

**COUNCIL**  
**22 October 2013**

**MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

Questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12

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**1. Councillor Azam**

Can the leader comment on the recent activity of the EDL in Bradford?

**Answer**

I am immensely proud of the fact that, once again the people of Bradford, from all backgrounds and communities, treated the presence of the EDL with the contempt they deserved and refused to be provoked or intimidated into reacting to far-right agitation.

The mature reaction of the community to the EDL's hate filled agenda has again left the reputation of the City enhanced while doubtless leaving the EDL disappointed that their pathetic attempts to provoke a reaction were an utter failure.

Nevertheless, the EDL coming to Bradford does require significant forward planning and logistical effort to secure the safety of the community and enable business to continue to trade in safety and security.

I would like to put on record my thanks to the Police who conducted an immensely professional operation, to Hope Not Hate, The Council for Mosques along with other faith groups, Trade Unions and Women for Peace for helping to coordinate the positive community led response and celebration of Bradford, to the many Council officers involved for their huge amount of hard work and diligence, to all those members of community organisations and businesses who worked with us and to those ordinary members of the community who continued to go about their business as usual.

All that effort does of course come with a price tag and Policing alone has cost taxpayers a million pounds. Who pays the bill for EDL activity is something that needs to be looked at as a matter of priority. We also need to look again at the powers to ban such events where they are so clearly not in the public interest and designed solely to promote hatred.

**2. Councillor L'Amie**

Further to the passing of the "Young Carers" motion at the council meeting on 9 July 2013, can the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services provide colleagues with an update as to what progress has been made to date regarding the identification of young carers and putting in place the appropriate support packages etc?

### **Answer**

The Council has a commissioned service to meet the need of young carers – this is provided by Barnardos. We are also promoting early identification in schools and other universal services like health and developing a support pathway through to specialist services. There is a strategic group planning for the new duties placed on authorities via the Children and Families Bill. The new Care Bill will simplify the legislation for young carers making rights and duties clearer to both young people and practitioners. It will extend the right to an assessment to all young carers under the age of 18 regardless of who they care for, what type of care they provide or how often they provide it. We welcome this and data capture of young carers will improve to track that responsibilities are met from all agencies. It will also provide the appropriate links between children and adult legislation to enable a young carer to be assessed with an assessment of the person they care for as a 'whole family' and deliver co-ordinated packages of support.

### **Supplementary Question**

The answer is quite comprehensive but I am not convinced that it is really clear how much of this had already been done at the time of the July Council meeting so my supplementary question would be what extra resources, what extra initiatives, have been instigated in the light of the Council's clear concern?

### **Councillor Berry**

It is very clear. Instead of just writing a strategy out of thin air what we are actually doing is engaging in working with Looked After Children, Children in Care Council and young people to produce the strategy. You can write them cold or you can talk to them and build it with people. That is what we prefer to do.

### **3. Councillor Sunderland**

Question to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services & Health - When purchasing or providing individual Care packages please give details of how many "packets" of time are purchased broken down to show the number of time "packets" for each of the following times.

More than 40 minutes?

31 to 39 minutes?

30 minutes?

16 to 29 minutes?

15 minutes?

11 to 14 minutes?

10 minutes?

9 minutes or less?

**Answer**

The information requested is not part of the standard reporting for Adults and Community Services and as such will require a service request to be written for ICT outlining the data required from the SWIFT chart data base and in what format the report will then need to be run and analysed. We are requesting the report and will make this available to Councillor Sunderland as soon as possible.

**4. Councillor Shabbir**

What immediate measures have Bradford Council put in place to ensure that there will not be a repeat of the tragic death of Hamzah Khan and that lessons are being learned and officials are being held to account for any failure in duty of care?

**Answer**

Hamzah's death is a dreadful tragedy. The circumstances that have emerged during the trial of his mother, who has been convicted of the manslaughter of her son, have shocked and appalled people, in Bradford District and across the country. Bradford Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) has conducted a Serious Case Review and the full overview report will be published. This Serious Case Review is overseen by an independent chair and an independent author and involves senior people from a range of organisations who work with children and families, including the Council. Serious Case Reviews are intended to lead to learning and actions to improve the safety of children in our district and across the country.

I cannot comment on the specific lessons learned prior to publication of the report but I know that Bradford Safeguarding Children Board, the Council and other partners are committed to ensuring that the necessary lessons are learned from this case. The Serious Case Review will address a range of issues regarding what agencies knew about Hamzah and his family, and how they tried to work with the parents, within the parameters available to them at the time. It is not the role of the Serious Case Review to investigate the cause of death or why this child's death was not disclosed by any member of his family.

**Supplementary Question**

Since the case started a number of residents living in Heaton and one in another area, have highlighted other issues that they have wanted to bring forward and their similar experiences around the case. Is there an option just for them to give their feedback into the Serious Case Review?

**Councillor Berry**

I believe we can make appropriate arrangements for them to have a discussion with officers but Serious Case Review is a specific thing that is defined by Government I am afraid but I would not want to dismiss any concerns that people have raised and I think we should be able to facilitate that, absolutely.

## **5. Councillor Warnes**

Will the Leader please tell us how many planning consents granted by the Council since the beginning of 2012 have included a condition that the developer had to incorporate on-site renewable energy technologies into the new building; and explain what measures are in place to ensure that developers are obliged to include these technologies in future applications?

### **Answer**

Whilst we do not hold this information, the Council deals with a number of planning applications that include renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency measures. The Council cannot insist that renewable energy technologies be incorporated into developments, although we do discuss this with developers at pre-application stage and when a planning application has been submitted. There have been a number of development proposals that have included energy efficiency measures (which are required under Building Regulations) and renewable energy measures. However, we do not include conditions to planning permission requiring such technologies as developers are under no obligation under planning legislation and policy.

