

**COUNCIL
8 DECEMBER 2020**

MEMBER QUESTION TIME
Questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12

1. Councillor Carol Thirkill

The fire that raged in Bradford next to the railway line was enormous and caused considerable distress to residents and businesses nearby. Please can you tell us a history of the site and how this happened?

Answer

The fire caused major disruption to residents and businesses in the area. There is an ongoing Police and Fire Service investigation as to how the fire started. We want to see the conclusion of that to see what lessons are to be learned to prevent this ever happening again. The Emergency management team (EMT) was made aware of this tyre site and the estimated numbers of tyres in June 2020. EMT reported this to Environmental Health and Planning Officers, and immediately informed the Fire Service. We also raised our concerns with the Environment Agency as the authority with the legal powers to deal with issues at such sites. The Environment Agency wrote to the council on 16th September 2020 confirming that the Agency was taking action regarding the tyres on this site. The operator was instructed by the Environment Agency to remove the imported tyres within a timeframe and the landlord was to provide night time security. Following the fire, at an onsite meeting on 26/11/2020, the Environment Agency confirmed they are the Agency responsible for dealing with the site landowner and tenant. A list of other tyre sites in the district is being compiled.

2. Councillor Jackie Whiteley

Given that The High Court judgement of June 2020 regarding building on Green Belt in Guiseley - ref Aireborough CO/3279/2019 ruled that Leeds City Council had acted illegally in allowing planning permission to build on Green Belt, can the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport, please advise of the implications this has for Green Belt Planning permissions in Bradford and clarify why this wasn't included in the Inspector's notes for the Sun Lane Enquiry given that the challenge was first heard in February 2020?

Answer

The High Court Judgement (June 2020) relates specifically to the Leeds Site Allocations Plan and whether 'Exceptional Circumstances' existed to allocate the sites in the Plan. The Judgement did not relate to planning permissions. The tests for development in the green belt through a planning application relate to the need to demonstrate 'Very Special Circumstances'. In this respect there are no implications for permissions within Bradford district which relate to development within the green belt including the Sun Lane site. All applications in green belt will have been considered against the test of 'Very Special Circumstances'.

As you are aware the Bradford MDC successfully challenged the Secretary of State's decision to refuse the Sun Lane (Burley-in-Wharfedale) application precisely because he wrongly applied the Policy test of 'Exceptional Circumstances' rather than 'Very Special Circumstances' and the matter is now awaiting re-determination by the Secretary of State based on the correct test being applied.

The decision does reinforce the need to robustly establish any exceptional circumstances through the local plan at the appropriate stages in the process with sufficient evidence and reasoning. This is something the council is fully aware of and will address in the emerging Local Plan.

3. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

How many Council owned, rented, or let premises are not fully accessible?

Answer

All but one of the buildings are let to single tenants and it is they, rather than the Council, that are responsible for complying with DDA legislation. Estate Management directly manages one multi tenanted property which is fully accessible.

Operational Buildings - Where required and where possible access has been improved as identified in condition surveys e.g. City Hall Reception and Registry Office, access to St George's Hall and the Alhambra Theatre.

When lifts are replaced we also ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to make them as fully compliant as possible working within the confines of existing buildings and constraints. In the case of the new Coroner's Court at Peckover Street, a fully compliant lift will be installed along with a platform lift.

Any new build works are obviously fully compliant e.g. Valley View Court residential home.

4. Councillor Martin Love

Can the Leader of Council tell us how many £10,000k Covid-19 business grants have the council paid to political associations or political parties, how many have been returned and which recipients have kept the grant?

Answer

It is not possible to identify, with any certainty, which buildings have a political association, from our Business Rates records. From common knowledge I know that Shipley Conservative Association and Keighley Labour Party are political organisations, having checked these, both were sent a grant. You would have to ask them how they have dealt with the monies received. There are numerous old political clubs which are still in operation around the district - Con Clubs, Labour Clubs and Liberal Clubs however these are often social clubs which no longer have any political affiliation. If he knows which of these, if any, still bear that political affiliation and wishes to ask the question about a specific property then we can let him know if they received a grant or not.

5. Councillor Richard Dunbar

Would the Leader agree with me that Government freezing pay for teachers, early years workers, support staff, youth workers and other key workers is an insult considering the pivotal work they play and especially during this pandemic?

Answer

Yes. Council staff, teachers, early years workers, support staff, youth workers and other key workers have done heroic work throughout this pandemic. These are workers who have gone above and beyond to keep our district and country going through this crisis. We have all seen countless examples of individuals who have put others first and gone to incredible lengths to support others, really going the extra mile at a time of exceptional need. So a pay freeze is certainly not what they deserve and clearly does not match their efforts or the importance of their work through this pandemic.

6. Councillor Richard Dunbar

Lockdown has provided victims of domestic abuse additional worrying challenges. How have we responded as a district during this crisis to best support victims and survivors?

Answer

During the Covid pandemic the district partnership has been extremely proactive in ensuring that victims, their families and perpetrators have been able to access support and information. Executive has also committed over £900,000 to help protect victims as part of a wider Covid response.

Support services and refuges have remained open and have utilised new technology to ensure that people get supported in a timely manner and a manner that puts the victim's wishes and the risks they face at the front of how intervention and support happens.

How the partnership has responded

Data

A data dash board has been established from the start of lockdown this has allowed us to track concerns and better plan our response.

Covid Meetings

Meetings take place that ensure we can:

- provide support at crisis points e.g. PPE and flexible working equipment, share knowledge and experience, collate anecdotal evidence to supplement the case for resource and now to plan for the next 6/12 months.
- Coordinate communications to help people understand what support is available.
- A group has also been formed to help manage the increase in cases that are presented to MARAC (multi agency risk assessment conference) which is now meeting weekly to keep on top of the increased demand.

A Housing Pathway/Youth Service Offer has been developed with Incommunities to move people from refuge into social housing. Linked to this is some work to

ensure the families can access funding and furniture to support their move. A separate piece of work had resulted in creating capacity within the youth service to support teenagers who suffer low/medium support needs from domestic abuse. Pathways with the commissioned service have been developed.

The difference made by the Council Financial investment

The spend allocated by Executive has provided the following:

- Extra specialist support so that victims and their children get the right first response when asking for help and keep that support whilst they need it.
- Drawn down match funding from Government money so that resource has been meaningful through the creation of year-long support workers.
- The creation of new interventions to meet emerging needs due to the impact of the Covid pandemic.

7. Councillor John Pennington

Further to a deplorable, violent incident in City Park, when several youths were arrested approximately 20 months ago, could the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods & Community Safety, update members on what action has been taken in relation to Council Warden Training etc, to improve responses to such incidents and can the Portfolio Holder inform members of whether he considers it conducive to improving public safety, that no prosecutions have yet taken place?

Answer

All Council Wardens are trained to report such issues through to the Police and CCTV Control Room at which point it became a police matter. The police responded quickly and took swift action. As a result, four juveniles were arrested for the assault in City Park. The suspects were prosecuted, found guilty and received penalties.

