively pursue the developer and to move these matters forward in a manner which ensures that the risks to the Council and local residents are minimised and the development is adopted without further delay.

I. Question from Councillor Graves to Councillor Rawson

Do you think it was right that many of our trusted library staff were informed of their impending redundancy through a press release by Councillor Bayliss?

A detailed plan was prepared by senior officers to ensure that library staff were made aware of the contents of the Cabinet report on the future of Derby's Library Service before it was released to the media. The appearance of a report in the Derby Telegraph on Saturday 23 July, 72 hours before the planned staff briefing, was extremely unfortunate and I have already apologised to all staff affected.

m. Question from Councillor M Holmes to Councillor Afzal

It has recently been reported that around £1 million in fines for 'travelling in a bus lane' have been issued to local motorists by the council in just one year.

Can the Cabinet Member please detail the highways schemes that have been funded using this money?

The Council's website provides detailed up to date information about parking and other enforcement action, including the numbers of penalty charge notices issued for various offences including contravention of bus lanes.

The Frequently Asked Questions section of the Parking Services page aims to ensure that all enforcement actions are open and transparent. We publish information about where penalty charge notices are issued and for what reason.

All income received from parking must be reinvested in the service with any surplus spent on highway and transport activities, including highway maintenance and support for public transport. The Council's overall budget anticipates a level of income from parking activities and this is included in the funding available for annual revenue work including pot hole repairs and other highway and transport activities.

n. Question from Councillor Barker to Councillor Rawson

Can the Cabinet Member offer a detailed update on the urgent cabinet decision that was made in relation to the council's sale of the Eagle Market and Theatre Walk to Intu?

Since the Cabinet decision made earlier this year, the Council has undertaken detailed negotiations and carried out due diligence in respect of both the disposal of the Eagle Market and the purchase of the former Debenhams premises.

These transactions are complex and the Council consequently need to ensure that the terms of these transactions provide best value of the Council and that all risks are identified, understood and action put in place to mitigate them.

The Council recognises that this has taken longer than expected to complete. However, as soon as these commercially sensitive negotiations are concluded the Council will be in a position to release further information.

- o. Question from Councillor Graves (1) and Councillor Harwood (2) to Councillor Banwait**
- 1. Following the Monitoring Officer's ruling in regard to the previous Mayor, namely,**
- Failed to treat the residents of New Zealand Resident Association with respect by providing incorrect information to them;**
 - Damage to the reputation of the Office of the Mayor of the City of Derby; and**
 - Used his position as Mayor of the City of Derby to his advantage.**

Do you think it is right to react to this situation by changing the Mayor's diary from being a public document to being secret?

- 2. Why are the Mayor's Engagements no longer being sent out to Members?**

Verbal response to be provided.

p. Question from Councillor Grimadell to Councillor Rawson

With the majority of libraries now under close scrutiny, three libraries were part financed by the Big Lottery. If it is decided to eventually close these three libraries over £1 million pounds will have to be repaid back to Big Lottery. From where will the £1 million repayment be found?

It is correct that there is a requirement to repay part of the original lottery grant if the Allenton, Chellaston and Mackworth library buildings are no longer used for this purpose.

However, the Big Lottery has also indicated that if those libraries were to be run by the community rather than by the Council, financial clawback would not be sought as long as it deems the agreement between the Council and the community group to be acceptable.

On 3 August, Cabinet identified its preferred option for the future of Derby's Library Service. This option includes a substantial financial and in-kind package to support the establishment and ongoing operation of community-run libraries.

Community Libraries are an opportunity to deliver essential budget savings while ensuring that no library needs to close. The Council is committed to approaching its financial challenges creatively, by delivering services differently rather than not delivering them at all.

The question Councillor Grimadell poses is therefore premature: this Labour administration is planning to keep all libraries open, including Allenton, Chellaston and Mackworth, rather than pay the Big Lottery over £1.2m for permission to close them.

q. Question from Councillor Hudson to Councillor Rawson

Can the Cabinet Member tell me when a decision will be made in relation to the future of the Wholesale Market site, following full consideration of the expression of interest by the consortium of traders?