The Regional Spatial Strategy had a policy that required consideration of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures as part of new developments, but this is no longer a relevant policy requirement. The Council does take into account its adopted Sustainable Design Guide supplementary planning document in the consideration and determination of planning applications – Some developers incorporate sustainable elements within the design of their proposals, such as building orientation/passive solar gain and electric charging points for vehicles, but there is a general reluctance by developers to adopt renewable energy technologies. Developers cite non-viability as a reason for not including such technologies, and we currently do not have the means to require this.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you Leader for the response. I assume by the way that what that means is we do not at all introduce planning conditions requiring the use of renewable technologies or new developments and my follow-up question is that, well, I am puzzled. First of all can you explain why we do not do that when other Councils in the UK like Croydon and Merton have done it for years, and secondly, can you assure me, or re-assure me, that we are going to start doing it in the near future?

### **Councillor Val Slater**

This is quite a complex issue and part of it will be covered in a later motion. The main thing I would say Councillor Warnes is that at the next Council meeting I will be bringing the Core Strategy which is the Council's overarching policies for the next twenty years in respect of planning and sustainable development will be fully covered in that and it would not be right if I anticipated that before all Groups etc and other people had been briefed on it but you will get your chance within the next couple of weeks.

**6. Councillor Hawkesworth**

Does the Leader not agree that it would be wrong for the Council to be party to an arrangement where Council planning Officers obtain advice relating to the creation of a plan which will result in planning permission for large numbers of houses to be built in the district from a professional firm when the same firm is actively advising and will continue to advise developers and landowners who will seek planning permission under that plan in view of the fact that such action will devalue the perception of the Council's impartiality in the public eye?

**Answer**

All consultants the Council employs on the Local Plan are checked to ensure that they do not have a specific conflict of interest with their working for a developer, either existing or subsequently. This is a consideration as part of the appointment process and is monitored through the discharge of any contract. We are not aware of any conflicts of interest arising from the consultants that have been employed to date that have undertaken specific technical work in support for the Local Plan.

**7. Councillor Robinson**

What are the Portfolio Holder's thoughts following other Councils recent change in legislation to prosecute members of the public who "SPIT" on the highways?

**Answer**

I'm aware that earlier this year the London Borough of Waltham Forest Council started issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for spitting as they would for littering and that the courts upheld the prosecution of two individuals who refused to pay their FPNs. In light of this a number of Councils, including Bradford, are exploring or have tried out the approach adopted by Waltham Forest.

It is our view that spitting in the street is objectionable, anti-social and unnecessary and that our environmental enforcement officers should deal with it in the course of their duties as they would with littering or dog fouling.

**Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the answer from the Portfolio Holder. I am a little bit confused. The last paragraph says that environmental enforcement officers should deal with under their current duties. Does that mean that community ward wardens can issue fixed penalty notices under the current legislation?

**Councillor A Thornton**

And the answer to that is yes and we already have.

**8. Councillor Warburton**

Can the Leader update us on progress with the Odeon and Tyrils?

**Answer**

Council will recall that the Executive at its meeting in May agreed to accept the transfer of both the Odeon and the Tyrils from the Homes and Communities Agency to the Council following the HCA's approval of £1.32m for the Odeon and £2.2m funding for the Tyrils. Since this decision officers have been undertaking negotiations with the HCA on the details of the funding agreement.

The funding agreement has now been agreed by the Director of Regeneration and Culture and the transfer of the ownership of the buildings will be completed soon.

The next step for the Odeon is to invite interested parties to come forward with commercially viable proposals which retain all or part of the building. The process inviting initial expressions of interests will be launched in early November with a deadline for bids to be in before Christmas. Proposals will then be long listed and shortlisted before a final decision next summer.

I've made clear that although the Council's preferred option is for a scheme which retains all or part of the building, if no commercial viable scheme can be identified at the end of this process, all development options will be explored. This may include the demolition of the building.

With the Tyrils, the Council is working closely with HMCTS to relocate the cells which currently serve the Magistrates Court. Once relocated the building will be demolished to create a development platform for Grade A offices overlooking City Park.

**9. Councillor Ikram**

What changes have been made to Bradford's inter-agency frontline child protection services since 2010?

**Answer**

The strategic partnership approach to frontline child protection services in the District is overseen by Bradford Safeguarding Children Board. The national driver for the reform of child protection arrangements has been the independent review of child protection undertaken by Professor Eileen Munro. In Bradford, partners' local implementation of the reform programme is resulting in closer and more integrated working between child protection agencies, a revised approach to assessments, the development of new approaches to early help, and a strengthened commitment to high quality multi-agency child protection training. The high priority given to the protection of vulnerable people by the Council, BSCB and all partners is demonstrated by the continued investment in child protection services despite the overall reduction in resources to the Council and all partners. It is pleasing to note that external scrutiny by Ofsted (May 2012) found that Bradford's safeguarding arrangements are good, with outstanding partnerships.

Key local changes during this period include:

- An Integrated Assessment Service for child protection referrals and a Hub for work with young people sexually exploited in the district. These bring together Children's social work staff, police officer, health staff, education and early help practitioners to receive, screen and when appropriate assess referrals. These models have been positively evaluated.
- The Families First Project has been established in Bradford. This is a multi-agency approach to working with 1760 hard to engage families who are identified as having particular problems (calculated as our share of the national total), over three years from April 2012 to March 2015. To date this service has worked successfully with 281 families.
- The new Bradford Single Child Assessment has been developed and is being piloted. This new tool is intended to replace previous national assessment frameworks, which were criticised by Professor Munro. The pilot will test the intention to assist social workers and other professionals to keep a rigorous focus on the child throughout the process of assessment and provide a framework for the systematic gathering and recording of information, analysis and outcome.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the detailed response. My only supplementary question is that am I confidently assured that we now have an effective and robust inter-agency frontline child protection services.