Council Wardens do receive conflict management training which is refreshed annually. All wardens are told to carry out dynamic risk assessment at all times. The Wardens are not trained to intervene in violent confrontations, nor do they have the same kind of protective equipment as the police that is needed to neutralise a violent offender. Should a warden feel that their safety is compromised they are advised to get to a safe place and make detailed notes for evidential purposes to pass on to the police.

8. Councillor Richard Dunbar

The launch of the Bradford Music Network is very much welcomed. Can the Portfolio Holder explain how this will be developed and anticipated outcomes?

Answer

Through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority investment from the Business Rates pool we are able to sustain the support for a two-year period whilst we develop the steering group and the role to build the capacity and track record. We have placed the Music Instigator role within The Producing Hub. The postholder will be tasked with seeking further funding and they will also support the council's commitment to support partnership working. The Music Instigator will take a key role

in liaising between local musicians, the wider sector, local government and national music industry bodies in helping to drive forward support for and recognition of our vibrant local music scene.

We have also partnered with Music:local who have been successful with drawing down funds from the Arts Council to support the work in Bradford under their Launchpad project offering sector support development for the music sector. Alongside this we have created a new music social media network which will enable subscribers to cross-share information on funding opportunities, news, collaborations and to ensure that the music sector is fully networked with opportunities, the steering group and the wider public.

We are also working closely with partners to expand our links with other music steering groups from other cities to share best practice and joint approaches to supporting the music industry.

9. Councillor Richard Dunbar

Can we have an outline of how our children in care have been supported through this pandemic and are there gaps in support which need filling?

Answer

At the beginning of lockdown all 'high risk' young people were reviewed in relation to plans regarding visiting. All children living under Placement with Parents (PWP) arrangements were RAG rated and the children were all seen by relevant social workers.

At the beginning of lockdown all Family Time was restricted to being conducted virtually but from May onwards we began to explore how we could facilitate safe, face-to-face Family Time. This was prioritised in terms of those instances where a lack of direct contact was seen to be having an emotionally detrimental impact upon our children. Similarly 'bubble' arrangements were explored in a number of instances where respite care or overnight contacts had been in place.

Since August we have increasingly moved back to undertaking face-to-face visits, where this can be safely done. Being able to do this has meant that we have begun to ensure that children, who had not been visited in person for some months have now been seen. Furthermore, Social Workers report that this has helped re-establish and maintain the quality of relationships that the Children in Care service prides itself on having with our children.

There are various things happening in terms of plans for our children over the Christmas period. We are currently seeking donations for gifts and more specifically a project to provide hampers for all of our children in care who are currently living with their parents.

Christmas Family Time: We now have a 'covid-safe' facility to use whilst we remain in lockdown and/or tier 3, which allows us an opportunity, within certain restrictions, to provide face-to-face contact and are now well underway with a plan which we hope will ensure that every child gets at least one opportunity for such contact in the

run up to Christmas.

10. Councillor Russell Brown

Could the Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills, advise colleagues of; the reason for using paper based School Admission Appeals in the first instance, rather than telephone conferences during lockdown, whether this caused an unnecessary delay, the number of outstanding school admission appeals there are across the Bradford District, what action is Bradford Council taking to resolve any outstanding appeals and when will they be completed?

Answer

In recognition that during this pandemic period it may not be possible for admission authorities, local authorities and independent appeals panels to hear school admission appeals physically in meeting rooms due to Government restrictions to counter the spread of the virus the School Admissions (Appeals Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 were amended and the DfE introduced revisions to the School Admission Appeals Code. These state that when it is not possible to hold face to face meetings, hearings should be conducted by telephone or electronic conferencing or where that is not possible through a paper based process. However, a condition placed by the amendments on appeals panels is that each participant in a group of appeals has to be able to access a hearing electronically. A survey of appellants for the secondary school groups of appeals found that not all parents in the group confirmed that they could access an electronically held appeal so that meant that the appeals could only be heard through the independent appeals panel considering written documentation. A protocol for hearing the appeals in accordance with the amended Regulations and revised Code was drafted and implemented and this included the arrangements for hearing appeals through a paper based process which involves a number of stages. A paper based appeals process does take longer than a process based upon electronic delivery.

School admission appeal forms are received from parents throughout the year and those appeals are heard within the timescale laid down by the DfE. School admission appeals are being constantly processed and heard by the independent appeals panels; therefore the point at which **all** appeals have been heard and "completed" is not applicable because the submission of appeals is on-going. The independent appeals panels are continuing to meet and reaching decisions on the appeals. So far during this period the panels have made decisions on 407 appeals (a further 231 appeals which were being processed have either been withdrawn by the parents or a place has been allocated to the child). Currently there are 199 appeals to be timetabled but that figure is constantly changing.

I would take this opportunity to thank the members of the independent appeals panels for their dedication and commitment to undertaking this challenging role.

Supplementary Question

Whilst it is clearly the case that all members appreciate the commitment of School Admission Appeal Panel Members, serving local residents in what parents can find to be a distressing situation, but given that parents / carers generally contact Councillors for support via email and presuming that Panel Members have IT

facilities, is it the case, that Parents/ carers or some Panel Members are unable to connect via the conferencing medium used by the Council / Appeals Panel and if that is the case, have any solutions been considered?

Cllr Imran Khan

Well, consultation was undertaken with all parents who submitted School's Admissions Appeals on whether they were able to participate in an appeal through electronic means. The outcome of the consultation was that not all parents in the secondary groups especially, were able to confirm that they had IT equipment to enable them to do so. So in accordance with the regulations and the revised code, the Appeals Panel had to hear the appeals through a paper based process. So, because the appeal groups for primaries are a lot smaller in most cases it's been possible to hear those through electronic voice conferencing arrangements. Like parents, some of the panel members as well, come from diverse backgrounds and some of them obviously have issues with IT capabilities, so not all of them had access to IT facilities. So, given pressures on the Council's IT resources with priority given to supporting services directly dealing with the pandemic, it's not be possible to provide panel members and those parents with IT provision. But where parents and panel members raise IT issues which prevent their participation, the clerks have worked with those individuals to identify solutions.

11. Councillor Ralph Berry

In the light of the welcome decision by the High Court that the Education Secretary acted unlawfully by failing to consult on the extensive reduction of protections for vulnerable children, a move which the Council rightly declined to go along with, can the Leader and portfolio holder now add this council's voice to apply pressure for the full restoration of the statutory protections for vulnerable children in England and affirm that the pandemic is not reason to remove protection for children?

Answer

Here in Bradford we did not relax the protections for vulnerable children. We made our views quite clear to the DfE and Ofsted at the time, saying that we did not think such easements were appropriate or indeed necessary. We have been told that the Government will restore the protections once the pandemic subsides.

12. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

There are 4795 people with impaired mobility living in unsuitable accommodation and residents require 9100 wheelchair adapted homes in the next five years. What plans does the Portfolio Holder have to ensure we meet the housing needs of these residents?

Answer

The Council's Housing Strategy, A Place to Call Home, A Place to Thrive; Housing Strategy for Bradford District 2020-2030, published earlier in the year, recognises the importance of ensuring that vulnerable residents in our communities are supported to live independently.

