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**COUNCIL  
19 MARCH 2019**

**MEMBER QUESTION TIME  
Questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12**

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**1. Councillor Angela Tait**

Can the Portfolio Holder give an update on the Bradford Live project as it enters its next phase now plans have been approved?

**Answer**

Work on the former Odeon building, led by Bradford Live, is now progressing at pace. Work is taking place on-site to strip out the old concrete cinema inserts and you may have seen the fantastic pictures on social media of newly discovered art deco features that will be restored as part of the development.

Planning permission for both the building and the digital screen to be placed on the side overlooking City Park has also recently been approved and the NEC have now applied for a licence for the building.

Work is continuing to deliver this fantastic project that will provide a world class music and events venue not just for Bradford but for the whole of Yorkshire.

**2. Councillor Debbie Davies**

Could the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport advise Members of whether consideration has been given to running a cleanest ward award in order to encourage some fun, competition and increased community involvement to cleaning up litter from the District?

**Answer**

It must be noted that most people don't live their lives by ward boundaries. People typically identify with a more localised area, such as the local streets, village, town or community in which they live. There is a "Love Where You Live" campaign by Keep Britain Tidy and also the Britain in Bloom competition, for example in Esholt, Menston, Cottingley and many parks 'friends' groups enter. The competition includes cleanliness of an area as part of the judging criteria. We also already celebrate local volunteers who go out of their way to help others in their local communities in all kinds of ways. For example the Community Stars Awards recognise dedicated people who do incredible things for the greater good.

**3. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

To the Portfolio Holder, please can you detail, broken down by year, how much the Council has paid out in compensation to cyclists across the District, as a result of accidents caused by highways and cycle lanes being in a poor state of repair, over the past 5 years?

**Answer**

These figures relate to payments made in each financial year regardless of when the incident occurred. The number of cyclists is not shown for data protection reasons, as the numbers are below five in each year.

<u>FINANCIAL YEAR</u>		THIRD PARTY COSTS	OUR COSTS	TOTAL COST
DAMAGES				
2013/2014	£5,830.00	£22,418.85	£2,387.70	£30,636.55
2014/2015	£29,358.83	£20,937.68	£3,743.25	£54,039.76
2015/2016	£159,212.10	£62,041.53	£8,541.30	£229,794.93
2016/2017	£13,637.00	£22,062.87	£923.50	£37,253.37
2017/2018	£5,137.00	£1,500.00	£0.00	£6,637.00
2018/2019	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

**4. Councillor Tariq Hussain**

Can the portfolio holder provide an update on the work being done to enforce against dangerously and illegally placed clothing bins across the district?

**Answer**

Over the past two years the Council has removed almost 65 unauthorised and illegal clothing banks from the District's streets including 40 in the last month. These were all placed without the owner's consent and/or the relevant permissions and often blocked footways and caused obstructions. They also attracted anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping.

The Highway Enforcement Team has recovered over one and a half tonnes of reusable textiles which were then donated to BIU Group, the textile recycling partner for Yorkshire Air Ambulance. The funds raised will be used to support their life saving service. BIU Group support a number of other charities which includes the Yorkshire Air Ambulance, Francis House Children's Hospice and 13 other charities.

Around a tonne of rubbish was also removed from the clothing banks including, broken toys, old bedding, odd shoes, food, books, soiled clothing and needles. A further two tonnes of rubbish was also removed from the streets around the clothing banks.

Eight of the clothing banks were unidentifiable as being connected with any charity and three had been damaged by fire. All unclaimed clothing banks will be recycled for scrap metal by the Council after one month.

We have received a number of complaints about these illegal and unauthorised clothing banks. They are often placed blocking footways or on private property without the owner's consent or the relevant permissions and some have even been stolen from other areas. We have made numerous efforts to deal with this in an informal way and in most cases the clothing banks are removed, however, they tend to appear in other locations causing the same issues again.

## **5. Councillor Fozia Shaheen**

It's welcome news that we will be receiving over £100,000 from the Private Rented Sector Access Fund to help tackle homelessness. What are we planning to do with this funding?

### **Answer**

On 1 March 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced that Bradford Council was one of the 54 bids that had been successful in its bid into the Private Rented Sector Access Fund. Bradford Council will receive £133,000 over 2018/19 and 2019/20 to enhance its existing Private Sector Lettings Scheme. The funding will be used to enhance incentives to attract more private landlords onto the scheme, including rent guarantees and damage liability, and to provide a dedicated tenancy support officer to work closely with all parties to prevent any threat of homelessness arising due to rent arrears, tenant/landlord disputes etc. Tenancy training will also be provided, equipping vulnerable households with the skills required to sustain their tenancy. We anticipate being able to support up to 100 people in housing need with accessing a private rented tenancy utilising this funding.

### **Supplementary Question**

I just want to say this is absolutely fantastic news for our district so I personally want to congratulate Bradford Council for being part of this bid and being successful. However it is a step in the right direction but I do feel the demand in Bradford with regards as to homelessness is huge and this is just a stepping stone and I do encourage the district which I strongly believe the Leader is well aware of. We continue to tap into these bids so we could be more successful to help and support the most needy in our community in regards to homelessness.

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

I agree entirely Councillor Shaheen.

## **6. Councillor Russell Brown**

With equipment already being removed, can the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport clarify what is planned for the services currently operating out of the Council's Stockbridge Depot at Keighley?

### **Answer**

There are no plans to close Stockbridge Depot. Asset management is working to ensure that the space is used as efficiently as possible, which is why the equipment is being moved and the space reconfigured.

### **Supplementary Question**

Yet another tricky response. We Keighley residents have no problem with the relocating of equipment to the household waste site or elsewhere locally but when we hear that no more road salt is to be delivered to the site and just this weekend I understand officers were buying sand bags from B&Q. We just need to know that these resilient services are not being removed as has been attempted before by stealth. Can you just reassure us now please that these services are not going to be removed from Keighley? Thank you.

**Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw**

Thank you. I will repeat the answer. There are no plans to close Stockbridge Depot.

**7. Councillor Fozia Shaheen**

Does the Leader join me in congratulating everyone who has been involved in International Women's Day throughout the District, once again Bradford is flying the flag which is amazing.

**Answer**

Yes, I certainly do. Bradford is rightly proud of the incredible contribution that pioneering women have made in our district and beyond, so it's absolutely right that we celebrate the likes of Margaret McMillan, Julia Varley, the Bronte sisters and so many more women who have benefited all our lives. International Women's Day is also an opportunity to look at the present and into the future at the kind of world that we want to build for future generations of girls and women.

It's great that there have been a number of different events for people to get involved with as part of International Women's Day this year and of course it hasn't just been council events. I know that partners and businesses such as the Broadway and Radio Leeds, for instance, have also got involved with interesting activities for people to take part in. Socially, culturally and economically, every one of us will benefit from a fairer world in which women are respected and valued as equal citizens – and even now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is a cause that we have to continue striving for around the world.

**8. Councillor Caroline Firth**

Can the Portfolio Holder give an update on our ongoing repair and replacement programme for street lights and how many lights on average are being repaired or replaced each month? Also can he give timescales for the major new project to replace all lights with more efficient LEDs?