### **Councillor Berry**

According to the Ofsted judgement last year we were good with outstanding partnerships on that but let's not be complacent. There is always a need to learn and improve practice and I can say that over two years ago there are more social workers employed in that area and we have developed a high level of inter-agency working whereby the police, health and social worker all sit around one desk. There was a time some years ago when you had to speak to a customer service advisor. You now speak directly to a social worker but let me say this is a constant journey of improvement and everybody should be aware that these social workers are doing a difficult job at a time of great pressure but I believe that we are doing our best.

### **10. Councillor Cooke**

Does the Leader of the Council believe that multi-million pound public contracts should be issued without a competitive tender process?

### **Answer**

The Council's Contract Standing Orders (CSO) (Part 3G of the Constitution) set out the competitive tendering processes that should be applied to the letting of contracts. The vast majority of contracts are let competitively. However for some contracts a competitive procedure is either not feasible or not appropriate (for example there may only be one supplier). The ten

potential grounds for exception from the requirement for competition are set out in CSO Paragraph 11.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you for a very unhelpful answer essentially. The question I asked was does the Leader of the Council believe that these contracts should be issued without tendering, not an extract from the Council's Standing Orders. Perhaps I could give an illustration of one which was actually not issued by us but by Leeds City Council but it was issued on the behest of the Leeds City Region Leaders Board and it was a contract for £2½m for Leeds and Partners which was issued for work on inward investments into the Leeds City Region and it was issued without any tendering process. Does the Leader actually think this is the way in which we go about issuing large contracts of that nature which are politically sensitive and which are significant to Bradford?

### **Councillor Green**

Thank you for that question and I most probably could have given you a much more detailed answer if you had asked that question in the first place Councillor Cooke but we all play our games. It is a shame that your supplementary is factually incorrect but that the contract was let by Leeds City Regional Local Enterprise Partnership and not by the Leaders Board and it is to work for Leeds City Region which goes beyond the Leaders Board and I do not know the full details off the top of my head about how that was procured but I will find out and I will let you know the detail.

### **11. Councillor Sher Khan**

What benefits will the introduction of technology to deliver non-invasive autopsies bring to the communities of Bradford District and is it fair to say that Bradford is leading the way on this issue?

### **Answer**

The introduction of technology to facilitate less-invasive post mortems will provide the Coroner in appropriate cases with the option to use a 3D Digital scanner to provide a cause of death as an alternative to the traditional invasive post mortem. A post mortem is usually only required where there has been a sudden unexpected death often due to an accident or undiagnosed illness. This means that families are dealing with an already very traumatic situation. If the cause of death can be ascertained by means of a scan it will mean that a family will not have the additional stress and anxiety of knowing that their loved one has had to undergo a very invasive procedure to find out how they died.

The benefits to all the District's communities are clear and I am very proud that Bradford is at the forefront of pioneering this technology which over time will benefit not only people in this District but across the country.



## **Supplementary Question**

First of all I welcome this technology to Bradford. I think that Bradford will be proud of this technology. My question will be how many will be done within the period of time in Bradford and when it is going to start.

### **Councillor Imran Hussain**

I am delighted as well and I think everybody should be. This is a state of the art technology for the district and I think once again Bradford has pioneered in this area and led on the way for many other Councils and districts up and down the country perhaps that this facility is now going to be open to. What we are not saying, and I want to be clear, is that from next year when this technology is available every single case will be dealt with through non-invasive post-mortems because it is still very early in its progression stages and there is still quite a lot of research. What it does mean is that actually hopefully by the end of next year quite a lot of cases where there is not really a need for invasive and intrusive post-mortems will be allowed to be done in this non-invasive way. I do think that is something that is of benefit to all communities and I think that is something we can celebrate in playing a big part because I do think non-invasive post-mortems are the way of the future and one day I think we will look back and say we played our role in that.

### **12. Councillor Lynne Smith**

What is the potential impact on the Council's finances of the Government's decision to top-slice and hold back a billion pounds in local government funding?

#### **Answer**

The Government's decision to reduce Council's main stream general revenue support grant by £1bn more than was indicated in the 2013 Spending round will have a significant detrimental impact on services and their users.

Finance Officers across the country briefed Elected Members on the implications of the original June announcements, only to learn a month later that the funding reductions and assumptions, as outlined in the consultation, significantly exceeded the headline figures announced as part of the June Spending Round.

The largest proportion of the reductions has affected the Council's Revenue Support Grant (RSG), the only needs based element of Council's funding. Over the next two years Bradford's RSG will reduce in cash terms by £78m (43%). This disproportionate impact will affect not only Bradford but also other deprived authorities with high needs and relatively limited capacity to increase Business Rates and Council Tax.

Whilst some of the "held-back" funding may find its way back to the Council, the lack of clarity and drip feeding of additional information on how local authorities can access these funds undermines Officers' ability to reliably advise Elected Members and carry out effective medium term financial planning.

