

## COUNCIL 21 MARCH 2017

### MEMBER QUESTION TIME

Questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12

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#### 1. **Councillor Dunbar**

Will the Leader agree with me in saying that the budget announced by the Chancellor earlier this month is bad for Bradford and the country as a whole as it attacks the young, vulnerable, business owners and older people in need of support?

#### **Answer**

The full impact of the budget itself will only become clear over time. We have already seen the Chancellor U-turn over his proposal to increase National Insurance contributions for the self-employed. We have made clear our ongoing concerns around the Government's school funding proposals and the continuing absence of a proper plan to fund social care. Although we welcome the additional grant funding for social care in the budget, we await a long-term solution.

There is evidence from multiple sources which shows the poor, the vulnerable and women have been disproportionately affected. Many of these women belong to the "just about managing" families that the Prime Minister has pledged will be a key priority for the government.

As a District it is important that we continue to stand up for Bradford district and work together for a better deal for all our residents.

#### **Supplementary Question**

Thanks for the response Leader. Just a point on the education element of the budget. It clearly stated in the Conservative Party Manifesto that they pledged a real terms increase in the schools budget during this parliament but the reality is far from that case. 98% of schools across the country will see a real term's loss in funding per pupil between now and 2020 so would the Leader agree with me in saying that instead of tackling the crisis they created in the education system the Tory Party have got their priorities all wrong by wasting money in the opening of new free schools and grammar schools?

#### **Councillor Hinchcliffe**

Yes you are right. I think the schools funding is a debate we have already had in this Chamber and it is increasingly coming to light of course that a lot of schools are losing out under this. Again it is a cross party approach that people are lobbying at the moment so Conservative MPs and Labour MPs are all saying we do not like the national formula for school funding, can you do something about it. That is a conversation that is going on both inside this Chamber and outside it. So the actual consultation finishes tomorrow I believe submission is tomorrow and we are sending our submission in today I think. So that has gone through. So we wait to see what the Government conclusion is.

## 2. **Councillor Brown**

Given the current doubts as to whether the use of Bio-mass fuel actually reduces the amount of carbon added to the atmosphere (when considering the change of use from food to bio- mass production, transport, processing , amount of carbon returned to the soil via natural “mulching”, etc.) when compared to use of more traditional carbon fuels , can the Leader of the Council confirm whether the Council’s climate change function, holds a quotable view on this current, and more comprehensive, thinking? Further, are there any statistics available for the Council’s use of these and other “renewables” and the, impact positive or negative, on their contribution to carbon in the atmosphere?

### **Answer**

Chatham House has recently published a report on Woody Biomass for Power and Heat Impacts on the Global Climate. This looks at and critiques a range of wood fuel supply chain issues globally and includes for example:

- woodchip versus manufactured wood pellet,
- environmental impacts of harvest on virgin forest
- carbon accounting and emissions throughout the wood fuel supply chain
- accounting for emissions from land use change
- Fuel harvest, the forest cycle and sustainability

The recommendations are essentially aimed at refining international and national carbon accounting protocols and developing shifts in the policy paradigm for example to:

- ensure that subsidies do not encourage the biomass industry to divert raw material (such as mill residues) away from alternative uses (such as fibreboard), which have far lower impacts on carbon emissions

Officers within the Council are aware of these supply chain issues and have actively sought to source wood chip fuel, not manufactured wood pellets, from local and sustainable resources.

All the Council's large biomass boilers use wood chip from an Ilkley based supplier sourcing materials from Yorkshire woodland arisings.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the answer to that question. I would just like to see that the materials that were being used were grown exclusively in the Yorkshire region.

### **Councillor Val Slater**

I think this is a confusing one. Very technical and it goes across a number of portfolios but as I believe the answer states is that the woodchips from a Ilkley based supplier sourcing materials from Yorkshire woodland arisings, whatever arisings are, very technical. I will ask officers to check that but I think the answer is yes. Mr Del Monte says yes.

## 3. **Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

To ask the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport - Can the Portfolio Holder explain the rationale behind the Executive's decision not to support

the decision of the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to approve the formalisation of the ban of A Boards across all clearly identified urban centre of the District?

### **Answer**

The consideration given to this issue by Executive had to balance the impact of the pavement obstruction ban on both disabled people, who have campaigned on this issue for some time, and local businesses, who have expressed significant concern at various committee meetings and in petitions to the Council about the impact of the ban on their levels of trading.

The potential future implications of maintaining the ban, widening its scope to other urban centres (as recommended by the Health and Social Care O&S Committee) or even District Wide or reverting to the previous Code of Practice arrangements were presented to the committee. All these factors had to be balanced with the amount of available resources which the Council could bring to bear, not only in relation to front-line officers but in back office support to make any system workable in the context of a shrinking budget with a further round of cuts agreed in the latest budget.

A wide ranging review of the approaches of other Councils (both within West Yorkshire and nationally) was also undertaken to establish how other Councils are able to perform the statutory duty of dealing with obstruction of the highway effectively.

Each of these options was properly considered within the Executive report and subsequent deliberation and upon balance the approach of introducing a limited licencing model was approved.

Such a model successfully operates throughout the UK and ensures that advertising boards are only placed in appropriate places on the highway where there is space to both place a board and allow free passage of pedestrians. The licencing scheme will also permit conditions in relation to the size, shape and design of boards to be placed on businesses wishing to advertise their goods/services together with hours when these can legitimately be placed on the highway.

Based on the experience in Kirklees we anticipate approximately 75% of A-boards will be removed under a licensing programme, while generating a small amount of revenue to help fund enforcement activities.

As members will be aware this is a complex issue with no simple, or single, answer. Regardless the Council are not in a position to expand activities without funding and therefore a licensing model was approved by the Executive that is anticipated to reduce A-board numbers, ensure those that remain are appropriately sited and generate revenue to fund enforcement.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you to the portfolio holder for your answer to the question. It clearly is a contentious issue. But would he care to comment about how he feels about comments from members of the community who believe that the Council has let

them down and that they have been stabbed in the back and how is he going to repair these very important relationships?

#### **Councillor Ross-Shaw**

Thank you Councillor Sunderland. Totally understand that campaigners have been campaigning for this for a number of years. It goes back I think before my time on the Council as well so we know how passionate they are and how eloquent they have been in advocating in what they would like to see which is a full district wide ban and obviously completely understand and anticipated that if we did not agree with that view, and we did not feel it was feasible, which we do not in this instance that they would be disappointed by that. The door is always open to those groups and we are looking at different ways we can engage with them through different forms to make that sure that communication stays as strong as possible as we look to implement licensing and we continue to get their feedback on not just A Boards but any issues they have right across the Council.

#### **4. Councillor Warnes**

Can the Leader of Council please explain how a new motorway linking the A65 with West Yorkshire will reduce traffic along the Aire Valley corridor, cut air pollution, help Bradford reduce its overall carbon emissions and thereby make a positive contribution to the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan's objective of making "substantial progress towards a low carbon, sustainable transport system for West Yorkshire"?