Over the last 10 years, through the council new build programme, we have delivered over 400 new homes. A large number of these homes have been developed to meet enhanced accessibility standards, over and above the minimum building regulations requirements, where the site and topography allow. This includes level access to dwellings, larger circulations space and ensuring the homes we develop are flexible and adaptable to meet the current and future needs of our residents. An example of this is the Council's Extra Care Scheme, Fletcher Court. It comprises 36 two bed and 33 one bed apartments; it is designed to meet the needs of frailer older people, provides 24 hour care and support on site and is fully accessible throughout.

The Council has a statutory duty to administer Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). To facilitate this the Council receives an annual grant allocation from the Government. In 2020/21 the government grant allocation for DFGs is £4,527,491. Demand for adaptations continues to be high with the Housing service receiving an average of 50 new referrals for DFGs each month. In recognition of this the Council has agreed that the delivery of major adaptations through DFG is a corporate priority and has agreed to make additional funding available for DFG should the grant be insufficient to meet demand.

We also published the Council's Design Guide this year, Homes & Neighbourhoods: A guide to designing in Bradford. This is a supplementary planning document. It requires new housing developments to be designed to be inclusive for all and recommends that ten per cent of proposed homes should be designed to meet the needs of wheelchair users (Building Regulations M4 (3): Category 3, Wheelchair user dwellings) with the remaining 90% designed to be accessible and adaptable (Building Regulations M4 (2): Category 2, Accessible and adaptable dwellings). This sets out the intended direction of travel in advance of an update to the Local Plan (through the Partial Review of the Core Strategy) which will formally address the requirement for accessible homes through planning policy. The design guide also demonstrates our commitment to inclusive places including the provision of accessible streets, pavements and paths, having an effective strategy for parking and bins, and level access to all open space and play facilities to ensure less mobile residents are able to move around with relative ease.

13. Councillor Ralph Berry

We all agree on the importance of regular school attendance for children's learning and achievement. However in these exceptional times I know of parents who are fearful of their children being in school because they or a family member they live with has a substantially increased risk from the virus, being classified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable by Government because of a pre-existing health condition. Can the portfolio holder reassure me that schools are working constructively with families in this position who are concerned about school-based learning?

Answer

Schools are being supported by the Local Authority to proactively work with children and families where there are concerns about the risks of COVID to members of the household. Schools have been provided with advice and guidance detailing the support mechanisms which should be put in place to reassure parents of protective measures. The COVID response team, which includes colleagues from Health,

Education and Children's Social Care, has developed its remit to discuss any additional support mechanisms and/or specific advice for families who are worried about the risks of COVID in schools.

14. Councillor Kyle Green

Could the Leader of the Council confirm what policies are in place for Water Safety Management within the District and when these documents were created?

Answer

There are a number of different aspects to water safety management, covering a range of environments, in which the council and partner organisations have an important part to play. The regulation of water quality within the district falls to three enforcement agencies. River water quality is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. The safety and quality of the public water supply in the district is the responsibility of the statutory water undertaker; in the case of the Bradford district this is Yorkshire Water. Both of these agencies have a close working relationship with the Council through the Environmental Health service, especially so in the case of any quality concerns for the public water supply. The Drinking Water Inspectorate also provide independent reassurance of the safety of drinking water. The Council, through Environmental Health, is responsible for enforcing the quality of the many private water supplies within the district. This is delivered through a programme of regular risk assessments and the sampling of supplies, with appropriate enforcement undertaken where supplies are found to be unacceptable.

So it demands a strong partnership approach. To use the example of your ward, in Ilkley we are working with a number of partner agencies such as Police, Fire & Rescue, Yorkshire Water and Environment Agency, and community groups like the Friends of Ilkley Riverside Park and Ilkley Clean Rivers Group, to update and develop our plans for the management of the parks in Ilkley and the River Wharfe where it runs through them. We also have the Ilkley Riverside Hot Weather Plan, which we developed in order to help manage the large number of visitors this summer and which is being reviewed and will be updated for next spring and summer.

Council Water Management Policies within the district are included in two main documents as listed below.

Bradford Councils Core Strategy Development Plan Document. July 2018

Policy EN7: Flood Risk

- A. The Council will manage flood risk pro-actively and in assessing proposals for development will:
1. Integrate sequential testing into all levels of plan-making
 2. Require space for the storage of flood water within Zones 2 and 3a
 3. Ensure that any new development in areas of flood risk is appropriately resilient and resistant
 4. Safeguard potential to increase flood storage provision and improve defences within the Rivers Aire and Wharfe corridors
 5. Manage and reduce the impacts of flooding within the beck corridors, in a

- manner that enhances their value for wildlife
6. Adopt a holistic approach to flood risk in the Bradford Beck corridor in order to deliver sustainable regeneration in LDDs and in master planning work
 7. Require that all sources of flooding are addressed, that development proposals will only be acceptable where they do not increase flood risk elsewhere and that any need for improvements in drainage infrastructure is taken into account
 8. Seek to minimise run-off from new development; for Greenfield sites run off should be no greater than the existing Greenfield overall rates
 9. Require developers to assess the feasibility of implementing and maintaining SUDS in a manner that is integral to site design, achieves high water quality standards and maximises habitat value
 10. Use flood risk data to inform decisions made about Green Infrastructure. Only support the use of culverting for ordinary water courses, and additional flood defence works that could have adverse impacts on the environment, in exceptional circumstances.
- B. The Council will not permit development in areas shown as functional floodplain in the Bradford SFRA, with the exception of water compatible uses and essential infrastructure.

Bradford Councils Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) December 2016

The LFRMS is developed and maintained by the CBMDC. It sets out CBMDC's objectives and measures for managing local flood risk and aims to guide effective Flood Risk Management activities undertaken by Risk Management Authorities' operating within Bradford District. As Lead Local Flood Authority, the CBMDC's objectives for managing district wide flood risk, subject to resources, are to:

- Improve understanding of flood risk
- Reduce the impact of flooding on a priority basis
- Communicate flood risk to partners and stakeholders
- Carry out targeted maintenance on a priority basis
- Ensure appropriate development
- Improve flood response and post flood recovery

Supplementary Question

Thank you for the reply. I ask the Leader of Council to note that the Emergency Hot Weather Plan referenced in the answer to my Question does not have these in place nor is it a district wide water safety management plan, but is a plan designed to manage unacceptable behaviour at certain times of year in Ilkley at the riverside area. As such, can the Leader of the Council confirm what Water Safety Management Plan is in place for people who go bathing in water bodies such as the River Wharfe, when these documents were created and can she confirm if bathing in these bodies is allowed or encouraged for activities such as wild swimming?

Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw

Obviously this element comes under my portfolio so that's why I'm picking it up. Our officers have actually agreed to form a partnership with Yorkshire Water and Environment Agency to consider all the issues arising from potential positive bathing status designation in Ilkley and those will consider things like water safety, water quality and the signage and a Water Safety Management Plan will be considered as part of that. If the application's approved, then the signage will automatically be updated in line with DEFRA guidance and it's more of a focus on water quality than water safety which is obviously one of the drivers of the Ilkley Clean River group. These are all issues that you raised that have been discussed with partners and are comfortable with this approach but I have asked officers to keep Ward Members updated on the progress and the outcomes of the partnership as it moves forward.