With the exception of £100m to be allocated to authorities participating in collaborative working, it is currently estimated that the remaining £700m will come with new responsibilities and additional costs. The most significant allocations falling into this category being: - £335m for social care transitional new burden costs as a result of Dilnot recommendations and £188m for one off costs associated with the transfer of the Independent Living Fund from the DWP. There is therefore considered to be limited scope for the Council to bring in any of this additional funding into its current budget forecast without incurring additional costs

### **Supplementary Question**

If I have read this correctly especially the penultimate paragraph, is this just more smoke and mirrors and shuffling money around, gathering it into a central pot and then distributing it in a different way and if officers' ability to reliably advise us is undermined by this, how are we going to proceed to set our budgets correctly?

### **Councillor Green**

Definitely smoke and mirrors. I think that what we are facing is, and to be fair Central Government 'twas ever thus, where they announced a new funding regime and then turn round and point out it is an old funding regime that they have just rebadged and in as many cases taken it away from other front line services. The potential effect of this on Bradford is as Council already knows potentially £15m in further cuts dependent on what we can start pulling back but we do not know what the rules for that are, we do not know what the criteria for that are and we would hope that at some point somebody from Westminster or Whitehall would get round to telling us so that we can actually do what we are always told that we need to do which is financially manage this Council well. We are doing it well, the problem is that the Government keeps putting impediments in our path to allow us to do it better.

### **13. Councillor Baroness Eaton**

Can the Leader of the Council inform colleagues of what training is provided not only to senior officers of the council but any others who have regular interactions with elected members, regarding the political aspects of local government?

### **Answer**

Training and development of officers who have regular interactions with elected members, regarding the political aspects of local government includes:

- on the job support by more senior colleagues in the form of both checking advice and shadowing at appropriate meetings or briefings
- coaching and mentoring sessions about working in a political arena
- a political awareness session in the leadership and management development programme
- information in the manager induction pack

- specific events for Public Health, Education, Neighbourhoods teams recently
- occasional shadowing of elected members

Increasingly, training and development opportunities have been provided where both members and officers have attended and interacted to gain joint understanding of topics. Recent examples of this are the Safeguarding Adults and children's programme and a regional health inequalities conference.

### **Supplementary Question**

I would like to thank the Leader for the information provided but in spite of the training opportunities listed I think many Members of Council come across officers who are on the front line working in our wards and so on who seem totally unaware of the role of Councillors and do not understand fully the democratic process. Could the Leader please advise us whether such awareness is part of the induction for all staff and officers?

### **Councillor Green**

I will get you the full details of that induction course so that you can have it. What I will say is that I myself have actually attended some of those induction courses if you like as the voice of the political elite, which means you lot, to try and explain that relationship and the importance of local Councillors and also senior Councillors in the different roles they carry out. I do think, and I would agree with Councillor Baroness Eaton, that we do need to get better at it because I think in particular as the Council is delayed, so more and more people are coming into contact with elected Members who historically at their grade perhaps would not as much. I think we need to get that understanding all the way through the Council whereas before it may well have stopped at a supervisory level. Those levels have been delayed out at the management. I think it is more incumbent on us to make sure that people understand our role as local Councillors and also that we understand their role. So I will get you the details of the current induction process and it will be quite interesting to hear comments from Councillors about how we can improve that because I think you are right.

### **14. Councillor Sher Khan**

How much has the Council cut management costs by, including senior management, since May 2010?

### **Answer**

Management costs have been reduced across the Council since 2010 when 9 Senior Management posts were deleted, following this 2 further posts were deleted in 2013. In total, excluding the posts of Director of West Yorkshire Pension Fund and Director of Public Health, management costs have been reduced by over £1m since 2010.

The Council has also undertaken a Management Delaying exercise which has reduced management across the Council by 300 posts with a total saving of just over £9m a year

In total, since 2010 the Council has saved over £10m in management costs.

**15. Councillor Geoff Reid**

Question to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning & Transport - Residents living adjacent to the Fagley Quarry site in Eccleshill/Fagley are concerned about the proposed substantial housing development there, but no further consultation or a planning application has appeared. Will the Portfolio Holder confirm now if and when this scheme is due to go ahead?

**Answer**

To date the Council have not received a planning application for the site at Fagley Quarry for residential development and no information has been submitted indicating that an application will be submitted in the near future. However, if the landowners do decide to submit a planning application then they would be encouraged to consult the public before they submit their plans to the Council under a process known as "community engagement". This would allow local residents the opportunity to view the plans and comment early in the design process and raise issues for the developer to consider. If a planning application is submitted at a later date for this site then the Council's Planning Service would embark upon an extensive formal public consultation exercise as soon as the plans are submitted. This would include sending notification letters to nearby residents, posting sites notices and advertising the application in the local press.

**16. Councillor Warburton**

Since the inception of the New Homes Bonus, how many new houses have been built year on year and how much has this raised in funds for the District?

**Answer**

Since the inception of the New Homes Bonus, 2,150 new homes have been built in the District, and £5,505,595 has been paid to the Council for the delivery of new homes.

**Supplementary Question**

I thank the Leader very much for the answer. Just a few comments and really a bit more information and background. While it is a good thing that we are performing well in terms of gaining income on this New Homes Bonus, is it not the case that Bradford would have received more Government funding if it had continued to distribute this money according to need instead of new homes built? Also is it not the case that this would apply to Council tax freeze grant which redistributes money according to the size of Council tax rates not need?

**Councillor Val Slater**

I can answer part of that. I think we have done well in using the New Homes Bonus. I think many Councils do actually regret that it was top sliced and taken out of the rates support grant but actually Bradford have done really well, not only with the new homes that are being built but also the empty homes that we have brought back into being. I think we are in the top three of Councils in the country. It is regrettable however that in future there will be a further top slice and 35% of it will be going to the LEP so we cannot then guarantee that that money will definitely come back for the use in Bradford

because I think we have been quite successful with that money to ameliorate some of the other cuts that we have had and to actually bring about much needed initiatives in Bradford. And I cannot answer the second bit.