#### **Answer**

The West Yorkshire Local transport Plan has a number of objectives; in addition to working towards a low carbon sustainable transport system it also must improve connectivity to support economic activity and growth in West Yorkshire and the Leeds City Region. Improving East – West connectivity to support economic growth is also a key objective for Transport for the North and is supported by the Council. Improved transport links increase economic efficiency and reduce costs by speeding up journey times, reducing congestion and providing more reliable connectivity. The M62 provides the only dual carriageway link across the Pennines within the North and is prone to reliability and resilience issues thereby constraining economic potential.

Strategic Transpennine corridor improvements currently being explored by Transport for the North, including a possible M65 motorway extension could help address local highway congestion issues (which in turn could result in released capacity and a better environment for public transport improvements, walking and cycling provision) as well as provide an important strategic Transpennine connection for Keighley, which has been a long standing aspiration by the business community in Airedale.

The Council remains committed to improving public transport, walking and cycling provision along the Aire Valley, to provide a sustainable alternative to the car.

#### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you for your answer Leader. It was very clear and it confirms for us our perception that the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan is heavily geared towards

economic growth and in our view will not deliver the kind of environmental sustainable travel that we all need. Could I ask you therefore and the Executive to consider opposing this proposal for a motorway on the grounds that it will generate increased levels of traffic, will increase carbon pollution in our district and will also worsen air quality at a time when we are trying to tackle the problem of air quality across Bradford?

### **Councillor Hinchcliffe**

I do not think you can look at any one initiative in isolation to be quite honest. The M65 I think is the one you are talking about, there is an M65 perhaps going over to the top of the A1 and we need better east/west connectivity and yes that is one answer but actually of course what we are particularly campaigning for is the east/west routes on the north and Powerhouse Rail and get a stop on that. Because that is the thing that is going to take a lot of people off the road and at the moment of course we have a situation where the transport between Leeds and Bradford is such that 74% of people take to their cars when they go between the two cities rather than go by public transport. That is something we have to solve. It is the biggest flow between any two cities in the country and they are all in their car which is why we are all gridlocked. What we need to do is get that solved, also work on the different sustainable transport methodologies that we have and to include in the cyclecast and cycle routes but I cannot fight M65 to the top of A1 because the Keighley businesses are stuck in traffic day in day out with their lorries and that is all spewing out all sorts of stuff into the air for local people and we really need to do something about that so a “no action” is not an option for me and I will be campaigning for both to get that sorted.

### **5. Councillor Hassan Khan**

Will the portfolio holder give an update on the progress of our campaign for a Northern Powerhouse Rail stop in Bradford?

### **Answer**

The campaign is progressing well with a positive meeting taking place between the Council Leader and Chief Executive with the Secretary of State for Transport Chris Grayling MP. At the meeting the Council, with business leaders, set out the strong economic and connectivity case for a Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) station in Bradford and Mr Grayling later acknowledged in his speech the importance of improved connectivity for Bradford. Recent feedback from Network Rail and Transport for North is that a Bradford City centre station on the NPR route between Leeds and Manchester is feasible.

We have also been receiving encouraging comments from other Government Ministers, including the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Transport, Paul Maynard, who responded to a Parliamentary Question from Philip Davies MP, saying, that he would be surprised if Bradford did not feature in plans for NPR. Northern Powerhouse Minister, Andrew Percy MP, who spoke in Bradford at the launch of the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission’s report also stated, “If I had my way, Bradford would have a stop on Northern Powerhouse Rail.”

The Council are now undertaking a wider and proactive publicity campaign to push the Bradford case with key stakeholders and organisations right across the North of England to secure a Bradford stop on Northern Powerhouse Rail Route.

**6. Councillor Warburton**

Can the Leader join me in congratulating three Bradford brass bands – Black Dyke, Hammonds Saltaire and City of Bradford – for their success in the Yorkshire championships and their entry into the national finals later this year?

**Answer**

Absolutely. I was delighted to hear the news and have written to all three to congratulate them on their achievement. Bradford has a proud history of excellent brass bands and it is good to see our reputation continues to be justified.

**Supplementary Question**

I thank the Leader for the reply. This success may be short-lived for Bradford when through the Boundary Review and MPs comments they may move to Halifax or a Keighley/Shipley district. What are the thoughts on this Leader?

**Councillor Hinchcliffe**

Thank you Councillor Warburton for that. Yes you are absolutely right. We had not thought about when we answered the question but of course if those two initiatives went through we would be a much diminished place and I do believe strongly as Councillor Sunderland said earlier that if we worked together we get more for all of us. Spending time navel gazing and looking at who said what to who within the district does not support our case outside the district and we must make sure we speak as one voice as a strong whole district saying this is what we all need to succeed and only by doing that will we get anywhere. Splitting us up does not really help our case. I would be much more for a whole district solution to anything.

**7. Councillor Whiteley**

As the Local Plan has set a target of a minimum of 700 houses in Burley in Wharfedale and 600 in Menston, this would place a significant strain on local infrastructure of all kinds and I should be grateful if the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Transportation could explain the process by which applications can be made from monies collected (£100 per square metre) in respect of my ward, to support necessary infrastructure schemes within the ward and over and above any money paid to the Parish Councils?

**Answer**

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule, once adopted and implemented, will allow for 15% of all CIL receipts received for each Ward to be paid to the Parish/Town Council for them to determine the spend on infrastructure projects within the ward. Where an area has an adopted Neighbourhood Plan through a referendum, this amount will increase to 25% of all CIL receipts received in that area. The remaining CIL monies will be pooled into a central strategic CIL account to be spent on infrastructure required to support growth across the District.

The Council will continue to update its Local Infrastructure Plan evidence so that it can determine the infrastructure requirements and the extent of the funding gap in localities such as Burley in Wharfedale and Menston. With regard to how the central strategic CIL pot is spent, this will be determined by the Council's Executive in response to recommendations on how the funding should be spent by officers using the most up to date evidence in the Local Infrastructure Plan.

If a parish/town council wish to request an additional sum of money to be allocated to their area from the central CIL pot, then this request in the first instance needs to be made to the Planning Obligations Monitoring Officer who will then include the request in the annual monitoring report on CIL which will be heard by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will be responsible for deciding what projects to spend the CIL receipts on, in accordance with the Regulation 123 list for Bradford. It will, therefore, be the Executive's decision whether to agree to any requests from parish/town councils regarding the allocation of an extra sum of money from the CIL account. Members should note that the Governance & Audit Committee at the meeting on 28 February has considered the CIL governance arrangements by which the Council will manage the collection, spend and monitoring of CIL receipts.

It should also be noted that the Council will continue to negotiate Section 106 Agreements with developers for site specific infrastructure provision, such as affordable housing, highway improvements, school places provision and open space provision to make developments acceptable in planning terms.