15. Councillor Taj Salam

I'm aware that we've been investing in active travel during the pandemic to support our climate emergency work and healthier lifestyles. Will the portfolio holder give an update on the cycling and walking schemes we have been putting in place?

Answer

The Council received funding of £614,000 as part of our Tranche 1 Emergency Active Travel Fund allocation from Government which was split £543,000 capital and £71,000 revenue. This funding facilitated delivery of a programme of schemes including:

- Installation of pop-up cycle lanes into Bradford City Centre along key corridors including Wakefield Road and Manchester Road.
- Widening of the footway under the railway bridge at Wheatley Lane in Ilkley to help social distancing of pedestrians.
- Installing measures in town and district centres to support social distancing including localised footway widening, pedestrian one-way systems and supporting local businesses with social distancing outside their premises.
- Closure of Shay Lane (South Bradford) to vehicles to allow pedestrians and cyclists to access green spaces for exercise.
- Installing new secure cycle parking stands in 19 council run car parks
- Converting 40 existing pedestrian points at traffic signal crossings to automatic pedestrian detection allowing pedestrians to use these facilities without the need to touch the crossing button.
- Acceleration of existing schemes including proposals under the Transforming Cities Fund through reducing Hall Ings in the city centre to one lane in both directions from Jacobs Well to Bridge Street to help passengers wait safely for buses.

All of these schemes were delivered in line with the government imposed deadline of September 2020.

The Council has now received further confirmation of funding from the Government's Tranche 2 allocations of just over £2m to deliver a further programme of interventions. In line with the government's requirements a detailed programme of consultation and engagement on the ideas for these interventions, many of which came from our earlier web consultation, will be launched shortly.

16. Councillor Nazam Azam

One impact of the pandemic has been an increase in demand for children's social care services. Will the portfolio holder outline what actions we've taken to meet this demand and ensure high standards of provision?

Answer

Local Authorities nationally have experienced a sharp rise in the number of contacts being made to Children's Services. Balancing quality against demand will always be a challenge for Local Authorities however the following steps have been embedded since March 2020 to support with this:

Information and Advice Line

The launch of an Information & Advice Line has provided all referring professionals with a direct link into the Integrated Front Door. A team of experienced social workers are available to offer advice, guidance and support to anyone who may be worried about a child. By encouraging conversations, we are having early discussions about risk however we are also encouraging referring professionals to consider strengths, consent and existing safety for children. This has allowed us to ensure children's needs are responded to by the right service at the right time. With our 'Help or Harm' pathway now embedded, we are filtering all contacts in line with presenting needs. This ensures children and families can access Universal support, Early Help and Statutory Social Work services in a timely way.

Our call data tells us that professionals are starting to use the Information & Advice line more frequently and in spite of a sharp rise in the number of contacts, the number of referrals haven't increased at the same pace. Our referral rate is now in line with our statistical neighbours which is indicative of the improvements having the desired impact.

Performance Management

On average, around 80% of contacts are progressed within 1 working day of them being received. This has been sustained since April 2020 and is a result of tighter performance management. Performance data is tracked, analysed and shared with internal staff and the partnership on a weekly basis.

Audit Cycle

To understand and promote consistent threshold application, in August 2020 we commenced an Audit Cycle in the front door. We have made a commitment to audit 40 children's records per month where the outcome of the contact has been 'Does not meet Threshold'. This has allowed us to scrutinise the thresholds being applied by referrers as well as our social workers and team managers. The summary and findings are shared with staff and partners at the end of each month. Since October 2020 we have been auditing 'with' our partners from the Police, Health and Education to promote a culture of shared learning.

Lead Professional Assessment and Early Help Coordinators

A recently launched Lead Practitioner Assessment (September 2020) and a revised Early Help offer ensures children and families with low or emerging needs can access support without the need for them to be referred to statutory services prematurely. The appointment of 12 Early Help Coordinators in each of Bradford's Locality Hubs ensures communities benefit from timely and local early help. Professionals across the partnership are also being made aware of the continuum of support available in Bradford which may mean some families don't always need to be referred for a statutory service.

17. Councillor Dale Smith

Could the Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills Portfolio confirm what contingency plans are in place to ensure that in any future lockdown, a more consistent educational provision will be provided to children across the district?

Answer

The Government has issued guidance on the provision of remote learning plans which all schools must follow. Schools have been initiating these plans from September where there have been children who have needed to isolate as a result of COVID-19. Should schools be fully closed as a result of a future lockdown, these plans would be in place.

Supplementary Question

Could the Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills Portfolio confirm how many schools have been fully closed since February, by what process is CBMDC notified when a school is fully closed and what checks are made to monitor the education provision provided during closure?

Cllr Imran Khan.

So from the 23rd March 2020 all schools were required to close for the provision of education to all children. Schools were only open to provide child care to vulnerable children and key workers' children. But as you know, in June 2020 some schools were required to open partially but that was for specified year groups only. Since September of this year, other than for a 2 day deep clean, following advice from Public Health, all schools have remained open for education on site except for children who are self-isolating or who have had a positive Covid 19 test. Where children are self-isolating and not unwell, schools are required to provide remote learning. All schools have had to publish remote learning plans which are reviewed by OFSTED, DfE or where needed, the Local Authority. All schools are required to complete an online form which is submitted to the Education Learning Service so that information's collated and, where necessary, a follow up call is made to schools who may benefit from additional service and support to enable them to provide onsite education.

18. Councillor David Warburton

As a Group we are clear that investing in skills and jobs will be vital for the district

coming out of Covid – can the portfolio holder tell me about our plans to support residents’ skills?

Answer

We absolutely agree that support with upskilling, reskilling and securing and sustaining employment are critical to the recovery, as well as businesses having access to the talent they need to move at pace as the economy continues to change. It is clear that the impact of the pandemic has been far-reaching across all economic sectors, communities and geographies in the District. It is also the case that the underlying employment and skills challenges we were considering when we launched the District Workforce Development Plan in February need to be addressed and labour market and skills inequalities have only been amplified by the pandemic.

Within this context, in June the Executive approved an investment of £3.75million in the SkillsHouse partnership over the next three and a half years. Building on a successful track record of strong collaboration this will rapidly and significantly upscale the SkillsHouse approach. In doing so we will create a unified brand for locality based, multi-agency working providing a set of interventions that address longer-term skills gaps and low productivity, and the unprecedented demand for employment support created by Covid 19.

This is already having an impact:

The Partnership formed an integral part of the Local Authority’s emergency response to the pandemic, implementing a system wide approach to deployment and rapid recruitment in support of essential services. This engaged 530 new people. SkillsHouse also managed the engagement and recruitment process for “Track and Trace” successfully recruiting 50 contract tracers, and work is ongoing planning the recruitment of staff for the roll out of the vaccination.

