

## COUNCIL

Tuesday 12 December 2023

### MEMBER QUESTION TIME – Part 2

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

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**34. Councillor Debbie Davies**

Would the Portfolio Holder for Healthy People and Places agree that the announcement four years ago, of £6.4m of capital spending on playgrounds to provide “exciting local facilities for communities throughout the district” was rather misleading and raised false hopes amongst families across the district, when the majority of the money is being used for general maintenance, such as repairing worn surfaces, replacing damaged items and painting existing equipment which we would expect to be funded from a revenue budget?

**Response**

The council, together with its partners, continually seeks to provide innovative and exciting play areas and facilities wherever funding opportunities present. Recent examples at Fagley and Drummond Road are recognised as best practice examples of ‘Making Space for Girls’, a national initiative to encourage more girls to use public open spaces. Larger new sites such as Windyhill Wildlife Park and Peel Park are also examples of innovative and inclusive design built on lessons learned from recent local projects and research. As the final phase of the Council’s Playable Spaces Investment Programme is implemented, the aim to improve, as we refurbish, the district’s play areas and facilities will remain. Obviously the Government is not funding local authorities anywhere near to the same extent it used to so we as a council have to be more creative about working with partners to deliver our ambitions.

**35. Councillor Mike Pollard**

Would the Leader of the Council please confirm whether the Council has agreed the Children & Families Trust Business Plan?

**Response**

The Children and Families Trust has submitted a draft Business Plan in line with the contract requirements. Work is underway with the Trust to enable the plan to be finalised.

**36. Councillor Debbie Davies**

Would the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport confirm, that he recognises that the prospect of the £700,000 spent on external contractors to

produce the Draft Development Framework, proving to be a worthwhile investment, is very slim?

### **Response**

The Development Frameworks, which comprise five separate commissions, are intended to act as high level documents looking forward 15-20 years which support the district in attracting public and private sector investment, showcasing what our city and towns could be like in the future. Although the council cannot guarantee all the proposed interventions within the Development Frameworks are delivered, the role of encouraging and supporting investment in the district from sources outside of the council is more important than ever considering current pressure on council budgets. To that extent, the frameworks are already showing their worth, for example:

- The consultant's work on the Southern Gateway, as part of the Development Frameworks, has been important to our case making to Government for improving rail connectivity. Government recently announced it will bring Bradford into Northern Powerhouse Rail by investing £2 billion, doubling capacity, almost halving journey times to Manchester and providing a new station.
- The Keighley Development Framework will provide strong foundations for the £20m Keighley Long Term plan, ensuring we can act on this opportunity within the plan creation timescale set out by Government.
- Content provided by the Frameworks have supported funding proposals and case making for up to £ 20 Million through the investment Zone programme.

It is worth bearing in mind that we invested in developing Business Development Zones across the district, with two in Keighley and one in Shipley, and the work undertaken there contributed significantly to the Towns Fund Visions for those towns, which then secured nearly £60m between them.

If we want to drive investment into our district, government and investors expect us to have plans that outline our strategic outlook and development opportunities for the years ahead.

### **37. Councillor Matt Edwards**

Can the portfolio holder confirm if the environmental enforcement, street cleaning and parks team are being moved out of the Neighbourhood Services team? Which department will these teams sit under and what assurances can the portfolio holder be able to provide that services won't deteriorate?

### **Response**

The move of the Environment Enforcement, Street Cleansing, Parks and Landscapes and Ancillary teams that have transferred to Waste, Fleet, Environmental Health, and Licensing services, have many synergies with the existing teams in the service. An outcome of the move will be the avoidance of duplication of activities across a number of areas including procurement, stores, finance, and administration as well as a single point of contact for case management

for elected members. All elected members were briefed on the lift and shift in November 2023. The services which remain within Neighbourhood and Community Services align with the community and prevention focused activities that already are undertaken in this area.

This will lead to an improved co-ordination of services to residents and businesses in the district, by co-ordinating resources efficiently in a single management structure, responding to delivery of prescriptive ways of working agreed by of the Area Committees, better co-ordinated side waste and fly-tipping response, including reporting, pick up and enforcement, Increased capacity to respond to emergency situations, Increased ability to redirect staff during extreme weather conditions to support statutory duties, this will also enable efficient co-ordination and forward planning for regular and one off / series of events e.g., Bonfire Period, City Park, City of Culture, Festivals. it is also anticipated that the specific work to plan for the Culture 2025 readiness will be wholly supported, there will also be increased fleet management efficiencies in procurement, and prioritisation.

### **38. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

The Council has 56 buses of which 27 are non-compliant with 26 of those on order. Can the Portfolio Holder advise Council how many other vehicles does the Council run that are non-compliant with CAZ? How many of those are exempt and does the Council pay any charges for non-compliant vehicles?