As requested by Cabinet, officers have been undertaking the necessary due diligence work on the Expression of Interest Bid submitted by the consortium of traders in respect of the Wholesale Market. This work has now been concluded and a recommendation as to the way forward has been approved.

We are in the process of formally letting the traders know the outcome of this due diligence work. This will happen in the next day or so. Therefore, whilst I am happy to provide members details of the decision made, I think it may be inappropriate for traders to become aware of the Council's decision through this forum.

Therefore, I am happy to provide members with a briefing on the future of the Wholesale Market in the next few days once we have formally notified the various traders at the Market of the Council's decision.

r. Question from Councillor Poulter to Councillor Afzal

In recent years there has been cross party acknowledgement that the development of the neighbourhood working policy across the city has been seen as a success in every ward. It has proven vital to Members and the Council in their efforts to effectively engage with and empower our communities to address their important and different priorities in each of their areas.

The Cabinet Member maintains a need to make savings and has chosen not make it a priority to retain neighbourhood working or an element of devolved funding to Neighbourhood Boards.

How does he justify the total withdrawal of devolved funding when, even a token level of funding to each ward would allow neighbourhoods to retain some small means of tackling the most important of issues in their ward?

Even if the need to reduce staff resources available in the neighbourhood working team was accepted, how does the cabinet member seek to justify not allocating the remaining resources equally across each and every ward, to allow all Members and tax payers an equal opportunity to effectively engage with and represent their neighbourhoods?

As Councillor Poulter is aware, this authority has been subjected to unprecedented budget cuts by the Government, and that these cuts have resulted in reductions to staff and services in all areas of the Council. This administration's support for and promotion of neighbourhood working is well documented and the decisions to suspend neighbourhood budgets and to reduce staffing in the Neighbourhood Team were taken very reluctantly.

In this difficult financial situation, which is not of the Council's making, priorities for funding have to be identified and applied rigorously to ensure the best use of limited resources. Whilst the statutory services which protect vulnerable individuals have been protected to a large extent, many discretionary services and budgets, however valuable, have faced cuts in order to meet savings targets. Regrettably, this includes devolved budgets for Neighbourhood Boards. This does not, however, prevent Boards from applying for funding from other sources, and Neighbourhood Officers will be available to support Boards wishing to pursue this approach.

The reduction in the staffing numbers in the Neighbourhoods Team means that they will not be able to actively support all Neighbourhood Boards in the future. In

order to rationalise their work in future, it has been decided that support will be targeted at those wards with the greatest need, based on the Multiple Indices of Deprivation. This approach was agreed by the Cabinet in April 2016 and structures have now been established to maximise the benefit of this approach.

Whilst the new arrangement will begin on 19 September 2016 the Neighbourhood Team will continue to provide advice to all Boards, if requested, to enable them to establish their own community engagement strategies. The absence of an allocated Neighbourhood Officer will not prevent Boards and ward Members from engaging local people by whatever means they feel appropriate.

Whilst the work of the Neighbourhood Team will target those wards with the greatest need, the Community Safety and Cohesion and Integration work will continue to be delivered on a city-wide basis.

s. Question from Councillor Smale to Councillor Rawson

Can the Cabinet Member show a detailed breakdown of the full running costs for each library in the city including staffing costs, for a full financial year?

Although it is relatively easy to provide the staffing cost for each library, it is a lot more difficult to state with confidence their overall running costs. This is because:

- Some spending on libraries is from the budgets of other Council departments. Examples include cleaning and buildings maintenance.
- Some spending is not specifically allocated against an individual library cost centre. Examples include central staffing, books, IT network costs and events & activities.
- Some income is not specifically allocated against an individual library cost centre. Examples include late fees, book holds and printing

Our intention is to prepare detailed information on the running costs of individual libraries in time for a final decision on the future of the Library Service. If Cabinet agrees to implement a way forward that includes the transfer of some libraries from Council management to community management we would release this financial information as part of an information pack to be sent to groups interested in submitting an Expression of Interest to run a library.

t. Question from Councillor Graves to Councillor Shanker

Can Councillor Shanker update the council how his visits to swimming pools the length and breadth of the country at the Derby tax payer's expense is proceeding and enlighten us about the exact locations he has visited and those he intends to visit? A detailed summary would be most useful.

