

## COUNCIL

12 October 2021

### MEMBER QUESTION TIME – Part 2

#### Questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12

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#### 39. Councillor Debbie Davies

Could the Portfolio holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport confirm why site NE/053 (Esholt) was rejected for housing in the draft local plan?

#### Response

The site (Ref NE/053) was considered as part of the technical appraisal and assessment of potential sites which informed the Draft Local Plan, which was issued for representations in February / March 2021. The methodology for assessing the potential sites together with the headline reasons for their non-inclusion were set out in a background report issued in support of the consultation. Link to background report:

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/Documents/BDLP/Reg18/Evidence//Site%20Assessment%20and%20Rejected%20Sites%20Background%20Paper.pdf>

The site was not proposed to be allocated for housing as it was not contiguous with the existing build up area being a brownfield site within the Green Belt which was some distance from the current Green Belt boundary and existing built form. When drafting the Local Plan, the site in question was also being actively promoted as part of a larger masterplan for employment rather than a residential use through a hybrid planning application given its proximity to a water treatment works and the potentially negative impact of this operation on residential amenity.

Any change to Green Belt within the Local plan requires exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated both at the strategic level for Green Belt change (which the plan did set out) but also on a site by site basis. Under current circumstances the site can come forward under the provisions within the NPPF which supports redevelopment of previously developed sites, subject to some essential policy considerations rather than requiring a change to the Green Belt boundary necessitating an inset set within the Green Belt. In these circumstances if the site does get developed for housing it would constitute a windfall site, which is a source of supply acknowledged and accounted for in the draft plan contributing to the overall plan requirement.

#### 40. Councillor Debbie Davies

Could the Portfolio Holder for Healthy People and Places Portfolio confirm how much was spent on the “Thank You Day” for Covid volunteers including badges, merchandise, flowers etc. and where the budget for this come from?

## **Response**

Printing costs:

W41497	5K badges	£3,050 – RHPL
W41433	13k badges	£7,040 – PHPL
W41480	18k cards	£547 – RHQM

Bradford Council took part in thank you day celebrations as part of a national response to thank residents, staff and partners who had helped responding to Covid challenges. The Bradford Covid Response Hub spent a total of £294.57 on purchasing cakes for Covid Support Workers who had helped. White roses and badges were given to some of the staff members. All of the costs were funded through the Council's Covid funding budget.

Perhaps it's difficult to ever sufficiently thank the health and care workers and community heroes who gave so much to this district and the phenomenal commitment they showed us all at such an unprecedented time, but it was important to try to pay tribute to their sterling efforts and our approach is in line with the national campaign to say thank you. The then Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick enthusiastically celebrated all manner of events held across the country, such as "Covid safe Tartan Tea Parties, BBQs, picnics and certificate ceremonies in honour of those who have selflessly given their time to help those in need". The Government also specifically referred to "council staff, social workers and refuse collectors who kept vital services going during the most challenging times".

### **41. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

Can the Portfolio holder explain how the additional costs of the delays at Greengates junction are being met?

- a) what additional costs are being met by BMDC and the WYCA.
- b) Where is the additional funding needed to be taken from and
- c) What measures are in place to prevent the taxpayers from having to pay more for a scheme that is already over budget and years overdue.

## **Response**

a) Initial funding for the scheme was secured from within the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Fund along with contributions from the Council and S106 funding. The additional funding is required for the extended duration of the contract.

b & c) The extended duration of the contract is a result of several factors. The Covid-19 pandemic delayed the start of the works on site, delayed procurement of materials and also closed the site for a period of time. Other factors relating to the historic constrained site, the planning and sequencing of works at pre-delivery stage have caused difficulties due to unexpected ground conditions including utility infrastructure during delivery, resulting in a change to the programming.

This project is primarily controlled financially by the Combined Authority Assurance Framework that we will use to apply for the additional funding. The Assurance Framework sets out the arrangements that the Combined Authority and the LEP have in place to ensure that public money is managed effectively. It explains how the Combined Authority and the LEP identify, appraise, and evaluate schemes to achieve value for money.

**42. Councillor Debbie Davies**

Could the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport confirm whether there are there any plans to review the Council's planning policy relating to security shutters following ongoing concerns raised about crime and security?