The Local Infrastructure Plan has highlighted that the District requires £688m of infrastructure investment over the next 15 years based on the growth envisaged in the Core Strategy. CIL is not the silver bullet and will not be able to fund all infrastructure required in the District, however the Council recognises it is an important funding source to support local infrastructure.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you very much for the detailed answer. I must confess to being astonished by it though. Can I please check with you are you saying that only Parish Councils can request to be allocated additional money for infrastructure and that the democratically elected Members of this Council have no role in this?

### **Councillor Ross-Shaw**

I will double check the actual process. I suspect it is Parish Town Councils because obviously the way it is set up through legislation is they are the ones that get the CIL money so therefore if they want more on top of that for additional infrastructure spend then it would be funnelled through them. I will double check, I suspect it is a legislative issue whatever the answer is.

### **8. Councillor Dunbar**

National Carers Week will take place this year on 12-18 June. Will the portfolio holder explain the Council's plans to mark this important week to recognise the contributions made by carers in our district?

### **Answer**

Plans are currently underway to have a range of activities and promotional events during Carers week.

The details are not all finalised but will include:

- Promotional events including a presence in supermarkets and garden centres
- Celebratory social events including an evening social, afternoon tea party and pamper session
- Information stands and staff in GP practices, hospitals and other venues

## 9. **Councillor Dunbar**

Bradford has recently hit the headlines after running a successful LGBT History Month Festival which has been recognised nationally. Will the Leader advise what work we plan to do going forward to ensure the rights of the LGBT community are recognised and met?

### **Answer**

The Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership continues to identify and provide support for community of interest work. As part of the Stronger Communities Action Plan there are a number of specific action plans to ensure that people who belong to a community of interest have equal access to services, community life and opportunities to be active across the district.

These specific communities of interest action plans, which are refreshed annually, provide us with identified and evidenced based issues as well as partnership actions/solutions on ways to respond appropriately.

The Council currently provides officer support to deliver the LGB community of interest action plan. We are also assisting with the development of a Bradford District Transgender Action plan, which is being led by the Equity Partnership.

The 2017-18 LGB community of interest plan, in addition to supporting community wide needs and priorities, will also incorporate actions that will build on the momentum of the successful 2017 Bradford LGBT History Month Festival. The Bradford Pride Group has put itself forward to lead and to develop the 2018 LGBT History Month Programme.

Beyond our community of interest work, we do not resource programmes focused solely on single groups of people. We work to try and support everyone across our district and we consider all groups of people when policies are changed and decisions made.

The Council committed to a set of equality objectives in September 2016 stating the areas where it would focus attention over and above its day to day work on equality and fairness. For example, promoting hate crime reporting and awareness benefits many people, including LGB&T people.



**10. Councillor Gibbons**

Would the Leader of the Council provide colleagues with an update regarding progress with the works at St. George's Hall, including any completion date and variances to the budgeted cost?

**Answer**

Structural survey work and load testing is taking place at the Hall over the next few weeks and the strip out will be commenced shortly by the internal Council team.

The tender process for a principal contractor has now been completed and is subject to pre-contract discussions including a budget review. We are in the process of examining areas where there is a difference between pre-tender estimates and submitted costs. To enable this to take place, further detailed exploration needs to happen, including in relation to the heritage stone work, and is scheduled to be complete within the next 5 weeks. Once the exploration has taken place, we will be in a position to confirm the final cost of the project.

The tendered works programme is 54 weeks for total completion and due to the extended length of contract negotiations, we have opened up discussions to reduce this time in order that the building can re-open quicker than this and in line with the current target of early 2018. The schedule for the works and the estimated date for re-opening will be finalised with the principle contractor as part of finalising the contract.

**Supplementary Question**

May I start by saying thank you for the inclusion of the City of Bradford in your congratulations? Can I also say that I went to the championships and what a shame it is those championships were held at Huddersfield Town Hall rather than here at St George's. Can I also, and I know you will be saying where is the question and there is one coming, did we close it too soon to start with? I was there and was saddened to overhear a number of people say to me things like "well of course it will be closed for a while longer, it is Bradford, what do you expect". Someone else said "if this had been Leeds they would have pulled it down and re-built it by now". That is wrong. We need to return the reputation of St George's Hall and the other part of my question is could you assure me that we will try to return the business to St George's Hall of events like the Brass Band championships and others that may be lost because they are already talking about the potential for holding next year's band championships at Huddersfield rather than back at St George's even if we need to sweeten those requests in some way for those events to come back.

**Councillor Ferriby**

Thank you Councillor Gibbons. Obviously these old buildings take .., to answer your question, did we close it too soon? I do not think that we did. The trouble with old buildings is that once you start to look at them you do not know what you are going to uncover. I myself are pushing officers because obviously we want this building, it is an iconic building in the city centre, and we want it to open as soon as possible. So I am pushing officers who in turn will be pushing contractors so that we can open as soon as possible. Get the works completed and get business back into one of our iconic city centre buildings.

**11. Councillor Lal**

Does the Leader welcome the £1.8m investment the Science Museum Group has made in the newly named National Science and Media Museum?

**Answer**

I certainly do welcome this investment, which can benefit us all by adding to the district's cultural offer for local residents and visitors. It's exciting news for the city and the district and it's one in a series of developments which confirm Bradford's resurgence. With their plans for the Wonderlab gallery and other unique attractions such as Tim Peake's spacecraft, the National Science and Media Museum is starting a new chapter in its history. The museum can strongly support the progress we are all making as a city in building Bradford's reputation as a place with growing cultural, technological and business opportunities.

**12. Councillor Stelling**

To ask the Portfolio holder for Environment, Sport & Culture - Given the abolition of the pest control department within the Council, can the portfolio holder confirm that access to information related to this department will still be provided by the Council to the general public?

**Answer**

The Council will ensure that information about pest control is available to the public after the closure of the Pest Control Service via the Council's website and will advise members of the public that they can find alternative pest control providers online or through the Yellow Pages.

**Supplementary Question**

I would like to thank the portfolio holder for her reply. Also with this shift in movement to faceless contacts through online, what provision is the Council providing for access to information with the abolition of the Pest Control Department who are the means of contact and also do you agree with me that the spread of vermin is a public health concern?

**Councillor Ferriby**

Yes as you say there are a number of faceless contacts, telephone and IT. We will be getting that information out there wherever possible via our warden service so there is some face to face interaction. There are issues with vermin but those are dealt with and previously there are a number of private providers and we will direct any enquiries to contact.

**13. Councillor Dunbar**

The recent announcement to make age appropriate sex and relationships education compulsory in all schools is to be welcomed. Would the Leader agree with me on how important this is for all schools and all pupils in Bradford and beyond?

**Answer**

Certainly. Bradford has always been supportive of Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) in our schools and we still provide schools with support in this area, especially

around healthy relationships, teenage pregnancy and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). The Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) network organised termly for school-based staff was revived this term after the Health and Wellbeing staff became part of the Education Safeguarding Team in Education Employment and Skills. Staff from this network, along with the Diversity and Cohesion service, have established a working group to develop an Agreed Syllabus for Safety which will encompass all aspects physical and emotional safety for pupils, such as online safety, CSE, bullying, road safety and SRE.