A number of visits to swimming pools are in progress to benchmark relevant types of facilities provided by or on behalf of other authorities. This will allow us to learn first-hand about what does and doesn't work elsewhere and will be very useful in determining what will be best for the project in Derby.

Locations for visits include High Wycombe, Aylesbury, Corby and Huddersfield. Information is also being collated on a number of other facilities that will help progress the project.

u. Question from Councillor Evans to Councillor Rawson

The re-development and change of use of the former Roundhouse public house is conditional on Council earmarked Section 106 money for 'K-Barriers' to stop motor vehicles accessing public spaces in Alvaston. To date this money has not been paid by the developer to get these very important barriers in place, to stop the blight of anti social behaviour with people riding motorbikes / scooters in parks and other areas they simply should not be.

Can the Cabinet Member explain why this Section 106 money was not obtained before the development was started or at the very least on completion. What is now being done to get this Section 106 money?

A S106 signed in March 2015 secured £11,784 for public open space and £1,032 for public realm. Both these contributions were due on commencement. The development was under construction as of our April Housing Land Surveys, therefore the payments are overdue. It is the responsibility of the land owner to notify us that they have commenced development and to pay the contributions at the appropriate time. We have been in contact with the developer regarding payment; once received we will contact Leisure colleagues and the Neighbourhood Board for suggestions as to how this would be spent.

We do not allocate pots of money until the funding is actually received because at the time of signing the agreement we have no way of knowing when it will be received and what our priorities will be at the time.

v. Question from Councillor Harwood to Councillor Afzal

What assurances can you give the five wards, Allestree, Oakwood, Mickleover, Littleover and Chellaston that have not been allocated Neighbourhood Managers that any problems they have in their wards will be dealt with?

The absence of a Neighbourhood Manager or Officer specifically allocated to these wards will not affect the services provided by the rest of the Council or its partners. It will mean that ward councillors will need to contact these other front-line services directly, rather than through the Neighbourhood Team, and a directory of services and contact details is currently being prepared for this purpose.

w. Question from Councillor Hudson to Councillor Rawson

A number of traders and businesses in the Wholesale Market on Chequers Road have not been paying rent or utility bills, in some cases for months and years, on the premises they occupy, despite wishing to do so. Over the last few years they have unsuccessfully attempted to liaise and negotiate with the Council about this matter.

Does the Cabinet Member have any explanation for this mismanagement, and is there any intention for the Council to open up meaningful correspondence with these traders?

It is disappointing that this situation has arisen. Officers have been working towards resolving the situation, which involves only a small a minority of traders at the Wholesale Market. However, the resolution of this issue has been made more complex due to the future of the market being reviewed and the subsequent need to ensure that Council's future position is protected under various pieces of Landlord and Tenant legislation.

As Members are aware a decision regarding the future of the Market has now been made and that is in the process of being communicated to the Traders. The issue of the non- payment of rent will form part of the discussion with the relevant traders in respect of the future of the Market.

x. Question from Councillor Graves to Councillor Banwait

Unfortunately the Labour Party pushed through a decision to neutralise future petitions at our last Council meeting by preventing any that involve budget decisions or mentioning anyone's name. However, it should not stop residents from trying to present these to the council.

So can the Cabinet Member explain why the Labour Council banned all and any petitions to save our libraries from being available in our libraries?

Bearing in mind that this is where most signatures are likely to come your actions are following a pattern of 'Big Brother' shutting down anything that opposes the hierarchy.

Verbal response to be provided.

y. Question from Councillor Evans to Councillor Shanker

The debacle surrounding the Church Street Alvaston traffic lights is now beyond the pale.

For more than ten years 3 Church Street has been discussed at various meetings and by the public at large. Eighteen months ago the council set up emergency traffic lights to protect the public from danger of collapse of the building, which hasn't happened.

Last April, I recall Councillor Tittley promised to get a resolution to the issue, but nothing has changed except he has now joined the Conservatives.

It is wrong of this council to put local residents through this traffic light hell for so long. They do not deserve it and should not have to put up with it.

When can the residents expect the traffic lights to be removed?