#### **Response**

In addition to the exempted PTS buses the council is currently running 47 non-compliant vehicles out of a total of approximately 500 road vehicles in the council's fleet. Of that figure of 47, 46 have a CAZ sunset exemption in place. This is due to the compliant replacement vehicles being on order but not yet delivered. This number of 46 will continue to decrease as the replacements are delivered and "on-fleeted" and the non-compliant vehicles are being disposed of.

There is one vehicle which is not sunsetted as no replacement vehicle is on order and is paying the daily CAZ charge. This is because the service does not have funds to replace the vehicle.

In addition we have had communications from one other service who wish to cancel their replacement vehicle orders as they do not have the funds. If the orders are cancelled, and additional four vehicles will lose their sunset and be liable to the daily CAZ charge.

Note: A sunset exemption is awarded when an owner can prove that they have ordered a compliant vehicle, but that vehicle is awaiting delivery.

### **39. Councillor Julie Glentworth**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Children & Families please provide an update on the Children & Families Trust's progress with reducing the use of agency staff and the associated costs?

#### **Response**

One of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) governed by the contract with the Bradford Children and Families Trust (BCFT) is around the planned reduction of agency social workers within the Trust. The Operational Joint Working Group (OJWG) meet monthly to oversee the contract performance and specifically examine and scrutinise the progress against each KPI.

There is a statutory requirement to ensure the needs of the district's children are met safely and therefore any reduction in agency social workers must be carefully considered and planned so as to minimise any negative impacts on C&YP. This includes the need to ensure that the permanent workforce is not overwhelmed and that there is a good balance of newly qualified and experienced permanent social work staff.

The recruitment of permanent social workers remains a challenge nationally and whilst the Trust has taken proactive steps to address this issue, it remains an area of focus. The OJWG are working with colleagues in the Trust to accelerate & support the progress of this KPI via a detailed plan.

#### **40. Councillor Debbie Davies**

As the answer to a question asked at the last Full Council meeting, regarding spending on consultants, listed the amounts but not the purpose of the fees, I should be grateful if the Leader of Council could please confirm for what purpose was nearly £20,000 paid to Essex County Council?

#### **Response**

The main purpose of this commission was to provide important work in support of the Local Plan. The chosen consultant was appointed through the usual procurement process and has a public sector focus and good reputation.

Originally WYCA appointed them (using Housing Revenue Fund - HRF - funds) to provide urban design support to the five West Yorkshire authorities, which was £14K each. WYCA paid the consultants directly for this work. This was part of a much wider HRF package for the Council which also included Housing Sites Delivery work, City Village Feasibility work and more.

Further work was funded by the council to explore options for council owned sites. It made sense in terms of efficiencies to directly procure the same provider for this work and progress it in tandem with the wider work.

#### **41. Councillor Bob Felstead**

Does the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport agree that that the £2 bus fare cap funded by government until the 31st of December 2024, will support the Mayor's goals including a public transport renaissance across West Yorkshire, whilst supporting those people most affected by the cost-of-living crisis and supporting the use of greener and more sustainable ways of getting around?

#### **Response**

The Mayor's Fares £2 cap is funded through the Bus Service Improvement Plan allocation, not through the national Government scheme. The Mayor's Fares scheme applies to routes within West Yorkshire and is successfully attracting people to use their local buses to get out and about more frequently, encouraging them to use sustainable modes of Transport. The different Government-funded £2 bus fare cap applies only on cross-boundary routes to areas outside West Yorkshire. Due to its reduced coverage in our area, this scheme is having a more limited impact.

**42. Councillor Anna Watson**

A year ago at the December 2022 Full Council I asked the Leader of the Council for an update on fixing the clock on Shipley Clock Tower – due to the fact that the structure, which is privately owned, is not safe for the Council engineer to access to fix the mechanism. We were told that the Council were taking legal advice to understand what recourse is available to the Council so that they can undertake the necessary repairs and recharge the tenant.

**Response**

The council's tenant has been served notice requiring it to commence repair works to the Clock Tower by the end of March. The tenant has been asked to provide a timescale for the works however if it does not begin the works by the end of March the Council may notify the tenant of its intention to carry out the repairs itself and recharge the cost to the tenant.

**43. Councillor Caroline Whitaker**

Could the portfolio holder provide a list of the stretches of road in the Bradford District where HGVs have been banned and the dates the bans came into force?

**Response**

The attached file contains a list of all the current weight restriction orders which are operational within the Bradford district. This information is broken down into different types of traffic regulation order, all of which restrict access or movement of HGV and LGV vehicles.

[See attached Excel spreadsheet]

**44. Councillor Ursula Sutcliffe**

Residents complain about litter on Pit Hill Park but there are presently no bins anywhere in the park? Can the portfolio holder tell me why there are no bins anywhere in the park, if new bins are possible and if not what the alternative is for reducing litter?

**Response**

All users of our parks and green spaces are expected to keep them clean and litter free. They can do this by ideally taking their litter home to recycle or to the nearest public bin, so that everyone can benefit from clean and litter free parks.