**14. Councillor Ellis**

Can the Leader of the Council provide details of how the Council has acted to ensure that the potential cost to the Council of the Apprenticeships Levy, is offset by creating apprenticeships for young people within the Bradford District?

**Answer**

As part of our current HR restructure, we have created a new team - The Learning and Development Academy - this team is made up of three officers who will be responsible for coordinating and administering the apprenticeship levy.

In line with national guidance, the apprenticeship levy will be used to:

1. Up-skill existing employees - We will use some of the levy funds to upskill existing staff via apprenticeship qualifications, so that we can improve skills levels and support succession planning. Please note that where we support existing employees via the apprenticeship levy, we must ensure that they can work at the level that they have been qualified to at the end of the programme
2. Provide apprenticeship opportunities for new recruits - We will work towards all job vacancies Band 7 and below being advertised as apprenticeships (where appropriate). We will establish an annual apprenticeship recruitment cycle that matches the timelines of colleges and universities. We are working with partners across the district to look at innovative ways of offering cross-sector apprenticeship opportunities. We are working closely with the Education and School Improvement team to build on the progression pathways that have already been established for young people.

**Supplementary Question**

Thank you Leader for your reply and also thank you for the prompt reply to my email I forwarded to you regarding the Environment Agency's offer to fund university training for drainage engineers. I think that in itself leads me onto other questions in that the Environment Agency have actually identified the shortage of drainage engineers and across I think the building industry as such and construction industry we acknowledge that there are shortages. Now of course we do not employ many builders and construction engineers. I am just wondering how we will ensure that these people are offered, or shall we say these particular skills and training are offered, to people in Bradford? There is a mention of other agencies but I would like that to be spelt out a little bit clearer if you would please.

**Councillor Hinchcliffe**

How they will be offered in Bradford you say?

**Councillor Ellis**

My point is obviously as a Council we might be able to offer all sorts of apprenticeships. They certainly will not be in construction and building skills and trades. I am just wondering how we can facilitate that training to provide the needs of Bradford as far as those trades are concerned?

**Councillor Hinchcliffe**

There is quite a lot of construction training that goes on in Bradford of course and actually the Broadway site did have a few apprentices on there that came through Skillshouse and Get Bradford Working. We might not always see it but those apprenticeships do go on. I think when it comes to Council apprenticeships and local authority employment I think this is an issue, a shortage of skills come to my attention particularly at West Yorkshire level when we talk about planning, highways development and drainage engineering etc. and I think there is an argument for all West Yorkshire authorities to work together on this. Because what is happening at the moment is that we are all swapping staff so a Calderdale staff member might go to Bradford, someone from Bradford might go to Leeds and then we are all short staffed really. We need to do something concerted on apprenticeships and traineeships when it comes to working with FE and HE to make sure those young people coming out of education see that there is a really great opportunity to build things in the public sector and that is something we are working across West Yorkshire on, it is not just a Bradford problem, it is a West Yorkshire issue and we need to encourage those young people to come through. So I have not got a solution on it yet but it is something that is identified and this helps but there is a lot more to be done and resource needs to be found to do it.

**15. Councillor Dunbar**

I am deeply concerned at the news that the House of Commons narrowly voted in favour to close the Dubs scheme to protect unaccompanied child refugees by the end of the financial year. Does the Leader agree that the scheme should be kept open and does she agree that the government should provide councils with the resources to do our bit in providing places?

**Answer**

It is concerning that the Government appears to have reneged on its commitment to the Dubs scheme. So far under the scheme our District has successfully welcomed 13 children – 9 boys and 4 girls – and they have made excellent progress in their transition given the exceptionally difficult circumstances in which they found themselves. This reflects the fact that the Council and partners have managed the process effectively. The Labour Group of the LGA of which we are members has made strong representations to Government on our behalf. We would obviously be willing to take more children should government provide the funding for us to do so.

### **Supplementary Question**

I just want to ask the Leader if she will keep the Chamber informed about the representations made to Government on this issue because I still think it is disgusting that the Government chose to close this scheme because what we are actually talking about here, and we have seen the overcrowded centres in Italy and in Greece, and what this is doing actually is putting more young children from different countries at risk of being trafficked, exploited, physically, mentally and sexually so Leader please will you keep us informed on those representations?

### **Councillor Hinchcliffe**

Certainly Councillor Dunbar. This was an issue that was raised at the last LGA Labour Group meeting and the Leader of the Labour Group Nick Forbes has made strong representations on our behalf to Government and will continue to do so. Obviously I will keep you informed of any changes as it will be in the news because it has been something that has been widely discussed and widely reported on so something that concerns us all. You will be pleased to see in the answer that the young people we have taken in already under the scheme are doing well and we are pleased to have them here.

### **16. Councillor Watson**

Can the Leader tell us what the council did to mark International Women's Day and does she agree that although around a third of councillors in our chamber are women it should be more like 50% to reflect the general population?

### **Answer**

Council Members and staff worked with organisations across our district to collate and deliver a programme of activities, which ran from the 3 - 12 March, to mark International Women's Day. Events ranged from sports activities to a flash dance in City Park, a debate in City Hall with young women from the Speakers Corner Collective and a special screening of the film 'Suffragette' in the Banqueting Hall.

The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress hosted and attended events, including the ceremony to raise the International Women's Day flag in Centenary Square.

There were in total 40 events in the International Women's Day programme and many were delivered directly by organisations and groups themselves. The programme was promoted through a printed booklet and social, broadcast and print media.

Women have made much progress in the century since we won the right to vote, in politics as well as in business and other spheres of life.

However we know there is still much to do to realise true equality for women in our society and across the world. We should all be working towards achieving 50/50 representation.

**17. Councillor Whiteley**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, please confirm how much money was paid to outside fostering agencies in the years 2014-2015 and 2015- 2016 and in 2016- to date, along with providing details of the budget forecast for agency foster carers for the year 2017-2018?

**Answer**

In the context of the budget there has been a slight increase in fostering agency costs, partly due to the fact that agencies have increased their fees. However there is no significant increase in the level at which we are using foster agencies.

Fostering Agency spend

<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
£1,489,066	£1,328,450	£1,547,574	

The budget for external fostering for 2017/18 is £1,951,400. Given the past three years have come significantly below budget, if we continue with the same numbers of young people accessing external fostering the forecast would be below £1,600,000.

**Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the answer. I am interested to see the figures. I just wanted to ask you there is obviously an increase in the budget for the next financial year and I wondered whether that was because you expected there to be more children outsourced rather than using local foster carers?