**17. Councillor Mallinson**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning & Transport Portfolio Holder advise colleagues of what actions the Council are taking with relation to landowners and house-builders, to bring forward the development of significant sites with existing planning permission for housing?

**Answer**

The ability to influence developers to commence building on stalled housing schemes where there is an extant planning consent is very limited. Ultimately the decision to proceed with a housing scheme on a consented site will depend on a number of factors including scheme viability, the value of land and local market conditions. The Government have introduced a number of initiatives to seek to kick-start the house building industry including the introduction of the "New Home Bonus" and the "Help to Buy" scheme. The government has also introduced legislation that forces local authorities to reconsider existing S106 agreements with a view to removing the burden of affordable housing and other S106 contributions that may affect scheme viability. The Council have already received a number of applications to alter existing S106 Agreements and every assistance will be given wherever possible to make schemes viable. Since 2009 Bradford Council have taken a flexible approach to the delivery of new housing bearing in mind the implications of S106 Agreements, this to ensure that scheme viability is fully taken into consideration and to assist developers in bringing forward the development of significant sites with existing planning permission for housing. There are notable successes where this flexible approach has delivered new housing in Bingley, Keighley and the inner urban areas of Bradford.

**Supplementary Question**

Will the Portfolio Holder agree with me that this practice of developers, once we have got through all of these hurdles, got them an approved planning application, that they then come back as you have described once as 'mice nibbling at cheese' by reducing housing numbers. This practice must be stopped.

**Councillor Val Slater**

I actually do agree with you yes and I did use the phrase that people come back and it is like mice nibbling away a piece of cheese. The unfortunate thing is in the current planning regulations people get permission to build, it is not an obligation and therefore the powers that we have got as Council to actually force them to build at all or build whatever they originally asked for, is very limited and I do regret that.

**18. Councillor Jabar**

What support is the Council providing to Kings Science Academy in the wake of its Ofsted judgement?

**Answer**

The Local Authority continues to engage with all Community Schools, Academies and Free Schools in Bradford.

Following the Ofsted inspection of Kings Science Academy officers have written to the Academy to offer their support. The Strategic Director and Assistant Director have met with the Academy sponsor to discuss support for the school. The Council's Governor Support service are currently working with the School's Governing Body and providing advice and training. Kings Science Academy have become a member of the Bradford Partnership (of secondary Schools)

As part of the ongoing partnership work, the Local Authority are working with the Bradford Partnership (of Secondary Schools) and a peer headteacher and former HMI are undertaking a review of the school in November and will provide a report which will contain recommendations for future action.

**19. Councillor Ahmed**

Could the Leader give us the confidence that those officers responsible at senior levels are here and committed to the needs of our District and could he assure us that processes are in place to ensure senior officers declare any conflicts of interest in any activities and projects inside and outside the Bradford District that conflict with their role here in Bradford. Is the Leader confident that all these declarations have been made?

**Answer**

I am confident that all officers working for Bradford Council are committed to meeting the needs of the District and to providing good quality public services to the people of the District. The Council's Officer Code of Conduct has been reviewed and up dated recently in consultation with the Trade Unions and was approved by the Governance and Audit Committee on 30th November 2011. The Code sets out the obligations placed on all Council employees in relation to conflicts of interest, neutrality, secondary employment/private work and confidentiality of the Council's business interests. The up dated Code and its contents were publicised in Pride at Work in the Winter 2012 edition to ensure all staff were made aware of their obligations. I am satisfied that our procedures are up to date and have been circulated to staff to ensure, as far as it is possible to do so, compliance. Where concerns are raised they are investigated and appropriate action is taken.

**20. Councillor Swallow**

What impact is the bedroom tax having on children's movement between schools?

**Answer**

The Council's Revenues and Benefits team have identified 1177 households with 1985 children that have been affected by this housing benefit rule change. Some affected children will be below school age. Some affected households will not yet have moved to smaller accommodation and will be seeking to meet the shortfall themselves. In the case of Incommunities, 612 households had terminated their tenancy in order to move to smaller accommodation by October 2013. Of these, 250 or 41% were households with one or more children under the age of 18.

A total of 112 households with children have been granted a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) under the revised DHP policy which aims to minimise disruption to education by prioritising households where children are within one year of reaching the eligible age for a separate bedroom or are in a significant assessment or examination year at school and so would experience considerable educational disruption. It is hoped that this policy has reduced the number of families who have had to request a school move on these grounds.

The school place planning team processes approximately 13,000 applications per annum for an in-school year move into or between schools in the District. The majority result from families moving into the District. The applicants are asked to state the reason for requesting a school move on the application form, most record only that they have moved, without giving a causal reason. The team is aware of only one application since April 2013 that has explicitly recorded the rule change on spare rooms as the reason for requesting a school move.

**21. Councillor Poulsen**

Can the Leader of the Council provide details of meetings involving the Council, held over the last year, about proposals to provide a commuter service on the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway?

**Answer**

Council officers have been involved in two meetings concerning the potential for commuter services to be introduced onto the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway (KWVR).

The first in June this year involved Department for Transport officers, K&WVR management, Metro Officers, Bradford Officers, Cllr Val Slater, Cllr James Lewis (Metro Chair), Cllr Graham Mitchell (Keighley Town Council) and Cllr Neal Cameron (Oxenhope Parish Council). The meeting was instigated by the Worth Valley Joint Transport Committee and reviewed work previously undertaken by them into the concept of commuter services on the KWVR. The DfT made it clear in the meeting that they were not in a position to provide funding for potential commuter services and that would be a matter for the Integrated Transport Authority (Metro), working with Bradford Council. It was agreed in the meeting that KWVR would look at operating costs and Metro would review potential demand for the service.