**Answer**

The number of street lights repaired in January was 1,552 and in February was 1,522; this is around the same during the winter months.

The Smart Street Lighting project is intended to begin works around November 2019 for a duration of four years. It's an invest to save project which will also bring a number of practical and environmental benefits, including: energy reduction of at least 65%; substantial energy cost savings which once all the new units are installed will be over £2m a year; a CO2 reduction of 6,046 tonnes per year; complete control of lighting levels and subsequent energy consumption using a web portal; significantly fewer faults as LEDs have a much longer life than traditional lamps; improved high-tech fault reporting when one does occur; Internet Of Things capabilities to enable a smart cities approach with connectivity for a range of sensors and other monitoring devices.

## **9. Councillor Jackie Whiteley**

Will the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport, please confirm whether any work has been completed which considers the likely displacement of commuter parking from Ilkley into Burley in Wharfedale and Menston if road side parking charges are introduced and residents only parking stops commuters parking in Ilkley?

### **Answer**

Long stay parking will be available in Ilkley town centre with an all-day parking charge as recommended in the independent review of Ilkley parking by Steer, Davies & Gleave. The parking review also discusses migration of commuter traffic into the less densely populated parts of Ilkley where streets can accommodate parked vehicles without interference of traffic flow. The review also notes a significant number of journeys into Ilkley originating from within 1-2 miles of the town centre. Therefore it can be expected that a certain amount of the current commuter parking will be dispersed between paid-for parking spaces in the town centre, parking further on the outskirts in lower density housing areas and a modal shift as people change transport mode and walk, cycle or use public transport.

Nonetheless there will still be a number of people who will use the car through choice or necessity and funding for feasibility work has been secured for a car park extension at Ben Rhydding rail station and a scheme to extend the car park at Steeton and Silsden rail station has also been approved.

Mitigation work to restrict all day parking by non-residents around the rail stations at Menston and Burley in Wharfedale has already taken place. Residential streets in the vicinity of the stations are protected with waiting restrictions and in some places, residents permit parking. Updates to these schemes have occurred progressively through time where residents are still affected by commuter parking.

It is almost impossible to determine exactly what level of migration will occur and where it will go but we will be undertaking some checks on parking patterns at the stations before the parking scheme is implemented and officers will quickly determine the impact post scheme implementation and act accordingly to address any emerging issues.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you for your answer. I am concerned that there was no work done to consider the effect of displacement of parking into Burley-in-Wharfedale and Menston. I am glad that officers will now be looking at what the current situation is and my question is if it is found to have an adverse effect on parking in our roads would you consider reversing any decision that you make because it seems that by solving one situation you are going to possibly exacerbate another? Thank you.

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

So we have said all along we will take a look at the impact as things move along so it will not just be that it goes live and then we leave it and just see what happens. The question is how much displacement there is and where that displacement goes so the current balance at the moment for residents in Ilkley is considered unacceptable

so their situation is really bad for residents. Now it might be that if a small percentage of the current problem moves somewhere else that would not necessarily justify unravelling the whole process. It might be looking at what the localised solution is for that community so we will look at what the problem is, if there is one once it has gone live, and then we will look at what we think of are the reasonable solutions.

#### **10. Councillor Caroline Firth**

Does the Portfolio Holder join me in agreeing that the newly unveiled restored Butterfield Window at Cliffe Castle is a fantastic achievement for all involved in the project?

#### **Answer**

Yes it really is a most fabulous window and I'm delighted we've been able to restore this important part of Keighley's heritage. Personally I find it a poignant piece and I just think it's fantastic that it's now there for all to enjoy at its very best. I also want to thank our partners who have made such an important contribution to this project. The restoration was made possible with the support of The Friends of Cliffe Castle; The Friends of Bradford Art Galleries & Museums; Sir Charles and Lady Nina Bracewell Smith; The Cliffe Castle Trust, and The Swire Trust.

The event to launch the newly restored Butterfield Window was held on Sunday 3 March and we have received many positive comments from guests and the public. We also received positive press coverage in local, regional and national papers so it has been extremely well received.

The event also recognised the hard work of Council staff. The restoration project is the culmination of a long-held ambition of Daru Rooke (Museum Manager) to reintroduce and restore elements of Henry Isaac Butterfield's original decorative scheme within the staircase area, which in previous years involved reweaving carpets, redecorating the staircase and bannisters and reinstituting the display of artworks. Daru worked closely with colleagues in Facilities Management over a number of years raising funds and putting in place the project plan. The window required significant repair to make it secure and watertight, however the opportunity to reinstate the riotous colour, so long missing from the staircase window, has also been spectacularly achieved. It is a testament to the long-term vision of our staff along with the skill of the craftspeople involved some very local and others from across the region: Jonathan & Ruth Cooke Specialist Stained Glass Conservators, Stone-Edge Heritage Masons, Hirst Conservation, Wireworks Keighley and H&H Decorators, Keighley.

Importantly it provides another jewel in what is fondly known as Keighley's treasure house.

#### **11. Councillor Brendan Stubbs**

To the Portfolio Holder, over the past 3 year how many times have each of the District's Planning Committees approved or declined an application in opposition to the recommendation of planning officers and how many times have they followed the

officer's recommendation?

**Answer**

From 1 March 2016 to date:

Panel	All Decisions	Overturned
Bradford Planning Panel	160	24
Keighley & Shipley Planning Panel	153	27
Regulatory & Appeals Committee	109	6
Total	422	57

**12. Councillor Richard Dunbar**

Will the Leader join me in acknowledging the pioneering work of Dr Mags Portman in the field of HIV prevention following her untimely death in February?

**Answer**

Dr Mags Portman was a pioneer within the sexual health sector and a key person in helping to raise awareness of and supporting the use of PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) in the UK. She was a very passionate, committed and knowledgeable sexual health consultant and an advocate for good sexual health. She championed important public health initiatives and challenged stigma around HIV prevention.

During her time in Leeds, she helped put National HIV Testing Week on the map: Leeds GUM's working alongside Yorkshire MESMAC and Leeds Skyline continues to be an example of the great things that can be achieved when a sexual health clinic works alongside the community sector. Also working closely with Yorkshire MESMAC, she was instrumental in the set-up of Armley Men's Sexual Health Clinic, Leeds' first sexual health clinic in a sauna for men who have sex with men. She also appeared on the BBC3 documentary "Unsafe Sex and the City". It was during this time that she began to develop a particular interest in HIV prevention and collaborative working with the community.

Mags gained her Certificate of Consultant Training in 2014 and worked as a Locum Consultant in East London, both at the Royal London and Homerton Hospitals. During her time at the Royal London, she worked on the PROUD study, and her life as a PrEP advocate began. At Homerton, she was responsible for the HIV Antenatal clinic – again, this work was very close to her heart.