**Councillor Val Slater**

Our main aim is obviously always to try and look after Bradford children in Bradford but sometimes that is not always possible. For instance if I give you an example we have got a young person at the moment whose relationship with their mother has broken down, the father is actually in Scotland and we feel that they have got a better chance of building up a relationship with the father so we have placed them with a foster parent in Scotland to facilitate that process. We do not have any foster carers that we know about in Scotland and that is the kind of thing where we would use an agency. We would use an agency where we are looking to move people to other parts of the country because of CSE or because of forced marriage or quite a number of other things. So the fact that we have slightly got an increase in the budget for that does not necessarily mean that it is because we do not have sufficient foster carers within Bradford. Very often circumstances mean that we have to place children outside the area for their benefit and not for ours.

**18. Councillor Farley**

We are all looking forward to the restoration of Cliffe Castle Park being completed. Can the portfolio holder give us an update on the work done so far and what we have to look forward to in the summer?

**Answer**

The restoration work to Cliffe Castle Park is currently on target to meet the anticipated completion date of 10<sup>th</sup> July.

The most significant area of work to erect new glasshouses, including a dome house, café and toilets is well underway. The dome was recently lifted into place and some zones are now water tight allowing internal works to start. The stonework for the ponds and fountains is being professionally cleaned as part of the project to re-instate them to full working order whilst work has started to refurbish the existing bandstand. There will be new Animal and Aviary Houses whilst many of the other parks historical features will be re-instated including a number of planted urns, street lamps and gates.

A new planting scheme has been drawn up including historically relevant varieties for both the park and glasshouses with interpretation at various locations around the site. A number of volunteer initiatives are taking place within the park led by the newly appointed Heritage Park Officer including local schoolchildren presenting a time capsule in June to be buried in the tree pit of the dome house. An official celebratory opening event, organised by a partnership between the Parks Service, Cliffe Castle Park Conservation Group and the Museum, is pencilled in for 30<sup>th</sup> July.

#### **19. Councillor Dunbar**

The Royal Society of Medicine has suggested that as many as 30,000 excess deaths could be due to national cuts in health and social care. Does the Leader agree that government needs to properly fund adult social care including more prevention work which keeps people well and out of hospital?

#### **Answer**

Debate in this Chamber has led to a consensus that adult social care needs to be funded properly and consistently across the nation. The additional funding just announced for adult social care is only a temporary fix so the thinking Government are doing around Adult Social Care funding is vital for the future sustainability of the service.

Preventative activities are important in keeping people at home for as long as possible. Again funding constraints across all partners, not just the Council, has meant that this is difficult to finance consistently over time.

We can't just wait for Government so the council's new Home First policy is our response in Bradford to how we are going to support the reduction of demand on services in the future whilst giving people what they want, i.e. to stay in their own home for as long as possible.

#### **20. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

Question to the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing - According to estimations in the BRE Client Report; in 2011 18% of Bradford's dwellings were in the private rented sector and of those 16%, some 28277 homes, had a Housing Health and Safety Rating System Category 1 hazard. Can the Portfolio Holder please tell us what steps have been taken to reduce the number of homes in the private rented sector in this rating?

## **Answer**

The Housing Standards Team (HST) based within the Economy and Development service is a statutory service responsible for inspecting property in order to ensure compliance with various housing and other legislation. The service is largely reactive and particularly focuses on conditions in the private rented sector.

In 2015/16 the service received 1416 service requests, all of which related to housing condition, the majority of which were from the private rented sector.

In January 2016 the Housing Standards team was successful in securing £45,000 of funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). This funding enabled officers to carry out additional enforcement inspections of flats above commercial premises between January and March 2016 to remove hazards.

During 2015/16:

- The HST served 736 notices requiring works to be undertaken
- Housing conditions were improved in 1330 properties
- 11 prosecutions were taken for non compliance

The HST also works closely with the Housing Options service and now undertakes housing inspections for the service to ensure compliance with standards as part of the new approach to provide additional housing options in the private rented sector. During 2015/16 HST carried out inspections of 88 properties in support of the Private Rented Lettings Service (PRLS).

- The Housing service works with landlords to ensure compliance with legislation. Wherever possible this is through education and encouragement but the service does use enforcement powers, in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy, where necessary. The service has recently delivered two training sessions for landlords as part of the PRLS approach both of which were very well attended.

## **Supplementary Question**

In the same period Bradford paid £79.5m of rent allowance was spent on private tenants which equates to some £12.7m of public money which may well have been paid to landlords who do not keep their homes of their tenants free from hazards. Does the portfolio holder have a view on what more can be done to reduce harm to tenants and does she still insist that we do not need to keep a register of private landlords?

## **Councillor Val Slater**

I do share your concern and I think it is disgraceful that public money is paid out to landlords that are not prepared to keep their properties up to standard. It is very difficult for us as a Council however to do more than we are doing at the moment. If we had additional resources then we could do a lot more. We are obviously trying to work with the good landlords and as part of our housing options team we now have a section that deals with private landlords. Those properties are inspected before we offer them to any people that are homeless or being threatened with homelessness and obviously we keep a relationship with those landlords and we will do - a question was asked for me the other day if once they get on the list do we keep an eye on



them because their property could be okay at the point we take them on but is anybody checking and I have agreed that we must at least do an annual check to make sure that they are up to standard. That team has also recently run some workshops for private landlords letting them know about some of the change in legislation that is coming forward that landlords will have to comply with but there is an awful lot more we could do if we had the resources to do it.

**21. Councillor Dunbar**

Recent investigations by the Alzheimer's Society show that as many as one in three home care workers have no dementia training. Does the portfolio holder agree that the Government needs to fix this broken system and provide better support for people with dementia, their carers and home care workers themselves?

**Answer**

Dementia is an illness that impacts on an increasing number of people. Inevitably the solution to their care lies in the government's response to the pressing issues surrounding how adult social care will be funded in the future.

A higher percentage of people with dementia in the Bradford District have their condition diagnosed than in other areas of the country. In September 2016 the dementia diagnosis rate for Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in the Bradford area was 81.2% and the national standard is 66.7%.

This should mean that people with dementia and their carers are able to receive support and to plan for their future so they remain independent for as long as possible. In Bradford this is enshrined in the implementation plan for the Dementia needs assessment as part of the District's Dementia Strategy.

Workforce development is included within this plan and the Department of Health and Wellbeing, in partnership with other partners which includes NHS and voluntary and community sector, and the Alzheimer's Society are working together to ensure that there is training for care and support workers for people living with dementia and their carers.

**Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the answer portfolio holder. Could I just ask a little bit more around what training and development opportunities will be done around this important issue?