**Response**

The Council's Shopfront SPD was approved in 2012 and developed in liaison with the police. In common with many authorities, it emphasises quality design that discourages external, solid shutters and shutter boxes.

There is always a balance to strike with local concerns around economic development, crime and so on. We liaise with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer on every application to consider these issues.

Very few, if any, Planning Authorities allow external, solid shutters as a matter of course as they deaden the street scene, and when clustered together can cause an increase in fear of crime and make a high street less visually appealing and a more unpleasant place to visit. Best practice shows there are other, more desirable ways of protecting shopfronts that provide a better balance between security and wider considerations.

If there are any specific cases or applications you would like feedback on I would be happy to look into them for you as we monitor policies and their impact on an ongoing basis as a matter of course.

**43. Councillor Debbie Davies**

Could the Portfolio holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport confirm that local residents will be consulted on any proposed changes to the use of the land at Esholt car park?

**Response**

The Council's Development Services have been dealing with the planning application for the former water treatment works site at Esholt. This application did not include any proposals for the car park at Esholt village itself, and there has not been any proposal to change the use of the that car park to our knowledge.

**44. Councillor Brendan Stubbs**

How many children and young people in the care of the authority are living in bed and breakfast accommodation and how long have they been housed there?

**Response**

There are no young people in our care residing in bed and breakfast accommodation. This would be against Council policy.

**45. Councillor Kyle Green**

As many residents rediscovered their local communities during lock down, using a whole host of paths including bridleways snickets and ginnels surrounding our villages and residential areas, what plans are in place to improve those which require attention?

**Response**

The Covid lockdown period did indeed trigger increased use of our local rights of way network and other green spaces. The improvement and maintenance of routes as raised in the question is split between Highways Maintenance (for the more urban routes) and the Countryside and Rights of Way team (rural routes).

There is a regular programme of vegetation clearance, drainage and surfacing which ensures that the majority of these routes are open and available and, in recognition of the increased use over the Covid lockdown, the Labour Group allocated an additional £250,000 from the Covid Recovery funding pot. This was split between Countryside and Rights of Way, Parks and Woodlands to address some of the improvement works required through increased use.

**46. Councillor David Heseltine**

Would the Leader of Council agree verge management and the introduction of more appropriate speed limits to some stretches of road to support safety of walkers, cyclists, runners et al., should be investigated and funded at a district level.

**Response**

With regard to verge maintenance, work is carried out in a scheduled way on a seasonal basis. Ad hoc visits take place to sites where more immediate attention is required. Speed limits can be set by the Executive over two parliamentary constituencies but if there are issues which you feel need addressing in the Shipley constituency in particular this is something you can pursue at Area Committee level.

**47. Councillor Alun Griffiths**

What progress is being made with the inquiry into the Council's handling of Covid-19?

**Response**

The Council's request has gone to the Health and Wellbeing Board and work is currently being undertaken to determine the scope of the review and identify the resources available to undertake it.

**48. Councillor David Heseltine**

Would the Leader of the Council confirm what preliminary works have been undertaken to ensure that all 5 constituencies within the BMDC district, are in a position to benefit from successful bids in the next round of levelling up funding.

**Response**

We are keen to ensure all five constituencies that make up Bradford district benefit from successful bids to the Levelling Up Fund. In Shipley constituency the Labour Group have been clear that Bingley should be the focus of the Levelling Up bid for this constituency and officers are working to that end.

We have held a number of meetings and workshops to pull together project proposals, including sessions with local councillors. We have also held sessions with the Voluntary & Community Sector to get their thoughts.

Work has continued since the first submission and further meetings are planned, including with MPs and Councillors in due course.

At this time, it is not known when the next round will be announced. Government has not given a date when the new criteria might be announced so we will continue working on the preferred options pending a decision being made by Government.

**49. Councillor Geoff Winnard**

To ask the portfolio holder how many council employees (excluding schools), by directorate, have been paid a redundancy payment or other form of exit payment in each of the last three financial years (including 2021/22)? How many of these exit payments have been in excess of £95K?

**Response**

The table below shows the number of payments made by Departments in the last 3 years (the number of payments over £95k was so low that we are unable to provide specific information owing to our data protection obligations).