Officers will review the numbers of bins in or near to this site and will look at suitable provision in the most appropriate location. Residents and users of all parks and greenspaces are able to participate in improving their local parks by getting involved in or setting up Friends of groups, using parks responsibly as community assets, or holding regular litter picks, all of these suggestions can be supported by your local Area Co-ordinators office.

#### **45. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

Given the high cost of children's care placements, forecasted to contribute 26.4million of the £45 million forecasted overspend in Children's Services it cannot be right that millions of pounds of public money is spent on profit in the private sector rather than on Bradford's most vulnerable children. Can the Portfolio Holder please explain why we are paying out profit to the private sector rather than building our own in-house provision?

#### **Response**

Nationally there is a significant shortage of placements for children and young people in care, with demand outstripping supply, and this situation is reflected in Bradford. Local Authorities have had to increasingly rely on provision within the independent sector in order to ensure that the needs of children can be adequately met. It is recognised nationally that the fees within the independent sector are substantial and that in the past two years, these have increased exponentially which has had a detrimental impact on the ability of Children's Services nationally to manage the financial impacts of these fee increases.

ADCS and the regional LGA networks are actively working to seek support and reform from central Government, DfE and key ministers centrally. The Josh MacAlister Review recognised the pressure that the costs in the independent sector are having on Children's Service finances and recommendations have been put forward, supported strongly by the ADCS and LGA, for costs and fee increases to be capped to enable profits in this sector to be reduced. Unfortunately this has not yet been enacted by Government.

Within Bradford, the Council and the Trust have been working actively together to address this issue on two fronts. Firstly the People's Commissioning Service has undertaken significant engagement with providers in the District to develop more cost effective options for placements for children in our care. Alongside this, the Commissioning Service has also reviewed all existing contracts with other providers to determine if efficiencies could be achieved. The Children's Trust is working diligently to review every child's plan and care placement, and where a high-cost placement can be reduced or drawn safely to an end, this is being undertaken.

Secondly, the Council is supporting the Children's Trust to increase and expand the number of internal placements across both in-house fostering as well as in-house residential homes. This work is being done alongside ensuring, where possible, safe and appropriate, options for reunification to family care are explored.

**46. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Childrens Services advise Council if all the housing provision for children in the care of the authority aged 16 and over is properly registered and regulated? If not, why not?

**Response**

Currently registration requirements set by Ofsted are progressively changing and all provision run by Bradford Children's Trust works in line with these registration requirements. Private and independent providers are responsible for ensuring they take steps to ensure that they are registered in line with the new requirements and are regulated by Ofsted accordingly.

**47. Councillor Alun Griffiths**

Can the Portfolio Holder advise Council how many of the 370 buildings that fall within the date rate for construction with RAAC have been reviewed, how many premises have been confirmed as no RAAC present, how many premises required further structural surveys and how many were identified to contain RAAC?

**Response**

Of the 370 operational council buildings c100 were identified as priority surveys due to the use, environment, and characteristics of the users. 58 surveys have now been undertaken, which have been undertaken by a fully qualified surveyor. Each survey is a full building check which can take up to a day dependent on the size and complexity plus time to review the buildings construction history arrange access and undertake intrusive works. 22 surveys are now being revisited as further inspection was deemed necessary and more detailed information being obtained post initial inspection. The remaining surveys on the priority list are being undertaken over the next few weeks and are scheduled to be completed by 9 February 2024. To date none of the buildings surveyed have had RAAC identified.

**48. Councillor Bob Felstead**

What plans do the Council and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority have planned / in place to address the increased demand from adult learners especially in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), literacy, numeracy and sector specific employability programmes linked to employers with vacancies, in hard-to-reach areas in the district?

**Response**

Our strategic approach to meeting the demand for provision is led by the English Language Advice Hub within our SkillsHouse service. We have an established Bradford District ESOL & Community Learning Consortium that now has over a hundred members. The Consortium works strategically to promote collaboration between providers, build trust in our settled and newly arrived communities, and understand local need and the impact of provision. We are also collaborating to develop a discrete Bradford District ESOL Strategy to maximise our impact.

There is a range of funding being utilised by partners, and the largest offer is funded through the devolved Adult Education Budget, and across Bradford in 2022/23 academic year more than 2,400 new learners started an ESOL programme, with over 4,000 qualification enrolments. We are also working with WYCA to secure the funding to build capacity in the sector, by upskilling residents to secure the qualifications that will enable them to become ESOL tutors. We continue to work together to identify further opportunities, this is particularly critical as demand remains high and historically we used a range of short-term funding, for example “Talk English” or the “English for Everyone” programme which were not re-commissioned by national government Departments. Clearly the uncertainty around funding makes it harder to plan strategically, does not give the sector the stability to innovate and is wasteful in terms constantly mobilising and closing down projects. Through the Council’s own training arm, Skills for Work, we deliver provision at a range of levels, both in the City Centre and in six community venues. We have been particularly successful at engaging women to support their children with their education, with 64% of our 310 enrolments being females. Our provision links to the wider employment, skills and careers offer in the District and all learners are encouraged to consider volunteering, part time work, and further learning as a stepping stones to employment.