**Councillor Val Slater**

Thank you Councillor Dunbar. A couple of things on that. First of all the Dementia Strategy is being refreshed and there is going to be an actual workshop looking at this on the 5<sup>th</sup> April at Douglas Mill. Looking at it from a dementia wellness pathway point of view and there will be two sessions, one in the morning looking at research, prevention and end of life issues, the second in the afternoon is about supporting people with Dementia and allowing them to live well and I would encourage staff and people interested to attend those. If you need details let me know and I can pass them on. The other thing is that as far as dementia awareness and dementia support Bradford has got a very good record and I was pleased the other day to get

an email, my apologies if I pronounce this incorrectly, about Meri Yaadain which is a scheme within Bradford that particularly supports dementia sufferers from a South Asian background and provides not only face to face support but also online and it was a professor in London that had contacted the guy that runs it who was given the MBE for his initiative and the work he has done in this area and what she was saying is that it is the only online tool that South Asians can refer to and that generally GPs, health care workers, carers, etc, are not aware of it. When they are made aware of it they are very impressed because it is the only one in the country so we obviously need more to do to publicise that but I mention it because it is an example of how we are leading nationally again on this kind of issue.

## 22. **Councillor Miller**

Would the Leader of the Council be so kind as to inform members of the nature and numbers of contracts provided to consultants and the costs of these, broken down by department and the dates of the contracts, for the last three years?

### **Answer**

The definition used by the Council for consultants is “providers of specific expertise, support and advice with time limited assignments. Consultants do not have decision making powers. They are appointed to offer specific professional advice for Council officers to consider”

Up to March 2015 information on consultants was published on a quarterly basis and is available on the Council website.

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/your-council/council-budgets-and-spending/consultants-expenditure/>

This information was published prior to the introduction of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 that requires the Council to publish details of all expenditure over £500 and all contracts over £5,000 on a quarterly basis. Information on consultants is now routinely published as part of these statutory reports and can be found on the following websites.

Expenditure over £500

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/open-data/our-datasets/expenditure-greater-than-500-in-value/>

Contracts over £5,000

<https://datamillnorth.org/dataset/bradford-council-contracts->

There will always be occasions when the Council needs to employ consultants to provide external specialist expertise, skills and advice particularly when we are working to secure major changes and transformations in the way that the Council works or when the Government requires us to take specific action within a relatively short space of time.

Over the last 3 years total spending on consultants is as follows:

Total Expenditure	£9,839,772
Council Contribution	£8,498,419

This represents average total spending of £3,279,924 a year with an average Council contribution of £2,832,806.

These figures represent a significant reduction compared to previous years. For example, in 2009-10, total spending on consultants was over £9.9 million exceeding in one year alone the amount spent over the last three years.

We do however continue to keep expenditure on consultants under close scrutiny.

Further information on consultants that have been used by the Council between April 2015 and March 2017 is to be circulated to all Members by email.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the answer. Can you advise me then when it was as it states in there that we continue to look under a close scrutiny, when it was last looked at by a scrutiny panel?

### **Councillor Hinchcliffe**

I do not know. It has been available on the website for a while. Everybody has seen now the amounts, all the contributions, all the lines and the budgets. That has come round to everybody's inbox so each individual Councillor can scrutinise it now for themselves if they wish. It is noticeable of course that it has come down considerably since 2009/10 from £10m to £3m so we are looking at it as a Council across all our expenditure but I am sure Corporate or somebody like that will be happy to look at it as part of their budgetary control which they do on a regular basis.

### **23. Councillor Love**

Please can the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Transport enlighten us as to why it is now impossible for members of the public to email comments about an application to the relevant case officer? Given the regularity with which the Planning Portal is unavailable or incredibly slow, particularly for applications with a large number of documents, could a departmental mailbox not be used to accept comments?

### **Answer**

Whilst it would be technically possible for the Planning Service to receive and process e-mailed comments, it would place a particularly time-consuming task on the council's Planning team that is currently being fulfilled by the Council's PublicAccess system. Particularly high profile applications can lead to comments being received in their thousands.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the answer portfolio holder. You are right in saying that it is technically possible for the planning service to receive and process email comments

because they have been doing it for as long as I have been a Councillor and as long as many for a long time before that I am sure. Given that especially in planning matters that the Council has to be seen to be open to receiving comments can I ask please to reconsider the withdrawal of this facility?

### **Councillor Ross-Shaw**

Thank you Councillor. Just to be clear all Councils in West Yorkshire either use or are moving to the online system we use. There is a bit of a perception in your question, it is quite unreliable. It is very reliable but there are issues where you get certain campaigns and obviously sensitive applications if it gets over one thousand comments and that can slow it up. What I would say is obviously guessing which cases you are thinking of. When it did slow up it was still processing hundreds of comments at that time so no comments have been lost. The issue is if we set up a mail box that is a huge amount of resource for someone just to process hundreds and hundreds of emails to upload it onto the same system that is still working. We can look at it if the system is technically down but it has not been down in this case. However the company who provide the service IDox are looking at ways and we have spoken to them about speed making sure that when you get these big sensitive issues that attract a lot of comments that it does not slow up in the future and we have worked with the IT team just to try and make sure that does not happen in the future.

### **24. Councillor Pennington**

In light of the Council's decision to not cut the grass at many bowling greens, would the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sport & Culture advise Members as to why we still tend the unused Riddlesden Golf Club and can we have confirmation of when this site will be transferred to the Scout Movement?

### **Answer**

The decision to cease bowling green maintenance is part of a programme which would see completion by 2020. Government cuts have forced the council to make difficult decisions such as this. Until 2020 the service will work with all bowls clubs through a steering group to look at alternative ways of managing the facilities.

At Riddlesden Golf Course all the major grassed areas were cut last year to normal public open space standards, rather than golf course standards, in order to keep the grass at a safe level of maintained, as the general public continue to access the area through the public rights of way, which pass through the site.

The Council is in discussions regarding a long term lease and the Scouts have decided to progress their potential future use of the site through the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process. They have submitted an application to progress this option and the Council will continue to work with the Scouts to support them through the process and seek to achieve a successful outcome.

### **Supplementary Question**

My question is not really about bowling greens nor about Government cuts, if you will pardon the pun, but it is about costs incurred unnecessarily in this case whilst a community asks it to transfer to the scouting movement seems to be stalling for a

variety of reasons. Now Councillor Malcolm Slater and myself are happy to work with Asset Management but what I would ask the Leader is will she please speak with them to ensure that there is a speedy outcome.

### **Councillor Hinchcliffe**

I have already corresponded with Keighley Scouts and said that we are making sure that Councillor Ross-Shaw looks at it and makes sure it is expedited as quickly as possible. Obviously we have got community asset transfers on the agenda tonight as a motion and that is something that we are all wanting to make sure we keep as many assets going in our communities as possible. We all value them and anything we can do to support local community groups take those on is always valued. We really acknowledge and welcome the interest of Keighley Scouts and we will support them.

### **25. Councillor Stubbs**

To ask the portfolio holder for Regeneration, Planning & Transport - Can the portfolio holder provide details of the number of highway and footpath maintenance jobs undertaken by the Council that have not been completed during the initial time allotted over the past 12 months across the District, how many required a second visit to complete the work and what was the additional cost to the Council?

### **Answer**

The Highways and Footpaths maintenance team are directed to work as efficiently as possible and therefore their routes are mapped to take the least time possible between jobs.