The second meeting in August was a technical discussion involving DfT, KWVR, Metro and Bradford officers. This was held on the KWVR and allowed

the DfT to experience the railway in operation and view the potential rolling stock. Metro presented the results of a study which updated previous work undertaken by the Worth Valley Joint Transport Committee. This indicated that the introduction of a commuter service would require significant ongoing subsidy and that the commercial risks to the KWVR were not fully understood. One option would be to promote the introduction of commuter services as an economic regeneration scheme rather than a transport one which could widen the scope for funding.

**22. Councillor Shafiq**

What are the implications for Bradford of the proposals within the Children and Families Bill to remove Council's roles in recruiting and assessing adopters?

**Answer**

The Government wants to see more children being adopted by loving families with less delay. It has introduced new recruitment arrangements, timescales and adoption support provision to help this to happen. The Government has also created a new power within the recent Children and Families Bill for Ministers to drive an increase in adopter recruitment by outsourcing if necessary. At the moment 80% of adopters for Looked After Children are recruited through Local Authority Adoption Agencies. Information from The Department Of Education and BAAF suggests that outsourcing will be required where the Local Authority is not able to make the necessary changes and improvements to reduce delay.

We hope this will not happen here. In Bradford we have already implemented many changes with more planned to improve the Adoption Service. We have used the Adoption Reform resources to change the service focusing two teams on recruitment, one team on family finding and one team on Adoption Support. We have changed the recruitment process to incorporate the new structure and timescales of the government changes. The service will run specific targeted recruitment campaigns (the first one is in November) and are changing the website and information for prospective adopters. In Bradford we recognise that families who adopt Looked After Children need ongoing support which is more easily available if people live locally. If it is not possible to find local families for children we quickly refer to the national register giving all our children the best opportunity to be with a family.

Removing the Council from the process could jeopardise the progress that we are making and potentially make things worse, not better, for children and adopters.

There is still a need for a proportion of children to find a family through other agencies and I believe that those agencies should work alongside the Council in finding adoptive parents, not replace it.



**23. Councillor Swallow**

What action is the Council taking to bring empty properties including former commercial properties back into use and what powers does it have to force developers to utilise such sites before building on previously undeveloped land and/or owners of such properties to bring them back into use?

**Answer**

The Empty Property Loan is one of a number of tools used to help bring empty properties back into use but does not cost the Local Authority anything to administer as it is provided as part of the Regional Loan Scheme. Continuing investment by the Council in empty homes and the consequent successful use of a full range of tools has led to a significant reduction in long term empty properties in the district and the subsequent generation of substantial new homes bonus payments from the government such that Bradford became the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest recipient of New Homes Bonus nationally in 2012/13 (figures for 2013/14 are not yet available).

Within the City Centre growth zone there are a range of financial incentives to encourage the use of empty buildings.

Nothing in planning legislation or policy that requires developers to consider a sequential approach to site selection for development, that compels developers to build on previously developed sites.

The Council does not have any powers to compel owners to bring their empty homes back into use. The Council incentivises owners to bring properties back into use through its application of Council Tax. It can also use powers to enforce sale where an owner has eligible debt to the Council. Compulsory purchase powers are used as a last resort whereby the Council seeks to take ownership of the property from the owner but this is a long process and is not guaranteed to succeed.

**24. Councillor Middleton**

Question to the Leader of Council - How much to date has been received of the prosecution costs of £38,635 ordered to be paid in May 2013 by the defendants in the Tradex/Beckside Road Bazaar case?

**Answer**

The court gave the defendants six months to pay the fine and costs. The date for payment is due to expire on the 3 November and to date no payment has been received. Should the payments remain outstanding after this date then appropriate further action will be taken.

**25. QUESTION WITHDRAWN**

**26. Councillor Vanda Greenwood**

Does the Leader share concerns that the Transparency of Lobbying, Non Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill will severely curtail the ability of charities, voluntary organisations and Trade Unions to campaign on matters of local and national importance and result in the gagging of democratic debate and scrutiny?

**Answer**

The Lobbying Bill is profoundly undemocratic seeking, as it does, to curb the ability of charities and voluntary sector organisations big and small along with trade unions and others to carry out legitimate campaigning and to challenge politicians. By effectively criminalising campaigning the Bill attacks civil society and individual rights while failing to tackle the real issue of secret corporate lobbying.

If enacted the Bill would increase significantly the number of activities by non-party organisations which could be considered “for election purposes” while halving the level of expenditure which requires them to register with and then regularly report to the Electoral Commission.

It will have a pernicious affect on the ability of organisations in this District to hold national politicians to account on matters of local and national importance and I would urge people across the District to join the national campaign to oppose it recognising it as a failure that would only result in 1% of UK lobbying activity being registered, and to urge their MPs to do the same.

**27. Councillor Ross-Shaw**

How many green deal assessments have been done and deals signed up to in Bradford and nationally?

**Answer**

Nationally, the latest figures are that there were 71,210 Green Deal Assessments lodged by the end of August 2013. These assessments have resulted in a total of 677 GD Plans (293 ‘new’, 372 ‘pending’ & 12 ‘live’).

In Bradford, the latest figures are 268 Green Deal Assessments in the District lodged by the end of June (out of a total of 44,479 nationally at the time). No figures are available for the number of GD Plans for this period.