Local ESOL provision can be found on the Learn English website ([www.learningenglish.org.uk](http://www.learningenglish.org.uk)) and support can be accessed through SkillsHouse via [skillshouse@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:skillshouse@bradford.gov.uk) or on 01274 437373.

#### **49. Councillor Debbie Davies**

Following the recent news that £8m of North Yorkshire taxpayers’ money could be lost after the Alpamare water park in Scarborough went into administration, could the Leader of Council please confirm what safeguards are in place to ensure something similar can’t occur in Bradford, with regards to the money loaned for the development of the Odeon and how much has the Council provided for this?

#### **Response**

The council is now the sole owner of Bradford Live and so has the powers and controls of a company owner as well as the contractual controls of the loan agreement. The Tenant of Bradford Live is the NEC Group who are the UK’s leading live events business with world-class expertise in venue and destination management. They are owned by the Blackstone Group whom as of June 2023 were the largest alternative investment firm globally with total assets under management of approximately US\$1 trillion. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that they would go into administration. The NEC’s confidence in Bradford, with the city’s growing reputation for culture, is a huge step forward and it signals more exciting times ahead for the people and businesses of the district.

The value of the loan to Bradford Live is £25million which will be paid back through rental derived from the completed scheme.

#### **50. Councillor Debbie Davies**



Further to the recent jailing of an unlicensed taxi driver, who was speeding and under the influence of drugs when he caused the tragic death of a 7 year old boy who was crossing Manchester Road, highlighting the fact that he continued to collect approximately 70 fares despite his licence expiring a month earlier, would the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Transport please confirm what is being done to safeguard members of the public and prevent this happening again?

### **Response**

(Please note this question should be addressed to the portfolio for healthy people and places.)

This was a truly tragic and terrible incident. Bradford Council's Licensing Service has a dedicated team of officers who are tasked with ensuring that licensing compliance is maintained. This includes conducting random inspections of licensed vehicles and drivers both out in the district and at the operating premises (base).

Licensed operators are required to maintain up-to-date records and carry out regular audits of private hire or hackney carriage driver licences, DVLA licences and insurance for all drivers and vehicles employed or operating under their control. Operators shall ensure that these records are maintained and made available for inspection at all times by an Authorised Officer, Police or VOSA at any time at the base office.

The team work very closely with partners such as the police on dedicated operations and share information on a regular basis. Police officers will accompany the Licensing Service officers during proactive patrols, some of which will be focused, or intelligence based following complaints or reports.

Additional information can be provided if desired.

### **51. Councillor Matt Edwards**

Over the summer, and in summers previously, there have been instances of youths throwing objects at passing cars from the old railway embankment on Shetcliffe Lane. This land is managed by Asset Management and is regularly left overgrown giving cover and an escape route. Can the portfolio holder ask the relevant department to work with Councillors to identify a cost-effective way of reducing this ongoing issue?

### **Response**

Yes, Asset Management are happy to meet with members to discuss potential solutions to this issue and will contact Cllr Edwards to arrange.

### **52. Councillor Janet Russell**

Could the Portfolio Holder please assure us that when work is to be undertaken in close proximity to a freshwater course, even a small one such as Addingham Beck, that Environmental Assessments and consultation with local environmentalists will always be deemed necessary before work is initiated? Although we were told at the October Full Council meeting that members will now be consulted in such situations,

the answer that Environmental Assessments would be undertaken “as necessary” was not reassuring, and what happened on 3rd July at Back Beck Lane was “unforeseen” potentially because there were no initial consultations with local environmentalists, or any Environmental Assessments.

### **Response**

The undertaking to carry out environmental assessments for any works in the vicinity of freshwater courses was given in recognition of the requirements to work within the legislative framework which has been established to protect environmental assets.

Following the unfortunate incident earlier this year at Back Beck Lane the Council’s engineering teams have reviewed their internal processes to ensure that where works are carried out in the vicinity of freshwater courses there is a clear requirement for engineers to undertake appropriate assessments before works are carried out.

The suggestion that engagement with local environmentalists should be carried out as a matter of course is a difficult undertaking to support as there is no register of such persons to which officers can immediately refer. Therefore, whilst the Council will always seek to engage with all affected local interest groups there may invariably be situations where this does not occur simply by virtue of not knowing of the existence of such a group or person.

### **53. Councillor Ursula Sutcliffe**

Residents living on Kesteven Road and Ardsley Close in Holmewood have been experiencing issues with anti-social behaviour on the grass land in front of their house which is managed by Asset Management. Would the portfolio holder be willing to assist to see this land used for something like a communal garden or shared food growing space?