The Council is acting as a Gateway (consortium) for the national Kickstart programme supporting 16-24 year olds and businesses through funded work placements. This has been coordinated through the partnership. We have had 154 local businesses register with our Gateway offering over 850 placements for young people. This covers a broad range of opportunities and roles across 15 sectors of the economy. The application for this is currently being assessed by DWP but clearly this would represent a significant investment in the District.

Alongside the Council investment, we are also working to secure additional funding to meet local need and enhance our partnership approach, and have had positive conversations about co-investment in SkillsHouse with other agencies that we will continue to pursue.

The Combined Authority’s Devolution Deal is a welcome and timely development giving more local influence and control over key employment and skills budgets and shaping new provision. Through the Bradford Employment and Skills Board, which I chair, we have been holding discussions with the Combined Authority to inform commissioning and alignment of the Adult Education Budget with local priorities. Last Friday, the Combined Authority confirmed their decision to invest £13.5million in

employment and skills across West Yorkshire and we have started discussions about how we align that with our partnership approach.

As well as working in this way to both invest and maximise existing resources available to us locally, we are working within the Economic Recovery Group to further develop plans and interventions, to understand what other resources we may need, and to ensure we are ready with informed and costed proposals for any additional resource that can be identified.

19. Councillor Rosie Watson

I am proud that as a Labour led council we've invested in laptops and other support for children's home learning but we all remain concerned about the digital divide. What more are we doing to address this divide in Bradford?

Answer

The following work is taking place to expand on the initial provision from the DFE. This includes wider collaboration with other partners, including the Education Opportunity Area:

- To provide 2,000 younger children under the age of 5, across the District, access to an age appropriate device to support children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- Children who have since been allocated a social worker.
- Post 16 (Years 12 and 13) who need to access a device for college.
- Ongoing support and maintenance of the existing 4G connections provided in the DFE scheme, as well as the provision of additional connections for the extra devices.
- Ensuring that these are extended to the end of the current academic year in the first instance.

The IT Service is leading a cross service working group to develop the Digital Strategy; which will be inextricably linked to service based activity and core strategies such as the Economic Recovery Strategy.

The evolving Digital Strategy is focused upon an incremental, pragmatic and deliverable approach focused upon:

- Civic Infrastructure
- Intelligence
- Economy
- Inclusion
- Workforce and
- Services
-

Each of the above headings has a CMT sponsor assigned and an evolving programme of deliverables is being identified and progressed. A mapping of all Digital Inclusion activity is also presently underway.

As part of the wider digital strategy the current key focus is upon the Civic Infrastructure as this is essential to provide the digital connectivity across the district and we are working with WYCS, Telcos and other parties to target 100% Fibre To The Premise (FTTP) across Bradford District Region including rural areas by 2023 (current plans are 2025).

Budget proposals for 2021/22 include a number of investments that will further support and enable digital inclusion, including:

- £2.2m additional investment in Digital Inclusion for Disadvantaged Children and Young People by investing in an infrastructure to support the programme
- £1.019m per annum investment in Skills House, adding to the financial support allocated in July Executive
- £2.42m investment in Raising Achievement in schools; to focus on ensuring the children who have experienced a gap in attending school are not disadvantaged as a result of the pandemic.

20. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

The Prime Minister has announced that he is to bring forward from 2040 to 2030 a ban on sales of petrol and diesel cars. What plans does the Portfolio Holder have to ensure that households without their own driveways, who will have to rely heavily on private car parks and charges in places such as supermarket car parks, will be able to access enough chargers or is he considering a plan to restrict the numbers of cars per household?

Answer

Officers have been working on the best way to roll out Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure and continue to meet on a regular basis. This process is balanced to try to ensure expensive equipment has not been installed at a time when it is unlikely to be used and, up until last week, with an eye on the 2040 deadline to stop the sale of new Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) Cars. Currently officers are completing the installation of 22 Rapid chargers that each have a space for taxis under the WYCA taxi charge-point scheme and are developing another scheme to provide further charge-points within public car parks across the district, the final numbers and location of these chargers are yet to be determined.

Our Planning Policy approach is for new homes to have EV charging points as standard and as a result thousands of homes have been approved across the district with this measure. We also allocated CIL funding this year to further expand the public EV charging point network.

Officers are working on meeting the requirements of suitable charging infrastructure and reviewing ongoing infrastructure investment costs.

21. Councillor Shakeela Lal

Can the portfolio holder update us on what plans we have in place to continue our support for children facing holiday hunger?

Answer

We will continue to build on the work we have already done as a Council over summer and October half term to support our most vulnerable and are pleased that the Government has given in to pressure from us and other local authorities across the country.

The Government has provided £2.2m Winter Grant funding to the Council. £1m has been allocated to schools and will be distributed proportionately based on the number of pupils and the number of Free School Meal allocations. This will enable schools to provide food to families in response to school concerns around weekend hunger and will cover the period from now until 31st March 2021.

In addition, £550,000 has been allocated for provision to the Voluntary Sector to enable them to provide food across the Christmas and February half term holiday period. The allocation will be circa £10,000 per provider and will be allocated via an application process, as per the summer holiday programme.

£100,000 will be provided to the Bradford District's food banks; £300,000 has been allocated to support care leavers, with a further £250,000 allocated to support families in fuel poverty, which will be administered directly through the Council.

22. Councillor Debbie Davies

Would the Regeneration, Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder, make available to the public, copies of (including dates) any maintenance inspections undertaken during the past 5 years, on Buck Lane footbridge and can he reassure us that in future it will be properly maintained, in order that it is only closed whilst repairs are carried out rather than as at present, being closed for months whilst no work is going on?

Answer

In spite of the swingeing government funding cuts over the past 10 years hitting every part of our district, council officers continue to work extremely hard to carry out maintenance and repairs in an effective and timely manner.

I can confirm that a Principal Inspection was carried out on 19 September 2017. The condition of the deck planks was recorded as: *'A localised area of section loss was recorded in the timber deck (north span), the area measured 530x100x10mm. The full length of the timber deck was found to be weathered by up to 10mm, typically at the edges. Moss growth was evident on the full length of the structure at the deck edges and in between the timber deck panels'*. No remedial measures were recommended at that time.

Buck Lane footbridge had a general inspection survey (which is done every two years) carried out in 2018. As part of the maintenance regime where repair works are identified in the general inspection we try to do these within the financial year, subject to budget availability. As a result the replacement of damaged planks was carried out in 2018. A number of planks were replaced on 10 and 11 December 2018.

A site inspection and interim repairs were proposed on 16 October 2020 following a

report of a number of rotten planks. Having identified the extent of the damage, short-term interim repair solutions were considered but discounted due to the use of the bridge by horse riders (as the loading on the structure caused by these users is significantly greater than that of pedestrians). The decision therefore was taken to close the bridge on safety grounds until a more permanent solution could be found.

The current maintenance strategy for this bridge will use Ekki hard wood which needs to be machine cut off-site to exactly match the existing plank widths and fixing hole positions. We are currently awaiting delivery of these units to the contractor in order that installation can begin and hope that it may be possible to receive these this month (December). Our current programme of repair anticipates that the bridge will be reopened to the public by the end of January 2021, but we will of course endeavour to better this if at all possible.