Redundancy Payments & Exit Payment costs (i.e. Pension Strain Costs)	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (as at 30 Sept 2021)
	No. of payments	No. of payments	No. of payments
Corporate Resources	15	10	4
Department of Place	18	1	0
Health & Well Being	16	0	0

Children's Services	14	17	4
<b>Total</b>	63	28	8

**50. Councillor Rachel Sunderland**

Since the District launched the National Street Tree Sponsorship Scheme, Trees for Streets, how many trees have been sponsored by residents and locations identified as suitable to plant?

**Response**

Through the Trees for Streets scheme so far, 49 new street trees have been funded. This includes 25 standard street trees that will be funded through the grant passed to Trees for Streets Partners as part of the scheme. Also, 14 trees have been funded through the sponsorship platform and a further 10 trees are being funded through the platform by engagement with Shipley Town Council.

There is great scope to use the platform to engage other Town Councils across the District. This month, advertising for the scheme is being increased. Leafleting will be happening across the Borough and adverts will be shown on digital bus stops. On top of this Facebook, advertising is happening, your scheme has a healthy click-through rate to your schemes page. Many community groups are working with us to spread the word as well. There is a great deal of positive engagement connected to the scheme that is a foundation for growth.

**51. Councillor Dale Smith**

By sub-department responsible to each SD/AS/D, would the Leader of the Council provide the number of staff on payroll as at March 31st 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 Sept 31st 2021?

**Response**

Please see attached spreadsheet for response. Bear in mind some of the current workforce includes Covid-specific roles.

**52. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

What long term plan does the Council have to deal with damaged caused to the walls surrounding the former railway line at Thackley Corner?

**Response**

Long term plans would be to serve notice to the land owner and make safe any walls in the meantime. If we are not successful, we would proceed to put in for land charges in consultation with legal services.

**53. Councillor Alun Griffiths**

Does the District have stocks of personal protective equipment that are in the “do not supply” to the NHS category and if so, how much are they worth?

**Response**

The Council has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care since the start of the pandemic and receives regular communication on PPE products not suitable for use in various settings. The Council does not hold stock of products that that are not suitable for use in NHS settings.

**54. Councillor Rachel Sunderland**

The Yorkshire and Humber Climate Change Commission is due to finalise its 50-point Action Plan in the near future. What steps is the Council taking to ensure the District reviews its own plans and activities in order to deliver “ambitious climate action across the region.”

**Response**

At the District level, the Wellbeing Board recently approved the District Plan. This includes a priority to address climate and environment across the District Partnerships and with key partners. The Council and key bodies are working with West Yorkshire Combined Authority which approved the shared WY Climate and Environment Plan on 22nd October.

The Council’s work in this area has just been nationally acknowledged when it won the Climate Response award at the 2021 Local Government Chronicle awards in London.

**55. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

What obligations and or penalties are in place to make sure that the main contractor, sub-contractors and utility companies working on the improvements at Greengates Junction stick to deadlines and budgets for the work on the site.

**Response**

Under the contract, the main contractor would incur liquidated penalties if the scheme was delayed due to their or their subcontractors’ performance.

**56. Councillor Brendan Stubbs**

How many children are waiting for a place in a special school and what is the length of time each child has been waiting?

**Response**

The Council does not hold waiting lists for children who are waiting for a place in a special school.

**57. Councillor Alun Griffiths**

How many people suffering from Covid-19 have been discharged into care settings?

## **Response**

We do not hold this information for the duration of the pandemic - the council or the NHS was never asked to collect this data. Initially, Government ordered that people be discharged into care settings but stipulated that they had to have a test prior to hospital discharge with PPE equipment used until a clear result was received. After September 2020, 'designated beds' were set up in each council area to receive every patient discharged from hospital into a care setting, with the assumption that they had or could have contracted Covid during their hospital stay. We could provide the number of people discharged into designated settings (in Bradford these were largely our in-house short stay care homes) if this would be useful – but only a partial picture.

### **58. Councillor Kevin Warnes**

How many instances of graffiti in the Shipley Ward were reported by the Warden Service to the Ancillary Services team so between the beginning of January 2021 and the end of August 2021?

## **Response**

There were 16 graffiti cases recorded for Shipley ward during the period from Jan 21st to Aug 21st. Two were reported by Cllrs and fourteen by general public.