The partial road closure and traffic lights are necessary for public protection and must remain in place until the building is made safe. At this stage, given the complexity of the construction and the necessary legal process, I am unable to give a timescale for removal of these safety measures.

z. Question from Councillor Graves to Councillor Rawson

What plans do you have to close any children's play areas?

Can you give me an assurance that all Alvaston Ward play areas will remain open?

There are no plans to close children's play areas in Alvaston Ward or anywhere else.

za. Question from Councillor Graves to Councillor Repton

I refer Councillor Repton to a question in February's Full Council meeting about voluntary sector grants. Can Councillor Repton explain why he failed to inform the council that he agreed funding for DRRF by authorising rent free use of the premises in the Eagle Centre area whilst removing all the grants to every other voluntary organisation in the city?

DRRF is run solely by Labour Party members and funded by Unions supporting the Labour Party. Was this decision made because of the relationship between Chris Williamson and Ranjit Banwait?

Councillors were not involved in the decision making with regard to the flexible lease arrangement that was agreed as part of an operational lease-management decision. The decision was made under delegated authority in July 2015 by the then Interim Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods.

zb. Question from Councillor Graves to Councillor Rawson

The Spot has been in the headlines recently and watching the abysmal performance of the ruling Labour Group in the city one can see why. In 2014 the council spent £1.2m on a 'revamp' which focused mainly on removing the toilets and upsetting a considerable number of people. You are now, less than 2 years later, spending £1.25m on another 'revamp', whilst other areas remain untouched and desolate for years and years (Becketwell for instance).

I appreciate that most of the money is coming from D2N2 funding but have you, Councillor Rawson, deliberately misled the public and press when on 11 August 2014 you made a public statement on air stating that the contribution from the Council is £2000 in an attempt to 'bat away' any calls of wasting council money on an area that didn't need revamping after less than 2 years since the last investment. In fact Councillor Rawson the Council contribution is £510,000 some 255 times more than you informed the public.

Can you therefore confirm that this is a good use of taxpayers money?

Probity of elected councillors is paramount and misleading the public is a serious matter. Do you think that you should resign your position on the Cabinet?

Firstly, your assertion that £1.2 million was spent removing the toilets at The Spot is incorrect. This amount actually refers to the works to refurbish St Peter's Cross, which was completed in 2014.

You acknowledge most of the money is coming from D2N2 and to be clear, the total cost of The Spot refurbishment is £1.26 million, of which £510k was match funded by Derby City Council, and was necessary to secure the D2N2 funding.

This information has been in the public domain since December 2015, when this was reported to Cabinet, so there is no way the public could have been misled. Further to this, a joint Derby City Council and D2N2 media release was issued in January 2016 with this information. I apologise if my response has caused any confusion, as it certainly was not intended to mislead.

I can confirm that this project does represent a good use of taxpayers' money; a cost benefit ratio analysis shows a £2 return for every £1 spent in terms of jobs and private sector investment.

Successful city centres are the drivers of local economies and achieving a vibrant city centre is a key priority through the City-Centre Masterplan, of which The Spot is the first achievement.

zc. Question from Councillor Graves to Councillor Rawson

One of the most important seasonal sports started at the weekend. Football. Derby is renowned for our football at grassroots level, and contributes to healthy lifestyles especially for our children.

I was astounded to find that not only have you cut the number of football pitches throughout the city but you couldn't even cut the grass for the start of the season.

Dozens of parents have commented on the long grass their teams had to play on at the Racecourse and Alvaston Park. This is despite the fact that they all pay the going rate.

Can you explain why the grass was not cut? Can you give parents, players and managers an assurance that the grass will be cut for next weekend?

I very much recognise the importance of grassroots football and the benefits it provides to residents in terms of enjoyment, health and wellbeing.

Parkland areas including sports pitches are cut on a fortnightly basis. As we only have a limited number of machines and operators, they have to start and finish somewhere on their two weekly cycle. There is therefore a chance that any game, on any of the pitches in the city, could occur when there is almost two weeks growth. Alvaston Park was last cut on the 5 September and is not due to be cut for another week. The Racecourse was cut on Monday, again within the fortnightly mowing schedule.

I would encourage Councillor Graves to perform his casework privately, by approaching the Grounds Maintenance Team directly as any other member would, rather than grandstanding at Council.