The next quarterly publication will be released on 19 December 2013 and will contain more detailed information on activity up to the end of September, including geographic breakdowns of Green Deal Assessments and ECO measures and estimates of self-financed measures.

**28. Councillor Davies**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Transport provide details of the cost to run of the Council’s Empty Property Loan scheme and does she consider it a success when in two years only seven loans have been completed?

**Answer**

The Empty Property Loan is just one of a range of tools developed and used by the Empty Homes Team to bring empty homes back into use. The loan is particularly useful for targeting properties in very high levels of disrepair. The scheme does not cost the Local Authority anything to administer as it is provided as part of the Regional Loan Scheme.

Continuing investment by the Council in empty homes and the consequent successful use of a full range of tools has led to a significant reduction in long term empty properties in the district and the subsequent generation of substantial new homes bonus payments from the government such that Bradford became the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest recipient of New Homes Bonus nationally in 2012/13 (figures for 2013/14 are not yet available).

Bringing empty homes back into use brings significant benefits in removing blight from local communities and helping to reduce the amount of previously undeveloped land required to meet the District's housing needs. These benefits can be difficult to quantify in purely financial terms but are very important to communities across the District. I believe that the benefits, both financial and in terms of quality of life, environment and general well being represent value for money for our investment.

**29. Councillor Lynne Smith**

Does the Leader believe that the Government's intention to put the Local Authority Publicity Code on a statutory footing will help or hinder the Council's ability to stand up for the interests of its citizens and communities?

**Answer**

The Government's proposals to put the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity on a statutory footing will definitely hinder the Council's ability to stand up for its citizens and communities. Our support for the National Media Museum and for maintaining children's cardiac surgery in the region are examples of recent campaigns that would be hindered.

It is undemocratic, unnecessary and bureaucratic to give the Secretary of State the powers to issue a "direction requiring one or more local authorities to comply with one, some or all of the Publicity Code's recommendations - whenever he thinks it is appropriate to do so."

It's also incomprehensible and inconsistent, in the context of the Government's stated commitment to localism.

Council publicity is best dealt with by Elected Members at local level, in accordance with the current Code.

These proposed new powers undermine directly the democratic nature, community leadership role and responsibilities of councils. They would give central Government power to control the publicity of local authorities, which will limit the ability of all democratically elected councils to campaign on behalf of their residents on important local issues.

The new legislation proposed has the potential to create additional costs for national and local taxpayers, generated by the issuing and enforcing of directions to comply.

Section 4 of the Local Government Act 1986 already provides that local authorities should have regard to codes of practice on local authority publicity issued by the Secretary of State when making decisions on publicity.

In addition, local authorities are already able to demonstrate that consideration has been given to the value for money that is being achieved through compliance with contract standing orders and financial regulations.

Councils are accountable to the public for the efficiency and effectiveness of their expenditure not only through audit arrangements, but much more significantly through the ballot box.

**30. Councillor Wainwright**

What are the implications for the District's Clinical Commissioning Groups of the Government's proposals to significantly reduce the weight given to inequality in the distribution of resources?

**Answer**

NHS England is undertaking a review of its funding allocations policy.

If implemented the proposed new formula will reduce the CCG baselines by c£12.6m for Bradford (including Craven as part of Airedale and Wharfedale CCG).

A key issue in the new formula is a significant change to the weight given to deprivation and a strengthening of the weight given to age - this has obvious implications for Bradford given the underlying demographic and socio-economic picture and its relatively high levels of deprivation. The net effect of this change would be to shift significant resources from Northern England for redistribution to the Midlands and the South.

The impact on decision making is uncertain and difficult to predict. This is a matter for CCGs to determine. The impact may also be dependant on the pace of change that is adopted. The speed at which actual funding allocations will move towards is unknown.

The way in which funding formulas will affect the commissioning decisions of NHSE (both for primary care and specialised services) is uncertain.

**31. Councillor Shah**

Can the Leader of the Council advise colleagues of whether council policy permits the distribution of advertising material, promoting a specific business, sent out with the council's list of approved providers of the same service, particularly when the company in question is not on the approved list?

**Answer**

The Council should not itself distribute the advertising material of any specific business when providing information on our approved list of suppliers.

**Supplementary Question**

In light of the fact that the Council is doing just that, as the question you said that the Council does not distribute the advertising material. Issues have been raised and it has been brought to my attention that the Council is doing just that. So in the words of my constituent who actually raised this issue to me, she asked that am I to conclude that this is at best incompetence and at worst corruption. Which of the two would you suggest that I tell her it is?

**Councillor Green**

The answer is neither. I do not know to what you refer and if you were that worried about it I am taking it that you would have actually put down some details so that we could have investigated the issue but if it is something that is delivered by the post office or by a commercial deliverer it is not uncommon for them to deliver more than one item at the time although when it has happened in the past we have made it clear, particularly to the post office, that we did not want any additional leaflets or anything else being put inside Community Pride for instance which is what gets delivered by them. So it is clear that they are separate to the Council newspaper but if that is the issue that your constituent has raised, if you would like to give us some details, we will go back to the post office or whoever is delivering it and make sure that they are aware of our position.

**32. Councillor Middleton**

Question to the Leader of Council - How many 'Zero Hour' contracts does City of Bradford MDC employ?

**Answer**

Bradford Council does not employ staff on 'Zero Hour' Contracts. However, in relation to third party suppliers a number of industries (for example, domiciliary care, security and stewarding services) commonly employ staff without specified hours. The Council does not have access to this information from its suppliers of services. We will be looking at this issue as our procurement policy is reviewed.