In September 2015, Mags took up a substantive Consultant post at Mortimer Market Centre, Central & North West London NHS Foundation Trust, where she was lead for Genito-Urinary Medicine. Frustrated by the lack of PrEP implementation in the NHS, and observing that community activists such as Greg Owen and Will Nutland were supporting people to access PrEP online, she gained agreement from her Trust, and support from clinic staff, to provide HIV and STI testing, plus renal monitoring, for those accessing PrEP in this way. She also inputted to, and pushed for the provision of, the national PrEP Guide.

Mags sat on the National PrEP guidelines-writing committee and she was Secretary of the British Association of Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH) Media Group. Right up

to her passing, she continued to work closely with iwantprepnow.co.uk and PrEPster.info.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thanks for the detailed response Leader. The PROUD study as referred to in your response proved to be the most seminal study on HIV prevention this planet has ever seen and what it proved is that it proved to be 86% effective PrEP in all cases. Now do you not think it would be a massive tribute to the legacy of Mags Portman if the Government stopped dilly dallying with the rollout of PrEP and actually see the rollout on the NHS as soon as possible?

### **Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe**

Thank you Councillor Dunbar. I was amazed to see the work this person had done in this arena and it is a great tribute to the work that had been achieved. I thought we had made a lot of progress on this issue and I am sorry to see that it has not gone through but absolutely it should be paid for in that way and I will check up on how that is getting on through our Health and Wellbeing Board.

### **13. Councillor Debbie Davies**

Could the Leader of the Council confirm when and why the Labour Executive approved the £420,000 annual lease for City Library without regular break clauses and whether they now regret this decision?

### **Answer**

It's important to remember that it was imperative that a city the size and stature of Bradford needed to have a city centre library once again, which was not the case at that time due to the closure of Margaret McMillan Tower which was no longer statutory compliant and in need of full refurbishment.

The library's annual lease rental at the Aldermanbury development at Centenary Square is not £420,000 – it is approximately £270,000. There are additional costs, such as for staffing and utilities, as would be the case in any building. The library occupies the space under two leases which benefit from break clauses, one having a break clause in 2021 and the other in 2026.

By entering into a legal commitment to relocate the City Library into the Centenary Square Aldermanbury development, this allowed 757 Council staff and other stakeholders to be relocated to the refurbished MMT, occupying that space flexibly and more efficiently. This released a number of other buildings, including Future House and Flockton House, delivering substantial revenue savings.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the answer. You have replied to my 'why' question but you have not replied to my 'when' question. I just wondered when this was agreed?

### **Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe**

I think it was 2013/2014 from memory.

#### **14. Councillor Vick Jenkins**

Climate change is a danger to our planet. I'm pleased to have been able to vote for the Climate Emergency motion passed in this Chamber in January. Can the Portfolio Holder let us know what progress is being made in delivering the priorities set out in our motion?

#### **Answer**

The priorities identified in the climate emergency resolution are all at different points of development and officers are taking the required steps to provide information to Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee about where each priority currently stands and what options the Council has in order to move forwards. This will then lead to the development of future policy, where needed, that can be brought to the relevant decision making body in order to progress. The current state of each priority is summarised below. Officers continue to develop these priority areas and a paper will be presented to Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny in July to seek guidance on policy areas that currently require further development.

#### **Street Lighting**

Following the full council motion in January, the Executive took the decision on 5<sup>th</sup> February to approve the Street Lighting Invest to Save project. That project is already underway to convert the whole inventory to LED with the funding in place to deliver it.

#### **District Heat**

We have now secured funding from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) to develop an outline business case and this is being worked on as we speak. BEIS is also funding project management support which is currently being procured. .

#### **Embracing the opportunities provided by the H21: Hydrogen for the north project**

Officers are engaging with different groups across the council and the district to raise awareness of the H21 project and explore potential areas of opportunity. So far the current expectations are that the project would help to deliver:

- (a) 3600 Gas fitter jobs required to deliver the changes required to people's appliances and meters (training and jobs programme).
- (b) Unknown number of commercial scale fitters to be required (training and jobs programme).
- (c) Accelerated upgrade programme for gas grid (training and jobs programme).
- (d) Hydrogen fuel technologies test bed, generation and consumption (academia and industrial).
- (e) Call centre and admin support for programme rollout (jobs).
- (f) WYCA is coordinating a training programme on the opportunities and officers have been distributing information.

This will need to be co-ordinated across a number of additional areas and this will require Overview and Scrutiny Committee input.

**Increasing the proportion of Electric Vehicle (EV) / hybrid vehicles in use in the Council fleet and supporting the roll out of EV charging points across the district to help promote uptake of electric vehicle use.**

There are a number of initiatives already underway and a number of potential routes forwards. These include.

- WYCA taxi scheme – 20 rapid charge points to be installed for public / taxi use by March 2020
- Increase number public charge points in the council car parks
- Residential charge points – on street charge points, possible links with street lighting upgrade. Government funding may be available
- Update planning guidance
- Replacement of fleet with ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) - more charge points required at Council offices, home charging staff that take vehicles home.
- Awareness and Education – promote benefits ULEVs, grants - public and staff

**Increasing the amount of renewable energy and electricity generation on Council estate**

We are keen to make the most of our assets for energy generation. The energy market is currently difficult for smaller scale generators due to changes in the support mechanisms such as feed in tariffs. This means that systems need to be able to stand alone with only the certainty provided by a minimum energy price agreement such as Contracts for Difference (CFDs). We are therefore reviewing our approach and will discuss this further in more detail at Scrutiny.

**15. Councillor Caroline Firth**

Does the Portfolio Holder plan to introduce a food waste recycling/composting service in the District?

**Answer**

The Council actively encourages residents to compost and has teamed up with a Leeds-based company that offers residents the opportunity to purchase composting bins, water butts, composting accessories and wormeries at discounted prices. Full details can be found on the Council's website.

The Government recently published a Waste Strategy which outlines plans for all councils to collect food waste. This is not currently possible because there is no local anaerobic processing plant, however we will engage with any consultation and work with Government should the infrastructure and Government investment become available.

**16. Councillor John Pennington**

Could the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport advise Members of what happened to the much heralded Council Biomass scheme to heat its properties in the City Centre?

**Answer**

The Biomass boilers installed in Margaret Macmillan Tower are proving extremely successful and are providing the vast majority of all heat for both Margaret Macmillan Tower and Sir Henry Mitchell House. They act as the lead boilers and only when additional heat is required or during servicing periods the gas boilers are used. In the last measured period for Renewable Heat Incentive, the three months to 1 March 2019, the boilers have supplied 229,124kWh of heat.

**Supplementary Question**

Nice simple one here. We know about the boilers now but do they comply with this new Clean Air Act please?

**Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw**

I hope they do but I will get a written response.

**17. Councillor Vick Jenkins**

Would the Portfolio Holder be able to update us on the Initial Air Quality Plan for setting out the case for the interventions we will be implementing to deliver air quality compliance?

**Answer**

A Local Plan Proposal setting out the arrangements for how the work will be carried out was submitted on time in November resulting in an award of funding from the Joint Air Quality Unit to the Council for £902,550 to fund the development of the plan. The first statutory deadline was 31 January 2019 which required submission of an 'initial plan' described as the strategic outline case (SOC). This document has been submitted on time and was presented to government by the Strategic Director of Health and Wellbeing, Bev Maybury, on 26 February. This was well received and we are currently awaiting an acceptance letter from Government to confirm this.