Neighbourhood Wardens report offensive graffiti (racist, sexist etc.) directly to the Graffiti Unit to ensure this is removed as soon as possible and within 24 hours. These cases are not recorded in the same way and the Environmental Services and Enforcement Manager is currently looking at better mechanisms for recording this information for reporting purposes.

In addition, where practical, Wardens would remove small scale graffiti with graffiti wipes on site. For non-offensive graffiti on local authority land the time scale for removal is within 5 working days. Where graffiti is a concern on private property the Neighbourhood Wardens would speak with the owner/occupier about its removal.

### **59. Councillor Kevin Warnes**

Can the Leader of Council please update me about measures the Council is taking to ensure that the public lighting at either end of the snicket running between Kendall Avenue and Nab Lane is not obscured by nearby overhanging trees?

## **Response**

Officers have checked the lighting and there is a light at each end of the snicket which are not surrounded by foliage, the issue is more likely to be that of the trees in private gardens either side of the path are overgrowing the fences. I have spoken to colleagues in Network Resilience who have been in contact with the residents to get the vegetation cut back which should take place in the next few weeks.

### **60. Councillor Kevin Warnes**

Can the Leader of Council please update me about measures the Council is taking to ensure that the advertising hoardings mounted on boards on either side of the junction of Victoria Street and Saltaire Road / Commercial Street are removed, bearing in mind that these do not have the required consent and are an ugly eyesore on that side of the town centre?

**Response**

The matter of the advertising hoardings will be addressed by the Network Resilience team in conjunction with Planning colleagues and will be subject to appropriate enforcement action as necessary.

**61. Councillor Kevin Warnes**

Will the Leader of Council agree to review the Permitted Development rights for 'small HMOs', in order to move towards revoking these rights with an 'Article 4 Direction' in accordance with the General Permitted Development Order 2015, as has already been done in parts of Leeds, in order to ensure that local residents have sufficient say via the planning process over the character of their neighbourhoods?

**Response**

Permitted Development has caused a number of issues across the district, and in the city centre particularly. Thankfully the revised rules from Government are better with regard to space standards, however it has left us with a legacy of developments completed under the old rules.

However, at the moment it isn't apparent that there is a large scale problem that is similar to that experienced in other cities such as Leeds, and, as such, the benefits that an Article 4 Direction might give are less clear. However, it is something we may revisit should the evidence on the ground change and I would be happy to look at any specific examples you may have.

**62. Councillor Kevin Warnes**

Can the Leader of Council please update me about progress in relation to your promised review of the Council's Hot Food Takeaway Policy, specifically in relation to amending it so that the ban on takeaways opening within 400m of a school or in an area attractive to young people is extended to include all local shopping centres (with the exception of Bradford and Keighley city centres)?

**Response**

The Council's Public Health and Planning sections have been working together on reviewing the Council's adopted Hot Food Takeaway Policy, which has included looking at the up-to-date health data and information for the district. In order for the policy review to be effective, and the potential extension of the policy to include local centres, we have included a strategic health policy in the Local Plan. Once the Local Plan becomes effective we should be able to introduce a new Hot Food Takeaway Policy.

**63. Councillor Kevin Warnes**

Does the Leader of Council agree that the Council's planning enforcement team is so under-resourced that there are now unacceptable delays in dealing with the backlog of cases; and assure us that this situation will be addressed as a matter of urgency?

**Response**

The Planning Enforcement team are currently recruiting to three vacancies in the Enforcement team. One enforcement officer had been on long term sick for more than twelve months, before moving onto another team in the Council. However, the team is trying hard to recruit but this is proving very difficult in a competitive market place. Planning has created an additional post to help progress a number of outstanding prosecutions cases. This should enable the team to make some progress in dealing with the large number of outstanding cases.

**64. Councillor Kevin Warnes**

Does the Leader of Council agree that the Council's network resilience team is so under-resourced that (some) officers are not responding at all to repeated councillor enquiries on routine matters such as overgrown hedges and are failing to ensure that highway access along our pavements is maintained for pedestrians in a timely manner; and assure us that this situation will be addressed as a matter of urgency?

**Response**

The Network Resilience Team was created in 2015 with the view to managing the highway network - including enforcement issues - across the district. The remit of the team has been expanded since then and this has led to the need for increased staffing resources. The team has recently been restructured and two new enforcement staff, plus an administrative resource are expected to be in post from Quarter 4 of the current financial year.