**Supplementary Question**

Reading the answer, am I right to assume from the answer that the intention of Bradford Council when it's rights of specification for procurement that it will be asking the question about whether the intention will be to employ employees on those contracts on 'Zero Hour' contracts.

**Councillor Green**

I would have to say that it is not currently in the procurement policy but I have asked that it will be.

**33. Councillor Shabbir**

In the light of recent cases in Oxford, Rochdale and Rotherham where it was highlighted that there was a culture amongst social workers and safeguarding officials of ignoring complaints made by victims and the family of victims as they were seen as unreliable, lacking objectivity and dysfunctional; can the Council assure the public that their complaints will be taken seriously and social workers will not impose their judgements over complainants especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds and BME groups?

**Answer**

We take concerns about the welfare of all children very seriously irrespective of their background.

Bradford Children's Social Work Services have been subject to three consecutive Ofsted inspections of the Councils' Child Protection Services. Unannounced inspections by Ofsted of our contact, referral and assessment services were undertaken in 2009 and 2010. These were followed by a full 4 week Ofsted inspection of our safeguarding and services to our looked after children, in May 2012. These inspections were extremely robust in scrutinising how we respond to concerns about the welfare of all children, including those across disadvantaged and BME groups. All of these inspections were positive and did not report the messages from cases in other authorities, as we have seen in other parts of the country.

In February 2012 a multi agency Integrated Assessment Service was created. The team is made up of Social Workers, a Police Officer, Education Officer and Health Visitor, all working together to respond to new referrals which report safeguarding issues for children and young people, living in the Bradford District. Our workforce is reflective of the communities that we serve and we have a history of good partnership working. Our re-referral rates are monitored and scrutinised, to ensure that referrals are responded to appropriately and in a timely manner, across all communities. Bradford Children's Social Work Services are partners in the Multi Agency Hub Team that was set up by West Yorkshire Police, to respond to any concern about a child at risk of child sexual exploitation. We have a full time Team Manager and a full time Social Worker in the Hub, to work with the Police and other partners in identifying, responding and intervening with this group of vulnerable children and their families.

**34. Councillor Warnes**

Will the Leader please (a) provide estimates of the likely annual energy consumption and carbon footprint of each of the four schools included in the Priority Schools Building Programme, and also (b) please clarify what the energy consumption and carbon footprint of these schools would be in the event that each of these new schools was constructed to a standard equivalent to BREEAM Outstanding?

**Answer**

The Education Funding Agency is delivering the Priority Schools Building Programme rather than the Authority and the EFA has stated “ we are currently at Outline Business case stage. The energy consumption and carbon footprints will not be known until the detailed design stage is completed, and will be dependent upon the contractors design solution. There are many elements of the design that will affect the energy consumption including, but not limited to, the orientation of the building, its location on site, the mechanical and electrical systems employed, the inclusion, if any of renewable energy provisions etc. The output specifications which define the design requirements are available on the Department’s web site.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you Leader for the response. In a triumph of hope over experience I am going to ask a follow up in the hope of getting some detailed information back. You basically have not been able to give me the estimates that I am after. Surely that is possible to do given the fact that there are lots of existing school buildings in the UK of a similar design to the ones that we are about to build and secondly that the kinds of technologies that we could incorporate into the new schools are very well known and somebody should be able to tell me what sort of energy savings they can provide?

### **Councillor Berry**

You point out one of the perverse consequences of the nationalisation of the building of schools by Central Government removing the expertise that we have built up in this City in the area that you refer to. If only we had the ability to get them to listen to what we do, what we want to do, and how we have done it but this is being done by a national model of procurement and we will try again because I think everything you say is right but this is the consequences of the effect of nationalisation of the schools building programme.

### **35. Councillor Townend**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Sport advise colleagues whether the council has been in negotiations regarding Bracken Hall for several months and if so provide an update regarding progress, including details of whether this includes terms based upon a peppercorn rent?

### **Answer**

Officers have discussed the principle of community asset transfer with representatives of the Town Council which has been asked to put forward a business plan to include sources of capital and revenue funding for consideration. The Council’s starting position is that any transfer will take place at market value. The scope to reduce market value will be considered having regard to the nature of the proposals and the extent to which they support this Council’s priorities and objectives.

**36. Councillor Cooke**

Can the Leader of the Council advise members of what steps has the portfolio holder taken to ensure the continued operation of Bingley Riding for the Disabled out of St Ives?

**Answer**

St. Ives Equestrian Centre at Home Farm is on a 125 year lease and the conditions of lease can be varied by agreement after 2014.

The portfolio holder is aware of the issues associated with the ongoing use of the Equestrian Centre by Bingley Riding for the Disabled (which is a volunteer run branch of the national charity) and is fully committed to ensuring that the work of disabled riding school is able to continue.

The Council has already made arrangements for additional grazing on the Estate for Bingley Riding for the Disabled at a peppercorn rent and officers are looking at alternative premises at the Coach house as well as working with the St. Ives Equestrian Centre to secure a stable future for the disabled riding school.

**Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the albeit brief answer to the question which I know I suspect the Portfolio Holder has rather a larger sheet of correspondence on the subject. My supplementary is have the Council looked at the requirements under the various planning permissions for the Equestrian Centre that they are required to make provision for riding for the disabled as part of those planning permissions and that if it is not going to happen then are we going to take action against the operators for failing to comply with their planning permission?

**Councillor A Thornton**

You are quite right Councillor Cooke. I have got a list of whole load of things here that relate to both the granting of planning permission in 2005 which talks about the principle use but also about what the terms of the lease are and certainly we will continue to look at that as we go forward. Whether we will be taking planning enforcement action I am not sure this is necessarily right within my Portfolio.