**18. Councillor Vick Jenkins**

It's good that the recent consultation on Shipley/Canal Road corridor attracted 750 responses. Now that the initial consultation has ended will the Portfolio Holder explain what the next stage of the process is?

**Answer**

The level of response to the recent consultation on the Shipley to Bradford Route Improvement scheme has demonstrated the way in which the local community has actively engaged with the Council in developing its proposals for this vitally important transport improvement project. With over 750 responses to review officers are now working with their colleagues in the Combined Authority on reviewing each response in order to develop a revised set of proposals which take account of the comments that have been received. With this level of response it is anticipated that this process may take a number of months to complete in order that due consideration of each comment/suggestion can be given.

Once a revised set of proposals have been developed based upon the consultation,

work will begin on confirming that these are deliverable within the budget envelope currently available through the West Yorkshire+ Transport Fund. Officers will also be assessing the anticipated transport and economic benefits of the schemes in order that the Council can begin preparation of the Outline Business Case submission to the Combined Authority later this year. One additional element of consideration which will be essential at this stage will be to determine if the project is delivered as a whole or as a series of phased improvements going forward.

The Outline Business Case is an essential document which will be used to demonstrate to the Combined Authority that the project is deliverable and represents a good investment in Bradford's transport infrastructure. This document will also describe how the project has evolved from its initial concept through the consultation process.

We are hoping to be able to publish some interim results from the transport modelling before the Outline Business Case is complete to allow for further consultation on potential options to take place. We are also liaising with yourself and the local school on Otley Road in Shipley to discuss the plans in more detail with the head teacher and representatives from the school governors.

Approval of the outline business case will provide the Council with the funds it requires to develop the scheme proposals into their final form (again following a further engagement exercise with the local community). It is currently anticipated that the approval of the outline business case will be secured by autumn 2019.

#### **19. Councillor Riaz Ahmed**

Can the Portfolio Holder please explain the schedule and methods used to clean the District's cycle lanes including the cycle superhighways?

#### **Answer**

A combination of mechanical sweeping and manual litter picking is currently used to clean the cycling lanes at varying frequencies on adopted highways. In April plans to adopt daily gateway routes should pick up any specific problems on adopted cycle lanes keeping them free from obstacles, litter and other debris.

#### **20. Councillor Vick Jenkins**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport provide an update on the long-standing desire to see the Shipley canal towpath upgraded for walkers and cyclists?

#### **Answer**

I'm delighted to be able to say that the sections of the Leeds-Liverpool canal towpath in Shipley that have not been previously completed have now received funding through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Fund. This is a scheme that we have always put forward for consideration whenever a new funding round occurred and it's great news it has now been selected.

WYCA are currently working with the Canal and Rivers Trust in developing the

business case for this project with the aim of taking a report to the Investment Committee later in 2019 to be delivered by 2021. This work will complement the work currently being completed on CityConnect2 linking Shipley and Bradford city centre with dedicated cycling infrastructure, making it a lot easier for people in Shipley to cycle in to Bradford and on to Leeds via CityConnect1 or to Leeds along the canal towpath. Through continued investment we are steadily building the dedicated cycling infrastructure network throughout the district.

## **21. Councillor Mike Gibbons**

As the refurbishment of St. George's Hall was originally due to cost £4m with a 2017 opening, but early 2019 saw the eventual unveiling, at a cost of £9.8m, with plastic stacking chairs in the auditorium, why is the huge internationally renowned pipe organ curtained off in a state of disrepair?

### **Answer**

It is common for a building of this age and grandeur, which had not had a major repair since it was built, to require significant works to keep it open and maintain its historic integrity. Whereas the initial scope of works at 2014 only covered the repairs to the external stonemasonry, some re-roofing works and the rewiring of the entire venue, by 2017 the Council had approved the undertaking of further essential works. This is due to the fact that once the works had started, further structural issues were identified which needed urgent attention.

As a listed building and key part of our district's heritage, the Council had a duty to fix all unforeseen essential repairs encountered once the project started on site. To that effect, in addition to the above, the following works were also carried out:

- Replacement of the entire secondary roof structure (i.e. trusses);
- Reinforcement of the foundation of the stage;
- Repairs to the structure of the auditorium tiers;
- Redecoration of the auditorium;
- Removal of dry rot, asbestos;
- Improvement to the fire protection of the building;
- Re-levelling the auditorium floor for Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) reasons due to the left-hand side of the building having settled differently during the lifespan of the Hall.

None of these additional works were budgeted at the outset. Without these additional works being undertaken the building would not have been able to reopen to the public.

The pipe organ located at the back of the main stage has been out of commission for 37 years following the fire in 1982. The cost of restoring similar organs to their original glory has been estimated to cost in excess of £1million. The renovation of the pipe organ was never in the scope of works identified at the outset of this project. As such, irrespective of whether the overall cost of the project has gone up, there was never the intention to renovate the pipe organ.

The organ would be used occasionally if it were viable (perhaps once or twice a year). It is possible to bring in an organ should the programme of the orchestral

season demand.

Bradford Cathedral's organ is operational and they have a regular series of recitals and concerts (many of them free of charge) so the City is already served for this type of event. The public interest in further performances requiring the pipe organ has not been sufficient to evidence and support the additional investment in public funds to repair this organ.

Whilst it would have been good to repair the pipe organ, the Council has a duty to ensure that its capital programme of works is spent where it is needed and in this instance, neither the budget nor the VFM test allowed for such expenditure.

The organ is not permanently curtained off and remains a decorative feature of the Hall, especially for orchestral concerts when no backcloth is in use.

As a final point, the new stalls chairs were commissioned specially for the Hall to a design similar to another prestigious concert hall venue. They are fully upholstered with 30mm seat padding, 25mm back padding, metal framework and a birch-wood back.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the long and detailed answer. May I start off by saying Well Done because I think St. George's now is a rather super venue? Some comments in the answer yes it has been out of operation the organ for 37 years. I am not really surprised that we do not have much potential use for it. I think one tends to forget it is there if it has not been used for 37 years. Can I point out that the most listened to radio programme in Britain today is Classic FM which yearly runs a 300 strong top pieces of music, at least five of those pieces are organ pieces. The popularity as I well know of brass band music is great in its tradition here in Bradford and Yorkshire. One of the pieces that we are now almost constantly doing is Saint-Saens Organ Symphony which sounds absolutely wonderful when obviously it has an organ. Very difficult to play without one being there. Now I do understand in today's troubled times that it is an awful lot of money to fix the existing one, even the problems that go back 37 years. However there are potential alternatives and there are a number of venues around Yorkshire that have put electronic organs in. Keeping the façade if you like, keeping the pipes for aesthetics but having an electronic manual to operate it and they are really of a superb quality and make a good alternative. May I ask you to look at the alternatives and let's not spoil the ship because I do believe that there are other uses out there for it. May I also ask you while I am on to pull out all the stops - and I am not talking about backstops here - to assist theatres management in trying to bring back some of the lost business from St. George's and to bring in new business wherever possible because I am sure we will want to see whatever is played, sung, danced there and so on thrive.