Supplementary Question

I reported damage to the planks on Buck Lane Bridge in June this year and received a reply to say it had been inspected and “we are expecting a raised frequency of interventions over the next few years” but that full refurbishment was scheduled for 2026-31. I was therefore reassured and took this to mean the maintenance of the bridge was in hand but there is no mention of this June 2020 inspection in your reply; why not?

Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw

That’s a good spot, I think it’s just an oversight in the way that our officers searched through the maintenance and how they log it and I suspect it’s been a bit of a reactive visit for when you raised a concern and I think it may have been logged differently so it just didn’t show up. I can obviously confirm that it took place and it should have been on that list.

23. Councillor Aneela Ahmed

Can the Leader tell us what actions the council is taking to dispel harmful myths and conspiracy theories about Covid-19, which obstruct our efforts to stop the spread of the virus and save lives?

Answer

Misinformation, conspiracy theories and harmful myths are an unfortunate reality of life and the internet, and social media in particular, unfortunately enables them to spread unchecked more quickly and more widely than ever before, and to a global audience. I am not about to list any of the most prevalent COVID-related theories as I refuse to give them the oxygen of publicity.

Throughout the pandemic Council services – including Neighbourhoods, Marketing & Communications, the Contact Centre and Youth Service – have worked with colleagues in our partner organisations and residents across the district on a campaign to correct misinformation, debunk conspiracy theories and dispel myths.

Our anti-rumour campaign has had a number of elements and was developed and delivered in partnership mainly with the VCS and Asian Sunday.

Partners worked with the Council to address specific and pervasive rumours on social media in September 2020 about children who tested positive being taken into care. The campaign included video content in English and community languages targeting both parents and young people. This included rap by a young artist Faisal Motin (also known as the BBC's Voice of Bradford), and videos made by a senior safeguarding lead and the Deputy Leader on the Council. This was supported by Prof John Wright, of Born in Bradford, in his weekly blog and multi-platform BBC coverage and ultimately resulted in the fake news being taken down and an apology made.

The Behind the Mask campaign was run jointly by CABAD and the Council and used real life stories of people in the district to address the "so you think it's not real" narrative. This campaign was run on social media, billboards and bus rears and received local and national recognition.

Community insight work is taken every week by COVID Young Ambassadors, supported by the Youth Service, CABAD and the CCG, to track rumours and this is fed into system communications group meetings to develop approaches to addressing these rumours, which has included doorstep engagement, social media and press campaigns.

We've also launched critical thinking and anti-rumour workshops and toolkits to enable community champions and ward councillors to debunk fake news and conspiracy theories. For example this helped the Roma community to allay fears about COVID and the Slovakian community to dispel fake news about threats of deportation.

This and other work will continue in our communities for the duration of the COVID pandemic.

24. Councillor Martin Love

Can the Leader of Council tell us when were the Council first made aware of the huge tyre dump on the former go-kart site in East Bowling and what action was taken against the landowner and operator between then and the devastating fire? Also, is the Council aware of any other such sites in the district and if so, where?

Answer

The fire caused major disruption to residents and businesses in the area. There is an ongoing Police and Fire Service investigation as to how the fire started. We want to see the conclusion of that to see what lessons are to be learned to prevent this ever happening again. The Emergency management team (EMT) was made aware of this tyre site and the estimated numbers of tyres in June 2020. EMT reported this to Environmental Health and Planning Officers, and immediately informed the Fire Service. We also raised our concerns with the Environment Agency as the authority with the legal powers to deal with issues at such sites. The Environment Agency wrote to the council on 16th September 2020 confirming that the Agency was taking action regarding the tyres on this site. The operator was instructed by the

Environment Agency to remove the imported tyres within a timeframe and the landlord was to provide night time security. Following the fire, at an onsite meeting on 26/11/2020, the Environment Agency confirmed they are the Agency responsible for dealing with the site landowner and tenant. A list of other tyre sites in the district is being compiled.

Supplementary Question

I would like to thank the Leader for the detailed response and request she confirms that once the list of other tyre dump sites in the district is compiled that it will be shared with elected members?

Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe

Certainly, if there is a tyre site in your Ward I would expect all Ward Councillors who have a tyre site in their Ward to be informed and I'll make sure that happens.

25. Councillor David Warburton

Do we have an update on our campaign for a Bradford city centre stop on Northern Powerhouse Rail?

Answer

Bradford Council and its partners continue to make the case for a City Centre NPR station. As a result of the Council's input on the economic impact and connectivity benefits TfN Partnership Board on 18 November agreed the preferred NPR network which includes a new line from Manchester to Leeds via Bradford City Centre. This preferred way forward has been sent to the Government. Over the next few months the Council will undertake further detailed work with partners including TfN and WYCA on the options for the city centre location which will be submitted to Government with the updated Business Case for NPR in March 2021.

26. Councillor Geoff Winnard

Could the Leader of the Council confirm the overall cost of postage and the printing of the recent letter that was distributed to all households, about the nationally determined COVID-19 lockdown restrictions?

Answer

The total cost for design, print, enveloping and postage of the letter sent to just under 220,000 households was £88,668.

Supplementary Question

Some local residents have questioned whether the cost of sending a letter to 220,000 households, which included no new information (just repeating the rules of the nationally mandated lockdown), was good value for money. What was the rationale for sending this letter other than promoting the Council's brand? What was it intended to achieve?

Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe

You will remember that this was sent out after the Conservative Government thoroughly confused Bradford District and indeed the whole of West Yorkshire by giving us an instruction that Tier 3 rules would be followed and then 48 hours later saying 'no there wouldn't be Tier 3, it would be national lockdown. It wouldn't be happening on Monday it would be happening on Thursday.' So with all that in mind I think we owed clear information to the residents of the District to make sure they knew where they stood with the rules that were coming and it was certainly not clear after that faux-pas of Government I would suggest. I think it's also worth being really realistic about how people get their information. Not everybody, and we've already discussed this during this meeting, not everybody has access to the internet and email and is on Twitter and Facebook all day. There are many people I was going to discuss later on who are maybe elderly, alone at home who do not have the same kind of connectivity and therefore we have to make sure that we use all media at our availability to get the message out to people to keep them safe and to also let them know which numbers to ring if they need help and it would be an absolute dereliction of duty if we didn't cover all bases with our communications.

We want to make sure that every single person in this District has access to the same information. If you don't do that, that's the way health inequalities get entrenched in society by giving access to some people and not others, so you're looking at this mailing and I know some people may have contacted who may be very briefed up with all the latest information on the internet and on the news but we need to get through to people on all different media and is absolutely the right thing to do and it's a dereliction of duty not to do it.

27. Councillor Nazam Azam

How are our plans for the new city centre market progressing in spite of the challenges of Covid-19?

Answer

Covid-19 has impacted on the Council being able to undertake and complete structural surveys, which are necessary in order to finalise the building design and ensure that the adjoining buildings are structurally stable when several properties that comprise of Nos 8 to 24 Darley Street are demolished.

The formal appointment of Kier Construction as the main contractor is due to take place in January 2021, with a nine month demolition contract commencing in February 2021. Site clearance will be completed by October 2021, when the construction of the new market will begin.