In the case of the location which I believe led to the Member's question, the extent of the works on Robin Close was such that it required two visits to complete. It was always planned to undertake these works over two visits. The site was left in a safe condition between visits.

In terms of the specific response to how many schemes have not been completed within the initial time allocated I can confirm that only one scheme, Reva Syke Road, Clayton has not been completed within the time allocated in the initial programme. The reason for this was due to finding damage to a culvert by Yorkshire Water which required their attendance on site to repair before the highway works could recommence.

Finally, as to the Member's question about additional costs to the Council I can confirm that there are generally no additional costs to the Council as a result of this approach as works are planned and undertaken when resources are allocated to each zone.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the answer. Can I just clarify two small points? The first one is on behalf of residents and thank you for anticipating it was Robin Close. Can we make sure if at all possible when we write to residents in future if you are planning to go to a site twice you make it clear to them just so that if they are disrupted they understand the full extent of the disruption they are going to have. Can I just ask for

a little bit more detail and possibly some figures around the statement that says generally no additional cost to the Council because I know that generally we spell our street signs correctly but that is not always the case and I would like to know a little bit more about whether there are any costs.

**Councillor Ross-Shaw**

Thank you for that. Yes that is a good idea with the letter clarification. I will take that up with officers. Generally no cost just means it is not something that you are necessarily tracking so much as it is a small figure on the bottom line when it does not work out. It is not that there is a hidden cost. Some works we plan as two visits because that is the most effective way of doing it and therefore it is reducing the overall cost so it makes the service more efficient. I will see if we can pull anything more out for you on that and certainly on street signs. I know which street sign you are referring to. There was no cost on that at all so you will be pleased to know. Generally no costs can often mean no costs.

**26. Councillor Shaw**

Can the Leader of the Council confirm whether the presence of the Pokémon app on the Council Website has any costs involved and would she confirm whether anyone has considered whether the Council would be liable if any child using this were to come to harm in doing so? Further, if there are any costs involved, would the Leader confirm whether she agrees with me that these funds and the officer time in organising this frivolity would be better directed to essential front line services?

**Answer**

No costs were involved with the presence of the Pokémon app other than 30 minutes officer time. The aim is to increase use of the Bradford app and demonstrate broader Council services available to help reduce frontline activity and save cost. It also demonstrated availability of free public Wi-Fi in Bradford. The map has been live since 27th July 2016 with no incidents reported. Nintendo, the producers of Pokémon, offer safeguards on the use of the Pokémon app and the Council issued safe playing messages via its blog and Facebook media platforms. This initiative is in line with what other Councils have done with the Pokémon app.

**27. Councillor Davies**

Would the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sport & Culture inform Council why BMDC has chosen to become only the third council in the country to fund digital post-mortems, which are only effective in 70% of cases and according to the Chief Coroner cost “within the range of £400-£1000”, compared to the £96.80 cost of a traditional post-mortem?

**Answer**

An increasing number of councils are now using this technology which is undoubtedly the future for mortuary services. Grieving families naturally do not want their relative to be cut open if technology exists to prevent this invasive measure. This is particularly emotive when it comes to children.

Unless we had acted, this valuable service would have been withdrawn from Bradford, which would have also incurred a financial cost to the council.

Digital scans (which require the authorisation of the Coroner) can establish cause of death in approximately 75% of cases which is why the Council are only paying for 75% of scans undertaken.

The price negotiated with iGene for each digital scan is well below the figure of £400 quoted in the question whilst the figure mentioned for an invasive post mortem is considerably understated.

The maximum cost to the Council over the 12 months of the contract has been estimated at circa £60k.

Under the Local Government Transparency Code the Council has to publish on a quarterly basis details of all contracts over >£5k. This contract is included in the published details.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thanks for the answer. You say that if the service had been withdrawn from Bradford there would have been a financial cost to the Council. I just wondered why that would be and how much that would be?

### **Councillor Hinchcliffe**

It is about commercial confidentiality. I have just been acknowledged I cannot discuss that in Council is that right City Solicitor?

### **Parveen Akhtar, City Solicitor**

That is right Councillor Hinchcliffe. Any further detail would be commercially sensitive and we would be in breach of a confidentiality clause if it was to be disclosed here. Yes I can brief Councillors in complete confidence.

### **28. Councillor Pennington**

Further to the announcement six months ago, that an experienced Commercial Property Agent would be employed by the Council, to revitalise priority streets in the City Centre, can the Leader of the Council confirm, the cost so far, any tangible benefits and who the agent is?

### **Answer**

The release of a tender last year failed to secure an appropriate bid to undertake the work identified. The specification has subsequently been reviewed and two separate briefs drafted. The first is to undertake an on-street and internet survey of existing usage and perception within the wider city centre concentrating on retail / leisure threats and opportunities. The tender will be advertised via Yortender imminently.

Building on the findings of the survey – and once decision on the future of the markets has been reached and a vision for Top of Town thereby created – further specialised commercial assistance will be sought to use the vision to undertake a gap analysis, identifying both lack of existing provision and potential “missing”

retailers and, working as appropriate with letting agents for individual landlords, fill vacant units.

### **Supplementary Question**

This is amazing. We are six months on here and we have nothing to add. There is no response to my question on costs which is important and we have no named agent. Now we keep bringing in consultants into the Council. Am I right in thinking that the current AD of Asset Management was in a previous life a commercial property agent? Why can he not do the job?

### **Councillor Ross-Shaw**

He has another job which is the AD of Asset Management so that would be my concern with that one. There would be no cost because we have not got the commercial agent yet as the answer makes clear. So when we put out the tender obviously then we will incur a cost when we get someone of our own.

### **29. Councillor Ward**

To ask the Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills - At the Council meeting on 17 January it was resolved to "ask the Government to account for growth in demand of additional special educational needs (SEN) in this district". Will the Portfolio holder for Children's Services describe how this was done and what the Government's response was?

### **Answer**

There are many areas across the country where there has been a need for additional SEN places. Bradford has experienced a significant increase in the demand for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and provision in the last 10 years and it's projected that the demand for SEND provision will continue to grow, by 2018 additional specialist provision in the district will be required. This need is being addressed through a variety of different ways including providing additional capacity through existing provision and free school provision. The finances have been fully discussed with schools forum. It should also be noted that the population of the special schools has changed significantly for example the number of children with moderate learning difficulties has dropped and the children on the autism spectrum has increased. There have been similar increases for children with profound and multiple learning (PMLD) and Physical Difficulties (PD) with additional needs. As a Local Authority (LA) we have undertaken a review of SEN data to ensure that we have the right provision going forward to meet the needs of the children in the district. There is an expectation that every LA will undertake this piece of work. A variety of ways have been used to raise this issue with Government. An application has been made for the LA to establish a specialised Free School. Other applications by schools have been made for Free Schools matching what is required for provision in the district. Conversations have taken place with the Department for Education and Ministers to highlight the issues that are being faced in Bradford. We are awaiting the outcome to see what additional support will be received.