### **Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe**

Thank you Councillor Gibbons for that and for the pun. I know you do a lot of work in music with the brass band etc and that is really welcomed in this district. Yes we are all delighted about St. George's Hall. It looks fabulous. I spent some time a few weeks ago just wandering round the history displays which are fascinating, the films playing on the walls. Obviously as you outline yourself it is a matter of cost and

money. It says in the answer of course that there is already an organ in the Cathedral which is well used for lunch time concerts. It is not ruling out we will never do it but obviously in these austere times it is just we cannot necessarily find the money. One point I would also point you in the direction off is Saltaire where when we had the John McDonald event before Christmas, just as he was walking out the Wurlitzer rose and started playing The Red Flag as he walked out. That was fabulous actually. Other organs are available in the district if you are interested. Thank you.

## **22. Councillor Fozia Shaheen**

Could the Portfolio Holder provide me with an update of how many prosecutions were made over the Bonfire Night period for people fly-tipping and what did it cost the Council?

### **Answer**

During the bonfire period the Environmental Enforcement Team identified eight vehicles involved in fly tipping offences. Three of the vehicles involved had no registered keepers and details have been passed to the Police. One vehicle has since been scrapped.

Of the remaining four cases, two offenders were issued with Formal Warning letters and we have two prosecutions pending.

Enforcement costs cannot be determined until the cases have been fully dealt with in the Magistrates Court.

During the bonfire period street cleansing worked for a few weeks prior to Bonfire Night proactively removing potential bonfires. As most of this waste was collected and disposed of as part of the daily cleansing operations, it is difficult to estimate the cost associated specifically with bonfire waste.

## **23. Councillor David Warburton**

Can the Portfolio Holder tell us how many anti social behaviour incidents there were this year compared with last year across the District?

### **Answer**

There were just under 13,024 anti social behaviour (ASB) incidents reported to the police in the 12 months to 31 December 2018 which is a reduction of 16% on the previous year.

80% of ASB victims were satisfied with the level of service they had received during this period which is an improvement of 14% on the previous year. Bradford was the only district in West Yorkshire to improve ASB victim satisfaction during the year and Bradford is currently outperforming all of the other West Yorkshire districts (the average for West Yorkshire is 71.7%).

**24. Councillor Debbie Davies**

In order to help tackle the problem of fly tipping does the Portfolio Holder, Regeneration, Planning and Transport consider it appropriate to have say a one month amnesty where people can use Council tips even if they don't have a permit?

**Answer**

This will not be necessary as any resident that turns up at any of our Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) can tip without a permit provided that they have proof with them that they live in the Bradford District and pay Council Tax to Bradford Council. They will then be given an application form for a permit.

If there was an amnesty we would get residents from the surrounding areas who are not Bradford Council residents, wanting to dispose of their waste. This would only add to our waste disposal costs which we are trying very hard to reduce.

The Council is currently trying to raise awareness around responsible waste management practices such as using the Bulky Waste service, ensuring residents have permits to use tips and only use registered waste carriers to remove waste. Any amnesty would undermine this approach.

There are a number of illegal waste carriers operating in Bradford using vans and commercial vehicles to transport waste therefore additional resources would be needed at HWRCs to make sure illegal waste carriers were not exploiting public services.

There is no evidence to suggest that the “free” use of household waste sites would reduce fly tipping. From experience, the majority of people that fly tip do this because they can't be bothered to go to the tip in the first place or they are commercial operators that don't want to pay for disposal costs.

**25. Councillor Richard Dunbar**

Will the Portfolio Holder acknowledge the very real link between the cuts in police officers and the rise in knife crime nationally?

**Answer**

Yes. I cannot see how it is possible to claim that you can cut policing so significantly without there being an impact on criminal activities such as knife crime. The causes of crime are complex and crime rates can rise and fall for a number of reasons, but obviously if you choose to cut your country's police force then you have to acknowledge that will have an impact on your ability to catch criminals and tackle crime. Clearly a well funded and well supported police force, as we saw before austerity, is better placed to tackle crime. Every extra police officer on the beat helps in that fight against crime. But what we've seen according to the National Audit Office between 2010/11 and 2018/19 is a 30% cut in direct government funding for the police. Britain's most senior police officer Cressida Dick is one of many people who have said that of course there is a link between police cuts and rising crime.

Police funding is one part of the jigsaw in the fight against crime. Government

austerity has also hit a range of prevention activities across the public and voluntary sectors which combat the causes of crime and support people to live safe and fulfilling lives. As local authorities we are at the forefront of that preventative work alongside others such as schools, the voluntary sector, the probation service and others working as a partnership to break the cycle of crime, support victims, tackle poverty, build safer communities and support a robust justice system. All of these services have suffered from government cuts.

Nevertheless, despite the challenges, we have a lot of positive partnership work taking place in our district which we will continue to build on while we repeat our calls on Government to finally end its austerity cuts and to restore sustainable funding for the valued services that our communities depend on.

### **Supplementary Question**

It is nice to know that the Portfolio understands the link between police cuts and knife crime unlike the Prime Minister. Can the Portfolio Holder also give some assurances that he understand the national cuts to youth services so 800 youth centres and nearly 4,000 youth workers losing their jobs has also played a part in this rise.

### **Councillor Abdul Jabar**

Thank you Councillor Dunbar. Yes I absolutely agree and as a former youth worker myself I know the impact that the cuts of the youth service are having within society.

### **26. Councillor Brendan Stubbs**

To the Portfolio Holder, over the past 3 years how many times have each of the District's Planning Committees approved or declined planning permission in contravention of the Council's Planning Policy documents?

### **Answer**

The District's Planning Committees have not approved or declined planning permission in contravention of the Council's Planning Policy documents as all the Local Planning Authority's decisions are made in light of the Council's adopted planning policies and all other relevant planning considerations whether or not a Panel/Committee overturns an officer recommendation.

### **27. Councillor Fozia Shaheen**

Can the Portfolio Holder provide me with information regarding the private sector letting scheme and how we encourage landlords to use this service?

### **Answer**

In common with most other Local Authority areas, the provision of decent quality, affordable private rented accommodation for people in housing need is an increasingly important homelessness prevention tool. The Council established its Private Sector Lettings Scheme in 2015 and this works by identifying private landlords who are willing to let their properties to customers of the Housing Options service, who are either in housing need or at risk of homelessness. Landlords are approached using a range of marketing activities and are offered dedicated advice and support when they decide to join the scheme. Before they can join the scheme,

all properties are inspected by Housing Standards to ensure they meet minimum quality thresholds. A range of incentives are offered to attract landlords onto the scheme, including rent in advance, rent guarantees, damage liability, and support in setting up tenancies correctly. All properties let through the scheme are rented at or below Local Housing Allowance rates.

**Supplementary Question**

Thank you to the Portfolio Holder for a detailed response. I just want to know how many private landlords have been in this scheme since 2005 and how long have they remained in the scheme or have they dropped out?

**Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw**

Thank you Councillor Shaheen. I will get those figures supplied to you.