### **Response**

Asset Management colleagues will contact Cllr Sutcliffe to discuss these issues further.

### **54. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

Can the Portfolio Holder advise Council how many cases of homes in disrepair are currently being dealt with by the Private Housing Sector and how many weeks are they taking to resolve?

### **Response**

The Housing Operations Service, which includes the Housing Standards Team and Houses in Multiple Occupation Team, is currently dealing with 533 live cases (service requests). These include both disrepair within rented property involving landlords and also issues of disrepair between owner occupied properties, i.e. nuisance.

Each case varies in category, ranging from those identified initially as high priority to those considered low priority. High priority cases are responded to immediately and the urgent, or acute, issues are resolved within days however there can be other issues within the property that are longer term and more chronic where the responsible person is given longer to address.

The average time for resolution of all cases is 11 weeks however separating out the cases relating to rented property, which make up 91% of the cases, the average resolution time is 13 weeks and cases relating to nuisance (the remaining 9%) have an average resolution time of 9 weeks.

**55. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

Can the Portfolio Holder advise Council many homes for households with children have been built for social rent in the district in each of the last five years?

**Response**

The Council collects data on affordable housing provision on an annual basis. This data is not broken down into household types but as a rule most affordable homes will have 2 or more bedrooms and hence would be suitable for families. Between 2018/19 and 2022/23 our records indicate that over 900 affordable homes (gross) have been delivered across the district. We have no data on who these homes are rented to, but most lie in the social rented sector via Registered Social Landlords. Registered Social Landlords will be able to provide information on whether their affordable homes are built to social or affordable rent directly.

**56. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

The DfE provided an extra £10.8 of one-off grant to help the Childrens and Families Trust pay for additional running costs. Can the Portfolio Holder provide a breakdown of these costs?

**Response**

The £10.8m DfE grant was paid to the council and was subsequently transferred to the Trust. This funding was provided to enable the Trust to deliver improvement work aligned with the Children's Social Care Improvement Plan as well as to support infrastructure set up costs associated with the creation of a company.

Oversight of the use of this grant is provided by the Trust directly to the DfE, who monitor the Trust's expenditure of this grant.

**57. Councillor Andrew Loy**

What is the value of the Council's art collection, what proportion is on display, and what is the annual cost of storing items not on display?

**Response**

The total number of works of art owned by the local authority is 8,476 with an insurance value of £51,312,815 as of December 2023. Most works have been

donated by people of Bradford district over the decades and centuries to be held in perpetuity for residents.

Works on display fluctuate depending on the display programming across the four museum sites and outreach and loan activity. Currently 10% of artworks from the collections are on display, which meets national standards. Obviously different exhibitions are continually being created which means that it's not always the same 10% which are on show. Currently 850 artworks, including those on loan or displayed in a location that is not a Bradford Museum building. Artworks on display are regularly changed as different exhibitions are curated so it's not always the same 850 artworks which are on display.

We cannot provide costs for maintaining the art collections alone. BDMG is responsible for a large collection of material that covers over 150 years of collecting and falls within the subject areas of Art, Archaeology, Natural Science, Technology, Social History. The collections share storage, security, insurance and conservation. Costs to the service are not broken down over individual collections but are calculated as costs to care for the collections.

Our activities are regulated nationally and are in line with other museums up and down the country.

Most of the art collection is stored within the museums, owned by the council. Running costs for the building also include areas open to the public. Around 5% of the art collection is stored at the offsite store, owned by the council.

Annual costs for whole collection:

• Insurance costs for the whole collection	£158,039
• Security services for all museum sites	£19,847
• Business rates for Shipley store 1	£26,368
• Conservation materials	£6,000
• Environmental monitoring for all buildings	£2,425
• Membership fees to professional conservation bodies	£569

Total = £213,248

#### **58. Councillor Mike Pollard**

Is the Leader of the Council able to advise how many of the lowest paid Council employees have had their Universal Credit benefits affected by the fact that the Local Government unions took over 8 months to accept the pay rise offered to staff in February 2023 and can she confirm that she agrees that this is unacceptable?

#### **Response**

We do not know how many of our staff receive Universal Credit as households and financial circumstances vary. When a pay rise occurs, HR advise employees to speak to their Universal Credit Work Coach via their online account or call the Universal Credit helpline on 0800 328 5644. The process the Trade Unions go through to negotiate pay rises is nationally set, they must act in the best interests of their members to negotiate the best deal. I have no doubt that they have done just that and put their members first. The cost of living crisis and a decade of such weak growth in the UK economy is what is putting households under so much strain and the cause of that is squarely at the door of the long-running Conservative government whose policy choices since 2010 are unfortunately coming home to roost.

**59. Councillor Mike Pollard**

In light of the differing legal opinions regarding the lawfulness of the retrospective application of the revised Minimum Revenue Provision in the Council's 2021/22 budget, could the Leader of the Council inform members of the next step towards the confirmation and ultimately the use of, or otherwise, of the potential £24m increase in reserves?