The new market will provide a positive regeneration impact and become a key destination in the city centre. It will provide a platform for independent traders specialising in quality fresh foods, non-food and hot food and beverage each separately zoned and taking place on its own dedicated floor area. The hot food offer will provide informal and communal seating to allow customers to linger and experience the theatre of markets. A stage for music and entertainment is included to compliment the main activity of hot food. The market's dedicated hot food hall will take advantage of the growth experienced in the food and beverage sector of communal eating and socialising and will offer a wide range of 'world' foods. The hot

food traders will be encouraged to meet consumer demand for healthier food, particularly around less fats, sugar and salt in products through improved recipes and better menu planning.

The new market will also include an 'open air' market square that will become a focus of attention and gathering point for 'ad hoc' commercial, leisure and community events as well as providing an area of quality public realm in the city centre.

Environmental considerations have been at the heart of the market's design and it will be an energy efficient, sustainable and low carbon building. The market will rely on natural light and ventilation to reduce operating costs, making the building cheaper for the Council to operate, more affordable to tenants and reduce the need for fossil fuels and carbon emissions. It will include sustainable urban drainage systems with rainwater being retained and harvested as grey water for toilet flushing and plant watering in the new market square. Solar panels on the Market roof will significantly reduce the production of greenhouse gasses and lower operating costs for the new Market building. Heavy duty electrical vehicle charging points, cycle storage facilities and public water station will be included.

Trader development is equally as important as the market building itself and upskilling traders to offer not only 'bricks and mortar' retailing but also e-commerce and home deliveries. Work taking place with Bradford College to create the UK's first online training module for market traders will provide traders with the skills and knowledge to develop their business model.

28. Councillor Vanda Greenwood

Does the Leader join me in thanking volunteers and community centres across our district who have supported their vulnerable neighbours throughout lockdown and this public health crisis?

Answer

Absolutely. I give a big heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers and community centres in every part of our district who have worked tirelessly to help others at their time of need. What a fantastic district-wide effort it has been, and continues to be.

We could not possibly do justice to all the great work that is being done across the district in this response – there are simply so many volunteers and community organisations putting all hands on deck. And to be honest there will no doubt be lots of unsung heroes quietly getting on and helping their neighbours whose efforts truly deserve to be recognised.

Numerous community centres have supported vulnerable neighbours throughout the crisis, getting food out to people, offering all kinds of support, even a friendly phone call when lonely people needed a chat. Thank you doesn't seem sufficient for the extent of their public service during these difficult times.

We need to celebrate this in every way we can and one way we can do that is through the Community Stars Awards, currently being run through the T&A which will have a winners supplement in January to acknowledge individuals and groups that

have been shining examples of selfless service to their fellow residents across the district. Over 300 people and organisations have been nominated. We are proud to acknowledge their efforts and give them due recognition.

29. Councillor Susan Knox

To the Leader of Council. What additional action is being taken to address the backlog of 1,651 outstanding enforcement cases? Please give answers for each department of the Council concerned?

Answer

The Planning Enforcement Team has made significant inroads over the last few years to reduce the outstanding backlog from over 2,000 to what it is today. This has been in the face of many years of austerity, the Covid Pandemic and reducing staff numbers. The team have also reduced the backlog of outstanding Prosecution cases. I can confirm that we are seeking to recruit a full time Planning Enforcement Prosecutions Officer and a full time Trees Technician into the team. This will help the team deal with the backlog even further.

30. Councillor Rizwana Jamil

Does the Leader share my concern that the Spending Review shows the government continues to put the onus on the council taxpayer to meet funding shortfalls caused by a decade of cuts?

Answer

Yes, unfortunately the Spending Review has not assuaged my concerns or that of fellow council leaders that local government funding has structural shortfalls that need to be urgently addressed and it's about time that the government stopped seeing council taxpayers as easy fodder for generating income to fill the gap in national taxation. It's also a deeply unfair approach because councils in richer parts of the country can raise considerably more from a council tax increase than councils serving more underprivileged communities. While raising more income, in serving wealthier populations they also tend to have lower demands on a number of their support services. Placing such an onus on council tax, including the precept to pay towards social care costs, therefore risks adding to inequality rather than tackling it. As a country we need to level up, not down, and I will continue to make that case to government loud and clear.

31. Councillor Jackie Whiteley

Further to the Government bringing forward its deadline to stop the sale of petrol and diesel cars, could the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport, commit to the acceleration of the provision of infrastructure for electric and hydrogen cars to encourage and facilitate the early switch to emission free transport by as many residents as possible?

Answer

Officers have been working on the best way to roll out Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure and continue to meet on a regular basis. This process is balanced to

try to ensure expensive equipment has not been installed at a time when it is unlikely to be used and, up until last week, with an eye on the 2040 deadline to stop the sale of new Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) Cars. Currently officers are completing the installation of 22 Rapid chargers that each have a space for taxis under the WYCA taxi charge-point scheme and are developing another scheme to provide further charge-points within public car parks across the district, the final numbers and location of these chargers are yet to be determined.

Our Planning Policy approach is for new homes to have EV charging points as standard and as a result thousands of homes have been approved across the district with this measure. We also allocated CIL funding this year to further expand the public EV charging point network.

Officers are working on meeting the requirements of suitable charging infrastructure and reviewing ongoing infrastructure investment costs.

32. Councillor Angela Tait

England's Chief Medical Officer suggested people should be very careful this Christmas even though restrictions are being relaxed. Will we be giving similar advice to our residents?

Answer

In short, yes we will. It is vital that everyone enjoys the festive season COVID-safely so that we can keep infection rates in the district falling, as they have been recently; avoid a third wave and further lockdown; and protect our loved ones and the NHS.

I'd advise everyone to celebrate very carefully and to remember the 'hands, face, space' mantra wherever they mark the festivities.

Last week our Council communications were still concentrating on the transition from national restrictions to Tier 3 across West Yorkshire. Over the last few days Members should have seen Christmas-focused communications explaining the restrictions that will be in place between 23 and 27 December. We'll be pushing out those messages for the next couple of weeks in the media, on social media, in our Stay Connected e-newsletters and on the Council website.

And I would encourage fellow Members to amplify those messages with residents in their wards.

33. Councillor Geoff Winnard

Can the Leader of the Council, provide an update on the proposed Community Asset Transfer of Bingley Swimming Pool, including what outstanding issues need to be resolved?

Answer

As a local ward member I would hope that the ward councillor is already in touch with the Friends and has regular dialogue with them about this. He may therefore be aware that the Council was due to transfer the asset to the Friends of Bingley Pool in

September 2020, however after the pandemic struck we agreed to let them have another year to put their business case and plans together.

Since then discussions have been ongoing with Friends of Bingley Pool and two meetings have been held over the past three months. The portfolio holders for Regeneration, Planning and Transport and Healthy People and Places attended the last meeting on 5 November at which the Friends confirmed that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to difficulties in being able to apply for funding and as a result the proposed transfer date of September 2021 is no longer realistic. The Friends have suggested that a joint working proposal might provide a more sustainable future for the pool and a proposed model of working has subsequently been received by Council officers for consideration.