**28. Councillor Richard Dunbar**

Can the Portfolio Holder give an update on the production of a new homelessness strategy for the District?

**Answer**

Homelessness is a tragedy and it's an outrage in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain that it is something we continue to face as a society. In Bradford we are committed to doing everything we can to tackle it, through a partnership and evidence-based approach to get the best possible results.

Work to prepare Bradford's new strategy is underway, to build on and replace our existing 2014-2019 strategy. All local authorities are required to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy by winter 2019.

A multi-agency project group has been established, incorporating all key sectors with a significant stake in homelessness issues. The first stage of the project is to undertake a full homelessness review, as set out in Government guidance. Evidence has already been collated from over 20 partners, to inform the review which must cover local trends in homelessness, service provision, gaps and issues. The draft review will be presented to the project group in early April. A Members Task Group has been nominated by the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to input into the development of the strategy, which will be convened after early May. Once the review has been compiled the next stage will be to draft the strategy itself, which will take place over the summer.

**29. Councillor Debbie Davies**

The Good Schools Guide states that across the country over 80% of pupils are expected to get their first choice of secondary school starting in September, whilst in Bradford it is just 72%, so could the Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills advise of what actions are being taken to try and improve this figure for next year's allocation?

**Answer**

Bradford sends parents a comprehensive guide advising them how to make the most of their preferences. Officers are also available at secondary school open evenings to advise parents and press articles alerting parents to the issues of preferencing are released.

Bradford is unique in that it has a high number of schools who operate admissions policies that include fair banding tests and random allocation, therefore we cannot compare with national figures. In addition these schools receive hundreds of preferences for schools that are smaller than 4FT (120 places) in each year group. There is little we can do therefore to improve this performance.

These schools can give no indication to parents as to the likelihood of gaining a place as it is dependent on their child's exam score (band) from which the school randomly allocates a predetermined number of children.

Other anomalies are children applying for faith schools when they do not meet the faith criteria and single sex schools.

We have always maintained that we wish to see every school in the district become good or outstanding, thereby ensuring every school would be a first preference for parents.

### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the answer. Just in relation to the last sentence. What proportion of secondary schools are now good or outstanding in the district?

### **Councillor Imran Khan**

I honestly cannot remember off the top of my head but I will come back to you on that.

### **30. Councillor Hassan Khan**

Can the Portfolio Holder give an update on how the consultation has gone for the Darley Street markets and what are the latest plans?

### **Answer**

We are really excited about our plans for the city centre markets. The scheme could reinvigorate the Darley Street area, improve connectivity with the Broadway and of course to improve the market offer for customers and traders. We believe it could redefine Darley Street and the city centre while showcasing the fantastic Victorian buildings on Piccadilly by making them a lot more visible, in line with our wider approach to restore our district's heritage.

A comprehensive market consultation exercise has been carried out to capture trader and customer opinions for the new market, to understand any barriers to encouraging more visits and to identify the types of traders demanded by customers in order to inform the design process.

Consumer engagement events have taken place on:

- 5 February – Oastler Centre Trader Panel
- 5 February - Bradford Civic Society Place Panel
- 7 & 8 February – Oastler Centre
- 11 February - Kirkgate Centre
- 12 February - Broadway Centre
- 13 February - Bingley Library/Keighley Market
- 14 February - Shipley Library
- 25 February – Older Persons Focus Group

These events have been successful with over 125 written submissions received.

The Council's social media feeds have been used to promote the consumer engagement events and an online survey has been created to capture the views of stakeholders that have not had the opportunity to attend these events. Leaflets were delivered to city centre businesses encouraging them to complete the online survey. Drop-in sessions have been arranged for Members.

The final piece of the consultation exercise will involve a qualitative panel of a selected group of critical and expert friends

As at 7 March, over 1,000 completed online surveys had been received.

I'm delighted that we've seen so much interest in the project because we've said all along that the feedback we receive from shoppers, traders and other stakeholders will be critical to its success.

A planning application has been submitted and plans of our proposals can be found at <https://planning.bradford.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=PN4LXEDHMTI00&activeTab=summary>

### **31. Councillor Tess Peart**

What is the result of the consultation into 20mph zones and what are the next steps?

#### **Answer**

20mph zones are a proven way of making our roads safer and the proposed city centre zone will help make it a safer place for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed zone covers Bradford city centre within the inner ring road and extends to include areas around Bradford College and University campuses. The proposal also includes a programme of 20mph zones around two primary schools, Farnham and St Joseph's, to be developed and rolled out from 2019. By including a programme of 20mph zones around these two schools and nearby streets we can make a difference in protecting children from the dangers of speeding and promote responsible driving and road safety across the district.

The consultation period ended on 7 March 2019; we have had a small number of representations both for and against the proposals. These were considered by the Strategic Director of Place and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Transport, with more comments in favour than against, and the decision has been taken to progress and implement the proposals.

### **32. Councillor Val Townend**

Could the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport confirm what actual difference in terms of staff and mechanical pavement sweepers, the revised reduction of £500,000 rather than £1m will mean for street cleansing across the district, split into each constituency area?

#### **Answer**

The mechanical sweeping fleet consists of 11 vehicles. They are distributed across all five areas with two vehicles in each Constituency and a floating vehicle based at the Bradford Depot to cover main road channels. Extra sweeping vehicles to be brought in the autumn to respond to the annual leaf fall. In addition four electric vacuum machines have been purchased for the City Centre and two machines to tackle the chewing gum problem in centres and villages. The service has been redesigned and will allow for three litter prevention officers whose role would be to change behaviour with regards littering, to manage their waste more responsibly and take a pride in the environment where they live. These officers will have a District wide role deployed against evident need. Additional staff numbers in terms of numbers of staff in clean teams will increase by 20. Bradford West from 17 to 22 (+5), Bradford East from 17 to 22 (+5), Bradford South from 13 to 17 (+4), Keighley from 13 to 17 (+4) and Shipley from 13 to 15 (+2).

### **33. Councillor Richard Dunbar**

Can the Portfolio Holder give an update of how the empty units and street scene around the Odeon will be redeveloped in the run-up to its grand re-opening?

#### **Answer**

We're all excited to see the transformational impact Bradford Live will have on the district and this area of the city centre in particular. With an expected 300,000 additional visitors to the area every year we expect demand for vacant units nearby will increase significantly but want to ensure that we attract quality operators who add significant value to the offer in the city centre.

The Council is looking to use the momentum created by the Bradford Live opening to generate additional private sector investment in opening further, or re-opening former, leisure venues within the West End. Details of all the available vacant and under used premises in the area has been captured (including unit size, ownerships, permissions etc.) with the intention of promoting them to potential end users.

This activity is specifically aimed at helping to address the problem of closed or rarely used venues. Meetings have been taking place with owners/long lease holders and agents to involve them and to ensure we have the most up-to-date information. There are plans to produce hard copy and electronic material ready to be used for promotion of opportunities.

A meeting has also been held with Bradford Live and NEC to engage them in the initiative and to discuss potential interest from food and beverage and leisure operators.