**Response**

The Council had received legal opinion on the backdating of reserves, however following further more recent advice the council has now decided not to pursue the backdating of the revised MRP policy.

**60. Councillor Matt Edwards**

Residents living on Bankholme Court in Holmewood are suffering from issues caused by a bowing retaining role at the end of their gardens (and running along Landscope Avenue) which was completed as part of the construction of the housing development off what is now Raikes Avenue. Can the portfolio holder confirm if this is an issue for Highways Development Control and what will be done about this.

**Response**

The wall is recorded as private and is the responsibility of the land owner. Not all houses are privately owned along that row and the Council is currently trying to ascertain who has responsibility for the wall as it is not a highway wall.

**61. Councillor Janet Russell**

I understand that a bid has gone into the council's Active Travel Fund 4 Extension to get funding for the long-awaited upgrade of the canal towpath between Silsden and Kildwick. As North Yorkshire Council now have their funding in place for their part of this project does this council have a plan B if their bid, like so many bids before it, does not come through?

**Response**

This is a top priority for the Council and we will work with stakeholders (e.g. Sustrans) to seek funds from wherever we can. We remain hopeful that this will

receive funding through ATF4E, however, if it is unsuccessful, we will continue to look for other sources of funding.

The next potential source of funding we are currently aware of is the second round of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS 2) from 2027. Officers are preparing to make an application.

## **62. Councillor Ursula Sutcliffe**

Following the announcements by Morrisons and now Next that both companies intend to close sites in Tong Ward, what steps is the Council able to take to help people find alternative employment? Car ownership in Tong Ward is low and public transport connections are extremely poor. Would the Leader of Council be willing to meet with councillors to try and identify ways of improving bus connections to employment areas like Gain Lane, Euroways or Birstall?

### **Response**

With regard to the transport connections you refer to, the council is in regular contact with WYCA about the bus network and how it is changing. As part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan process, the Council also proposed new routes as well as enhancements to existing routes. Providing a commercially viable link from Holmewood to Euroway and further round to Low Moor is difficult due to the layout of the road network. We do believe it would be in the interest of employers in that area to organise better public transport for their staff at appropriate times. We are also looking at possible cycle links from Holmewood to the Spen Valley Greenway that may provide a useful link in the future.

We were disappointed at the recent frequency reductions on the 508 route which linked Holmewood with Gain Lane and are looking into ways of restoring this to run every half hour. Currently, links towards Birstall are hampered by the poor performance of Tong Street, and the Tong Street improvement scheme should allow, when completed, for services to be significantly enhanced. Obviously I am happy to continue the conversation to get the best services we can for local people.

I met with a representative of Next recently to discuss their consultation on job losses and challenged them on their business rationale. We offered the services of Skillshouse to support redeployment if this becomes necessary. We are in regular dialogue with Morrisons about their operations and they are involved in and aware of our employment and skills offers.

## **63. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

Given the recent publicity concerning the National Fraud Initiative investigation into the practice of 'multiple contracts working' Can the Leader advise Council of the steps she is taking to ensure that employees have properly declared second jobs?

### **Response**

The Council's Employee Code of Conduct applies to all officers and is available at all times on the intranet, Bradnet. The Code of Conduct is referenced in contracts of

employment and a copy is routinely appended to contracts of employment at the point of issue.

Council Officers recently updated the policy and published a reminder to staff on the Council's declarations of interest code on 7 December 2023, which includes advice and guidance on employee conflicts of interest.

The Employee Code of Conduct contains specific advice and disclosure required relating to secondary employment and private work, and the requirement to seek consent for secondary/private employment.

#### **64. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland**

In her response to a question the Portfolio Holder states the Children and Families Trust is currently forecasting a budget pressure for this year but did not state her confidence that she has secured the financial base and resources to expedite the sustainable improvement to deliver outstanding services to children and families. Can the Portfolio Holder advise Council what work she is doing to secure a secure financial base without detriment to vulnerable children, young people and their families and when will she feel confident that this has been achieved?

#### **Response**

The Council and the Trust are relentlessly focused on improved social care services and the Improvement Plan is the vehicle to achieve this. The Improvement Board, Chaired by the Commissioner, provides high challenge and high support to the Trust on the delivery against the Improvement Plan.

Discussions are continuing with the DfE and DLUHC to ensure that there is clarity and understanding of the financial support that is needed to ensure that the Trust is supported financially to deliver the much needed improvements, at pace.

#### **65. Councillor Brendan Stubbs**

The Aire Rivers Trust and I have both made several complaints to the Environment Agency about pollution from developments in the Eccleshill Ward. Can the portfolio holder please detail what action the Council is taking to ensure that ground water run-off from the major Housing and Retail developments in the Fagley Lane and Harrogate Road is not ending up in neighbouring gardens and cellars or contaminating local becks and waterways.