Supplementary Question

I understand that the length of the lease available for this community transfer has been reduced significantly and there is concern that this change may affect some potential funding streams. Can the Leader of the Council confirm what length of lease will be available for this CAT and also provide some reassurance that any essential maintenance work (including any COVID-19 compliance measures) will continue to be funded as long as the Council retains ownership of the pool?

Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw

Yes, I can reassure you and the Friends of group that the essential maintenance work, including keeping the building Covid secure, will continue while the pool remains in operation. We updated our community asset transfer policy earlier in the year based on feedback and learning that we'd undertaken on the process which is one of the biggest programmes in the region on asset transfers and now the average lease will usually be around 25 to 39 years we think. We've done a lot of research and engaged with partners in the sector and are pretty confident that there are very few funding streams which would look to have a lease longer than that although it is an oft-cited kind of concern of applicants when you look through the funding streams it's not the barrier that some think it is. However, we do work with them individually on their business case to go through their options and we retain that kind of bi-exceptionability to view each case on a case by case basis in case we need to have an exception to that.

34. Councillor Alun Griffiths

To the Leader of Council. What is the cost of the Council sending a mail shot to every household in the District?

Answer

I presume you are referring to the recent letter to all households containing the latest news, support and guidance on the pandemic. The total cost for design, print, enveloping and postage of the letter sent to just under 220,000 households was £88,668.

35. Councillor Debbie Davies

Would the Regeneration, Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder, please confirm the number of streetlights out by Ward and the time it is taking to undertake a repair, further to a light out being reported?

Answer

The current time for repairs to be undertaken is around 3 weeks. The table below indicates the number faults at “Ordered” status. The numbers are probably lower than these as there is a longer delay than usual in the repair information being entered on the system to update the job status to “Complete”. This is due to the works order paperwork completed by the operational repair teams being collected from the depot by staff working from home to update taking around two weeks which effectively inflates the numbers below until they have been updated.

Baildon	128
Bingley	220
Bingley Rural	210
Bolton and Undercliffe	128
Bowling and Barkerend	203
Bradford Moor	114
City	274
Clayton and Fairweather Green	135
Craven	112
Eccleshill	117
Great Horton	168
Heaton	89
Idle and Thackley	82
Ilkley	145
Keighley Central	173
Keighley East	192
Keighley West	121
Little Horton	149
Manningham	130
Queensbury	145
Royds	166
Shipley	159
Thornton and Allerton	183
Toller	113
Tong	154
Wharfedale	71
Wibsey	211
Windhill and Wrose	82
Worth Valley	149
Wyke	175
Total	4498

Supplementary Question

Whilst three weeks for Street Light Repairs seems reasonable, it doesn't seem to tally with requests that I have received from Baildon residents. I should thus be grateful if the Portfolio Holder could confirm what percentage of street lights across the district are repaired within three weeks?

Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw

That's a good question and I'll get all the Councillors that information as soon as we can get it through from the team and what I would say is that some issues are very simple, if it's a simple bulb replacement, you might get that done within a few days or a week. Others where there's more of a structural problem if they go out to Northern Power as well and they have their own service level agreements that can obviously increase the time or it might be something under our responsibility that takes a while yet so the average is 3 weeks but I expect they'll be some above that and some below that but I'll get everyone the data as soon as possible.

36. Councillor Brendan Stubbs

To the Portfolio Holder, Over the previous 4 years many community groups across the district have benefited from a 'Community Building Grant' for the Council to assist with Business rates and the cost of running these buildings. Collectively these organisations offer a wide range of vital services for their local communities. They have put in an incredible effort in 2020 to support local communities in difficult circumstances and like many residents and businesses they now face an uncertain 2021 and beyond.

Can the portfolio holder confirm to community organisations that this grant will continue to be available in 2021-2022 and beyond? What steps are being taken to make sure that the process for applications is in place as soon as possible? Also, what additional help and support is the Council making available to all Community organisations to help them prepare for the coming year?

Answer

We are very proud of our Voluntary Community Sector across the district, they have demonstrated knowledge, expertise and versatility in supporting communities and public services during this period of Covid uncertainty. They continue to play a key role in the delivery of local services and provide a whole variety of opportunities to support the wellbeing of neighbourhoods.

The Labour Group already committed some time ago to continuing the Community Building Grant (CBG) support and we are making it a base budget investment. Usually there is a detailed process involving Area Committees, Grants Advisory groups and ward officers but for the following year we are proposing, with current Covid restrictions in place, to extend the current grant agreement with current recipients. This will be subject to Area Offices confirming that those organisations are still operating in some capacity and in need of the grant, and on the approval from the area office and committee we will then issue an extension of grant agreement for a further year.

Once local checks have been made with the funded community organisations we will

be in a position to issue the new grant extensions by January 2021.

The Voluntary Sector have done great work for the district during the pandemic. We have compensated them accordingly but also where necessary have rolled grants over for a further year to ensure the sustainability of the sector at this crucial time.

37. Councillor Mike Ellis

Could the Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment and Skills confirm what assessments Bradford Council has made of the impact on Educational Attainment across the Bradford District, of the school closures during the initial lockdown and what action is being taken to support some form of catch-up provision, for those particularly disadvantaged groups of children who are likely to have suffered most?

Answer

When there was a return to full opening to all pupils in September, all schools were keen to ensure that assessments of pupils' learning needs were made in order to ensure their gaps in learning were addressed as quickly as possible.

There is a national programme of catch up provision with associated funding made available to all schools. A mainstream school will get £80 for each pupil from Reception to Year 11 inclusive. Special, Alternative Provision and hospital schools will get £240 for each place for the 2020 to 2021 academic year. A typical primary school of 200 pupils will receive £16,000 while a typical secondary school of 1,000 pupils will receive £80,000.

Additionally, the decision of the Labour Group was to invest in a Covid Education Recovery Programme. This includes investment in a Year 11 mathematics tuition project which will provide small group tuition outside of the school day, usually at the weekend for 800 Year 11 students from 17 schools. Tutors are graduate and 2nd or 3rd year students from Bradford University who have been trained by the White Rose Mathematics Hub. Schools have identified the students who are likely to be able to achieve at least grade 4 GCSE with this additional tuition.

Investment has also been provided to support Y11 learners with English Language skills which will help young people obtain the core skills for further learning opportunities as they progress into post 16 options.

The Covid Education Recovery Programme also includes investment in support for children and families who are struggling to re-engage positively with accessing school provision following the initial lockdown. The funding has enabled the creation of the Education Therapeutic Team who will work with identified families and children to support them to improve the engagement with school.

The above programmes provide a total revenue investment of £717k to support education recovery following Covid-19.

The Covid Education Recovery Programme also extends the national laptop scheme via the investment of £1.2m of capital funding to ensure that all children known to social care, including those who are in pre-school and in college, have access to

appropriate electronic devices to help support their learning. In addition, the investment will extend the existing national connectivity scheme which expires on the 31st March so that the connections continue to the end of August in the first instance with provisions being made for further longer-term extensions for the future.