A reinvigorated West End will support Bradford Live, City Centre retail, leisure, our theatres offer at the Alhambra and the newly reopened St. George's Hall. By providing a good range of food and drink venues, visitors will be encouraged to stay longer and spend more in the City Centre.

The area is included within the Council's City Centre Growth Zone where there are incentives in place to support businesses moving in and creating new jobs. A recent programme of public realm improvements funded by the City Centre Growth Scheme saw enhancements to the bottom of Little Horton Lane, outside the Alhambra and up Godwin Street. We are looking at potential to extend these improvements further to include the streetscape in front of the Bradford Live building.

#### **34. Councillor Debbie Davies**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills confirm the annual cost of School Admission and Transport Appeals and what percentage of applicants fail to attend?

#### **Answer**

The Admissions Team have a dedicated Appeals Officer 1FTE who presents the Appeals case on behalf of schools and a 0.5FTE Admissions Officer who prepares paperwork and presents primary appeals. This is a statutory duty of the Council for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools and is a traded service to all other schools. The costs of these posts are neutral as this service is traded and the cost of presenting appeals to fulfil the statutory duty is covered by the traded service.

The Admissions Team is funded through the Designated School Grant agreed by Schools Forum however neither the DSG nor Council funding contributes towards the Admissions Appeals section.

From the Democratic Services side the servicing of the School Admission Appeals Panel and the Education Appeals Panel (Stage two home to school transport review hearings) are serviced from the resources allocated through the budget process to support the Council's democratic decision making arrangements. Due to the variables involved in servicing each appeal/hearing the costs associated with each appeal/hearing differ; it is not feasible to produce a cost for each appeal/hearing. The Committee Secretariat does offset the costs by charging schools that are their own admissions authority for the appeals relating to their school but is not allocated any funding from the Schools Forum for the servicing of appeals.

During the current academic year 23.14% of appellants did not attend their school admission appeal and 14.54% of appellants did not attend for the stage two home to school transport hearings.

#### **35. Councillor Richard Dunbar**

Will the Leader join me in praising the students who took part in the youth climate strike actions in standing against the harsh realities and existential threats posed by

climate change?

**Answer**

It is an exceptional cause and they are the generation who will have to live with the harsh realities of climate change, so it's right that they take a stand to demonstrate the urgency of the existential threat that you describe. Whilst I welcome their zeal and passion on this important issue, as Leader of the Council I also of course want all children and young people attending school or college every day to get the best possible education – so this vital issue also needs to be incorporated into their curriculum and into their learning and we need to see concerted international action from governments of all persuasions, businesses and communities all around the world, to combat climate change.

**Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the answer. Would the Leader agree with me the youth strike for climate have got four key demands and one of the key ones you mentioned in your response which is about more being put into the national curriculum on climate change which must be an absolute priority. Would you also agree with the other three demands that the young people in this country and across the world have got and that is about the Government declaring a climate emergency, young people taking a central role in influencing policy change around climate and also bringing the votes at 16 into play rather than the current law and also the Government and agencies, businesses etc doing more to inform the public around the very real and present dangers around climate change?

**Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe**

Thank you Councillor Dunbar. Yes votes for 16 have been a long held Labour ambition and policy and I fully support that certainly. I would like to see the Government doing some more on climate change I have to say. We are trying to things regionally and in local areas but actually you need a whole national response to this. It is a huge issue. We need to act on it and we need to act collectively on it. So absolutely I will support those.

**36. Councillor Geoff Reid**

Given that West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) are consulting on changes to bus services and planning to reduce subsidies paid to bus companies by 20% over the next few years. Can the Portfolio Holder explain what work the Council is doing to make sure that residents who rely on the bus services are not cut off and isolated?

**Answer**

The Combined Authority approved a medium term financial strategy at its meeting in February 2018. This recognised the funding difficulties facing the public sector and acknowledged the need for the Combined Authority to achieve a balanced position whilst reducing the funding from its local authority partners. The strategy included a commitment to reduce the transport levy by £1 million each year and to utilise transport fund reserves to balance the budget for 2018/19 and 2019/20. Over that time period actions would be taken to reduce expenditure such that by 2020/21 the budget would balance without the need to use reserves. This is the largest area of

discretionary revenue expenditure for the Combined Authority and is funded by Council Tax from the constituent authorities.

The Budget report to the Combined Authority held on 14 February 2019 provided an update on progress in relation to the Financial Strategy. In terms of the bus provision the commitment made in the strategy requires a 20% reduction in the cost of bus tendered services over a three year period. This does not automatically mean that there will be a 20% cut in bus services. A thorough review of the cost reductions is under way to look at how bus services are procured. This review will ensure that all services meet value of money criteria and that all steps are taken in procurement to maximise the benefits of the reduced expenditure. In 2018 the Combined Authority's Transport Committee considered the issues around the effectiveness of expenditure on bus services in supporting mobility and approved revised policy guidelines together with a programme of district level bus network reviews.

Actions taken in the current year in relation to contract awards and amendments have delivered the first tranche of the savings required on bus tendered services whilst minimising impacts on customers and communities. The opportunity to retender some schools services has provided additional savings which assist in contributing to the further savings targets required by 2020/21. The Combined Authority is also consulting on changes to the guidelines it uses to supplement the statutory home to school transport provision provided by local authorities seeking to ensure the reduced funding is targeted at greatest need.

In terms of bus service provision going forward WYCA is in the process of developing the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance and working towards a formal agreement with bus operators incorporating key performance indicators and a delivery plan. This includes a range of activity which is currently underway to determine both the Governance arrangements as well as developing a number of work stream delivery plans. On 11 January 2019 the Transport Committee endorsed the Commitments proposed for delivery through the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance. This will address a range of themes, work streams and commitments. As well as looking at customer experience issues including information, the Alliance will be looking at service provision issues. The Alliance was formally launched on 18 March 2019 in Bradford.

The Districts, including Bradford, are working with the Combined Authority and bus operators to develop the delivery plans for the identified themes including service provision.

The District also feeds its views/comments through the District Consultation Sub Committee which includes representation from the WYCA and bus providers as well as local public representatives.

Throughout the range of Combined Authority governance arrangements and work with partners, officers and members will seek to promote bus use and access to services.

### **Supplementary Question**

It is good to have the events of the past year spelled out clearly and in sequence.

But the crucial reference in terms of my question is the bit about minimising impacts on customers and communities. If there is any response to service reductions in this Council, where is it located? Is it down to the promptings of the Council's representatives on the Combined Authority or is isolation to be identified and acted upon for example in the context of ward plans that we have been firming up in recent weeks?

**Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw**

Thank you for that Councillor Reid. I think I understand the question. So the decision-making process is to do with the framework that the subsidy operates and will go through the transport committee on the Combined Authority where we have cross-party representation on there. All the transport committee districts have a sub-committee as well where representations can be made so ours I think is chaired by Councillor Salam. He chairs the Bradford one and therefore we have had people concerned about issues around bus services raised there and the bus operators attend those meetings to deal directly with them. It is obviously a very difficult time for the bus industry at the moment and we want to grow that network and I think we spend something around £2million a year supporting bus services but that is obviously under pressure, just in the same way all of the different parts of Council budget is. What we have managed to do through tendering is often maintain the same level of service of subsidised services whilst reducing the amount being spent on a tender which represents a saving without cutting the service. It is a difficult time but those are the two main areas. If people have a direct concern they can always raise it with me as well and I will feed back for them.