**30. Councillor Whiteley**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing provide a breakdown of the children brought into Local Authority Care for the previous two years broken down by age, ethnic background and nationality?

**Answer**

There were 683 children who became Looked After by Bradford Council in the last two years.

Age	Number
Under 1	143
1 – 4	134
5 – 9	135
10 – 15	206
16 – 17	65

Ethnic Origin	Number
White British	368
Other White backgrounds	65
Asian/British Asian	–
Pakistani	79
Other Asian backgrounds	14
Black/Black British	14
Mixed Heritage	73
Other Ethnic Groups	22
Not known	48

Of the 683 children, 74 were recorded as having a non-UK nationality. Because of the small numbers involved we can't make the full breakdown publicly available as individual children could be identifiable.

**31. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

Question to the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sport and Culture - Can the Portfolio Holder advise how many trees each month per ward in the District have been felled as a result of Health and Safety implications?

**Answer**

The information held currently by the Service does not record ward details or identify the reasons for tree removal and the following figures could therefore include a number of trees removed to prevent damage rather than for being dangerous. The "trees" category also includes a high proportion of large shrubs such as hawthorn and elder or rogue growth such as 'scrub' sycamore, ash and elm growing from stumps or out of walls. The following numbers are therefore indicative given the limited time and resource available for a manual analysis of existing records:-

2016	
Month	Number
January	13
February	25
March	15
April	8
May	12
June	11
July	34
August	35
September	35
October	36
November	11
December	16
Total	251

**32. Councillor Davies**

Could the Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment & Skills advise members, why did the teacher recruitment bus tours start with primary schools, not secondary, when secondaries are where we have the most recruitment difficulties?

**Answer**

The secondary teaching market nationally is historically more difficult to target because of the emergence of academy chains and stand alone academy schools. So we have worked closely with local Teaching Partners, the Regional Schools Commissioner and National Government on this issue and fully endorse Sir Nick Weller's report 'The Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy'. He has shared his findings with both the Public Forum for Education and the Education Improvement Strategic Board.

Over the last two years we have also developed relationships with outstanding providers, for example, Tauheedul, Northern Lights and Feversham Education Trust to work in Bradford and bring in and develop the best teachers through the development of their Teaching Partnerships.

**33. Councillor Love**

Please can the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sport & Culture update members on the current situation regarding St George's Hall?

**Answer**

The tender process for a principal contractor has now been completed and is subject to pre-contract discussions. The schedule for the works and the estimated date for re-opening will be finalised with the principal contractor as part of these discussions. Once concluded, it is anticipated that there will be a four week site set up and mobilisation period, with the full team on site by late spring. In the meantime, further structural survey work and load testing is taking place at the Hall over the next few weeks and the strip out will be commenced shortly by the internal Council team.

**34. Councillor Pennington**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Transport confirm how many Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued in accordance with the Public Space Protection Order, intended to reduce anti social behaviour in the City Centre?

**Answer**

At present no Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued as timescales for the implementation and enforcement of the Public Space Protection Order have been extended in order to equip and train new members of staff who will be involved in enforcement. The staff will be operational and able to enforce the order from 3rd April 2017.

**35. Councillor Fear**

To ask the portfolio holder for Regeneration, Planning & Transport - How many businesses received support from the Council when starting up and have gone on to close within 3 years?

**Answer**

Economic Development's business advisor team support many individuals considering self-employment by sign-posting to support and services and assist with accessing finance. The majority of support to new-starts is referrals and although these supports are recorded it is not always possible to follow up on progress three years later.

More tangible evidence of start-up business support can be evidenced by the grant support offered through the City Centre Growth Scheme. To date the scheme has assisted 42 businesses to start up within the City Centre. Of these, six have closed within three years, providing a failure rate of 14%. This compares extremely favourably with the national statistics showing a 39.5% failure rate within the first 3 years (Source - Office for National Statistics).

**36. Councillor Miller**

Would the Leader of the Council be so kind as to inform members of the number of Council employees working to Zero Hours contracts?

**Answer**

The Council does not have any employees working to Zero Hours contracts.

**37. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

To ask the leader of Council - Following the decision of the Executive to prioritise awards to families what steps is she taking to protect those vulnerable people who are in receipt of a Discretionary Housing Payment who live in Extra Care Homes?

**Answer**

Residents who live in Extra Care Housing will continue to be eligible for a Discretionary Housing Payment as they are now. This applies as long as they are in receipt of Housing Benefit or the Housing Element of Universal Credit.

The Council has received increased funding for Discretionary Housing Payments, from the Department for Work and Pensions for the coming year and it is not the intention of the revised policy to penalise this vulnerable group in order to help more families.

**38. Councillor Davies**

Could the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sport & Culture confirm whether she shares my view, that it would be simpler and more ethical to encourage people to shop around for the best energy deal from all providers rather than promoting one company in return for cash?

**Answer**

Bradford Council is a partner of White Rose Energy (WRE), a not for profit energy company for Yorkshire Region, which will be actively marketed to Bradford residents.

The income stream is ring fenced to support fuel poverty linked initiatives and hence, the council would have the opportunity to support fuel poor and vulnerable and households in the area.

By actively promoting WRE in the district we will be able to target customers particularly in fuel poverty. These households are less likely to be aware of the benefits of energy switching.

Currently there are around two thirds of households who do not switch energy supplier. These 'sticky' customers often overpay by hundreds of pounds per year compared to the cheapest tariffs available, with a high percentage of sticky households on low incomes (often OAPs) and therefore vulnerable to the effects of fuel poverty. A key cause of 'stickiness' among households is mistrust of energy companies. A council backed energy offer is more likely to be trusted and can engage residents and encourage them to access lower tariffs via its wide communications channels.

Customers are encouraged to shop around; no one will be forced to switch to White Rose Energy. Customers are offered personalised quotes to help them compare prices for the supply of electricity and / or gas via the website.

The income will support additional activity in the Fuel Poverty Framework for Action, current action plan agreed by EWOSC in Oct 2016, including people in fuel poverty who may not sign up to White Rose Energy. Actions might include supporting domestic energy efficiency measures and "healthy heat" type projects within our Better Homes Bradford programme.

**39. Councillor Pennington**

Can the Leader of the Council confirm, that regardless of the tenancy changes, whether there are any business rate arrears at the Odsal Stadium?

**Answer**

There are business rates arrears for Odsal Stadium as follows:-

A sum of £21,955.12 was submitted in the Council's claim against the former company which went into liquidation, covering the period 1 April 2016 to 14 November 2016. It is unlikely there will be any dividend for creditors from this process.

The Administrator was liable for the subsequent period, up until the new company took up occupation on 18 January 2017 and arrears of £6,791.20 are still outstanding. This is expected to be paid once the administration process is concluded.

The business rates for the new company are not overdue at present.