#### **Response**

Construction and maintenance activities in or near water have the potential to cause serious pollution or impact on the bed and banks of surface waters and on the quality and quantity of the water. The Council is aware of this risk and have examined opportunities through the development control and planning process to help prevent pollution incidents.

This appraisal has led to the development of guidance and warnings included in pre planning application advice. Furthermore, where there is a risk of sediment pollution being generated during the construction period of a development, planning

conditions requiring the details of temporary site drainage runoff for different construction phases of the project are required and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The prevention of excessive surface water and sediment run-off into adjacent watercourses is supported by planning policy in the Councils Core Strategy in line with policies EN7: Flood Risk and EN8: Environmental Protection.

The Council includes footnotes on planning application decision notices with the intention of raising awareness to developers of these types of pollution incidents. This advice guides applicants and developers to seek specialist advice on how to manage the risk of pollution and comply with the law when planning construction, maintenance or other works in, near or over surface waters. This may include but is not restricted to managing silt, concrete and cement, oils and chemicals, maintaining structures over watercourses, waste management and responding to pollution incidents. The advice specifically warns that causing pollution of a watercourse may result in committing a criminal offence.

Planning conditions and foot notes for the control of sediment were included within the planning permissions for the referenced development sites and supporting information was submitted and approved. The implementation of the approved details can be investigated and reported to ward members should further pollution concerns be raised.

Notwithstanding the above, residual risks of sediment pollution can blight development where a lack of site management processes can lead to pollution incidents over and above the control permitted through the enforcement of planning policy. The enforcing of pollution incidents to waterbodies is the responsibility of the Environment Agency as they have the correct expertise, resource, and legal powers to investigate these occurrences. The Council work collaboratively with the Environment Agency providing essential local knowledge and guidance where required, to support any ongoing investigations.

#### **66. Councillor Rebecca Poulsen**

Would the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Transport please confirm how decisions are made regarding council or landowner responsibility for the maintenance and repair of retaining walls that hold up pavements?

#### **Response**

The Council's policy on how decisions are made in relation to responsibility for the maintenance and repair of retaining wall is published on the Council's website and can be viewed on the following link: <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/highways/guidance-on-retaining-wall-responsibilities/>

#### **67. Councillor Rebecca Poulsen**

Is the Leader of the Council able to advise, how many licences for children working in films, TV and theatres have been applied for in the last 3 years and how long the applications take to be processed?

#### **Response**



In the academic year 2020-21, 400 licences were applied for, in 2021-22, 555 licences were applied for and in 2022-23 443 licences were applied for. This year to date 219 licences have been applied for.

Applications take on average 10 working days to be processed.

**68. Councillor Debbie Davies**

Given that around £6.1m has been received from fixed penalty notices compared to around £4.2m in Clean Air Zone charges would the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Transport agree that more needs to be done to publicise the actions which people need to take to avoid fines?

**Response**

The Council has placed 3,700 signs, in line with DfT specifications, to notify motorists that they are approaching, entering, within or exiting the CAZ.

Additionally, the Council has publicised the CAZ to an area within a one-hour drive which helps people who are new to the city. All other existing highways signage is in line with Government DfT guidance. If the councillor has any specific locations where there is a concern we will be happy to review signage against the DfT guidance.

**69. Councillor Matt Edwards**

What is the current status of the A6177 Cutler Heights Corridor Improvement Programme?

**Response**

The Cutler Heights scheme has been identified as 'pipelined' within the West Yorkshire+ Transport Fund. This classification means that following a review of the WY+TF programme to address its affordability this scheme was identified as one which would not progress beyond the Outline Business Case (OBC) towards delivery unless further funding was identified.

The OBC is still in development and currently looking at different options to ensure it meets current policy, funding objectives and aligns with the Major Roads Network (MRN) funded Tong Street scheme and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) Wakefield Road scheme.

It is programmed for submission around autumn next year, at which point further funding opportunities will be sought to deliver the scheme.

**70. Councillor Janet Russell**

A new £10 million Cold Weather Fund was announced on 13th October to support councils to get rough sleepers off the streets during the winter by helping them to provide more self-contained accommodation. Can the portfolio holder for Regeneration, Transport, and Planning tell us if Bradford Council has received some of these funds, and what extra support this has made possible for rough sleepers in freezing temperatures this winter?

## **Response**

Although £10m can sound like a lot in isolation, when you consider the number of local authorities across the country it doesn't go very far. The government like to announce small pots of money to make it look like they're taking action but in reality, it rarely meets the need in local services.

We received confirmation of £29,000 from the Cold Weather Fund. Our plans involve providing emergency accommodation, offering incentives for those transitioning from supported accommodation and facilitating targeted Bed and Breakfast stays for rough sleepers but the amount of need our residents have is far in excess of this £29,000.