**37. Councillor Richard Dunbar**

Would the Leader confirm what work is being done to prevent people living in Social Housing being evicted to the street and can more be done to stop this occurring?

**Answer**

A survey on social landlord evictions was carried out recently which resulted in six Housing Associations out of 12 responding to the Council questionnaire. The responses however represent 80% of all registered provider stock within the District. Of those six responses, Habinteg are a specialist older person provider and their eviction rate is negligible. Of the other five, they all broadly have a similar rate of evictions per 1,000 homes ranging from 4.29 to 7.04 per year. All stated that evictions are a last resort and their intention is to sustain tenancies. Most evictions have been for rent arrears with the average owed around £3,000. With Anti-Social Behaviour, evictions are quicker but their numbers are much lower.

The Council is aware that our social housing provider partners view evictions as a final resort and prior to taking the decision to evict they will do everything possible to resolve issues with tenants amicably to avoid eviction. This is in line with Court rules in the form of Pre-Action Protocol for Possession Claims by Social Landlords which Housing Associations are required to follow. This includes the requirement by landlords to contact tenants as soon as possible; help tenants sort out any benefit issues; agree an affordable repayment plan for arrears; postpone court action as long as the tenant sticks to a repayment plan. However in some circumstances e.g. serious anti-social behaviour, drug dealing, domestic violence etc. they may face

pressure from other tenants to evict problem tenants. We are aware that Registered Providers take the correct legal steps during eviction and often go beyond the legal minimum requirements.

We have been working closely with our housing partners to ensure that the Housing Options Service is alerted as soon as possible about evictions so that we can make preparations to rehouse the evicted tenants. Whilst we have set up an alert module on our IT system, we are currently discussing ways to improve communications further. The National Housing Federation (NatFed) is also encouraging its Members to sign up to its Commitment to Refer and to include tenants facing eviction into that process.

However, despite social housing providers doing their best to prevent homelessness, consultation by Crisis on commitments (known as Cathy's Commitments) to tackle homelessness by Housing Associations indicated that preventing and relieving homelessness was inconsistent across the housing association sector. This proposed commitment tries to address these inconsistencies by encouraging all housing associations to commit to a series of actions. Commitment 4 is directly relevant to the motion.

Commitment 4 - to not make any tenant seeking to prevent their homelessness, homeless (as defined by the plan definition)

Housing associations should not evict any tenant into any situation which meets this plan's definition of homelessness. In exceptional circumstances, it may be that a tenant cannot remain in their current home. This could be because they are causing harm or distress to others or where the property is unaffordable or unsuitable for other reasons. In such cases, local pre-eviction partnership agreements should then be in place to arrange reciprocal moves into an alternative home or into emergency accommodation. There should be a clear move-on plan in place so that emergency accommodation remains as brief an intervention as possible. To achieve this, housing associations should be able to provide their tenants with quick access to effective tenancy support services and operate flexible rent arrears policies. This offer should be made proactively. There should be processes in place to identify and engage tenants who could struggle to maintain their tenancy without support. Housing associations must maximise the capacity of support services. They should work in partnership with local organisations to identify the range of support services available to tenants as well as providing support directly themselves.

The Local Authority is undertaking a review of the Homelessness Strategy and is using the review and consultation process to sign up our local partner Associations to these or similar commitments and to consider other solutions to reduce the number of evictions.

**38. Councillor John Pennington**

Could the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport confirm; whether some Planning Officers have been provided with new state of the art computers at a cost of £3,500 each, how much is the total cost and from which budget has it been paid?

### **Answer**

Whilst there have been no new computers for staff in the Planning section of Planning, Transportation & Highways Service, there have been 117 new laptops at £1,895.92 each and 14 new Desktop computers at £2,906.36 each for use by the highways engineering section of the Service and architects section of Facilities Management. The update of these computers is necessary to ensure that the Council can continue to use its main engineering design package, AutoCAD and comply with national Government's Building Information Modeling (BIM) requirements. These machines are being funded through prudential borrowing which will be repaid through recharging to capital projects delivered with the use of these machines over the next three years.

### **Supplementary Question**

It is a pleasure to be on the Dunbar and Davies show. My financial ferret over there, Councillor Pollard, attempted unsuccessfully to take £500,000 from the earmarked £6million for the ICT reserve so why are we now borrowing money to buy computers?

### **Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe**

So prudential borrowing is used at the same time as using our reserves and we have got more to buy in ICT than actually is there. If you remember that answer in Full Council I gave, we have got £9million that we need, we have already got £6million in reserves and you need a balance to portfolio funding to fund our ICT needs. As you will see from this ICT is an incredibly expensive thing. But if we did not have these machines that software would not work on those machines in the first place. So that is the kind of level of your spending that you need otherwise our officers cannot function. It is an expensive business is ICT these days and it changes day on day.

### **39. Councillor Fozia Shaheen**

Could the Leader join me in congratulating the continuous hard work the voluntary sector is doing to keep things going within our communities?

### **Answer**

Yes, Bradford District has a strong and vibrant civil society sector with an estimated 1,500 voluntary groups and 100,000 volunteers committed to making Bradford District a better place to live. I admire their resourcefulness and ability to provide local services tailored to local needs. The scope of initiatives run from voluntary organisations runs across the spectrum of health, education, training, arts and crafts, cultural and parenting services. One of the main assets of community organisations are the volunteers who utilise their skills, expertise and, most of all, their time for their betterment of their communities.

The value of and impact of this resource is immeasurable. Some examples of the good work undertaken by the Voluntary Community Sector include organisations that support uniformed services around the bon fire period including getting volunteers to patrol neighbourhoods and engage with young people. A whole host of organisations have provided sterling service to new migrants, asylum seekers and refugees to the

District providing key services to the most vulnerable groups including housing, hot meals and English language courses. There are also dedicated Voluntary Community Organisations providing quality services to women across the district and communities of interest groups. All the valuable work of the Voluntary Community Sector also significantly contributes to our Council Plan priorities.

**Supplementary Question**

I just want to thank the Leader in joining me in congratulating the voluntary sector for the hard work that they do in the district. Also thank you to the Portfolio Holder for a very detailed response. Someone that has been working in the voluntary sector for over ten years I just feel the voluntary sector is a backbone to our district and there is amazing work and amazing commitment. Just an example for the bonfire night period we have done amazingly well and that is just tackling. It did put a stop on a lot of anti-social crime in the areas as well so which was absolutely amazing and my question to the Portfolio Holder is what commitment does the Council have in sustaining the work and demonstrating long term partnership within the voluntary sector and community organisations. Thank you.

**Councillor Abdul Jabar**

Thank you Councillor Shaheen. The voluntary sector play a very important part with the Council. We are always here to support the voluntary sector in any way we can and we thank the voluntary sector for all the hard work that they do.