### **71. Councillor Matt Edwards**

Residents on Meadowcroft Rise in Bierley have had multiple incidents of speeding vehicles crashing into their walls which run along Shetcliffe Lane at the end of Ferrand Avenue. This is incredibly distressing and there is a clear danger to life - will the portfolio holder be able to direct the Highways Department to look at a safety barrier here and see what other work can be done to improve this dangerous junction?

## **Response**

The Traffic & Road Safety team will undertake a review of this location including interrogation of collisions and traffic survey databases to determine if any interventions are warranted and feasible. Any suitable measures identified will be subject to the availability of an appropriate funding source.

### **72. Councillor Brendan Stubbs**

Can the Portfolio Holder please provide a further update as to when the new traffic lights will be erected on the Junction of Moorside and Harrogate Road. At the last meeting of Council, it was stated that discussions were ongoing with the developer about the release of funds. Has this been agreed and when can residents expect them to be in place.

## **Response**

Officers have been in discussions with the developers and their contractors and can confirm that new traffic lights will be erected at the above junction. Discussions continue with a view to co-ordinating these lights with other elements of the scheme. There is an expectation that officers will finalise the agreements very soon. At that point, funding will be released and the works can be programmed.

### **73. Councillor Riaz Ahmed**

Following the addition of Average Speed limit on the Stanningley By-Pass and there planned introduction on the Inner Ring Road in Bradford. Can the Portfolio Holder please detail any plans for speeding measures on Leeds Old Road/Barkerend Road and Leeds Road so that residents in Bradford Moor are not left with their roads being used as the racetrack in between these two better policed sections of highway.

## Response

There are currently no plans to introduce Average Speed Cameras on Leeds Old Road/Barkerend Road and Leeds Road. Deployment of such cameras is based on a strict criteria requirement which is unlikely to be met by these locations as traffic calming has been installed on Barkerend Road and the general congestion on Leeds Road will itself reduce vehicle speeds along its length. Therefore, whilst there may be localised pockets of speeding activity it is likely that these will be insufficient in themselves to meet the criteria threshold.

Officers will however carry out a more detailed assessment to confirm that this is actually the case and will provide a more detailed assessment once this is completed.

### 74. Councillor Brendan Stubbs

Can the Portfolio Holder please provide another (and hopefully final) update on the re-introduction of Swim for all sessions at Eccleshill Pool.

## Response

We share Councillor Stubbs' concerns regarding the time taken to reintroduce swimming for unaccompanied young people. However young people have been able to swim at Eccleshill as part of a family group.

There have been many things put in place, including training, new procedures, the introduction of new body cameras and new CCTV. I am pleased to say that we had our first trial sessions over the Christmas holidays.

Although the new online booking is still outstanding as we have been let down by our system supplier, we have used a temporary system.

This has been a testing time, but until the staff could feel comfortable and be reassured that customers were properly safe we could not have reintroduced this any earlier.

### 75. Councillor Debbie Davies

Would the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Transport be so kind as to provide a breakdown, detailing the levels of Nitrogen Dioxide measured over the past 3 years, at each of the five automatic testing sites?

## Response

The figures requested by Councillor Davies, expressed as ug/m<sup>3</sup> are detailed below:

Site ID	2020	2021	2022
CM3 Manningham Lane	35	32	27
CM4 Manchester Rd/Mayo Av	34	38	33
CM5	29	34	31

Site ID	2020	2021	2022
Thornton Rd			
CM6 Shipley Airedale Rd	38	41	37
CM7 Rook Lane	29	35	32

2022 saw reductions in pollution due to CAZ readiness effect which included a significant upgrade of taxis (grants started in July 2021), buses and local HGV and LGV took place in 2022. 2023 data will be released in line with statutory timelines – submitted to Government by end of June 2024, published in Autumn 2024 following Government sign off.

#### **76. Councillor Debbie Davies**

Would the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning & Transport please confirm whether money from the Clean Air Schools Programme can be used to fund parking restrictions near schools, at school arrival and leaving times, thus improving the air quality near schools, whilst encouraging children to walk at least part of their way to and from school?

#### **Response**

The Clean Air Schools Programme will see five new School Wardens to support traffic management and anti-idling around schools and schools are currently preparing their grant applications for the £500,000 funding available, to improve emissions around schools. We do not know what the final applications will be yet, however, parking restrictions will not be funded under this scheme.

The Highways Department will be looking at appropriate traffic restrictions around schools, including the expansion of the School Streets Programme, where traffic movements are restricted around schools at the start and end of the school day. This may include Traffic Regulation Orders in locations that facilitate this such as School Streets in conjunction with other parking restrictions. Discussions have already started between Highways and the Clean Air Programme Team.

#### **77. Councillor Ursula Sutcliffe**

The road and crossing markings on the small road to the car park for Knowles Park which is also outside St. Columba's Primary School (on Tong Street) are very faded. This has meant that there are increasing issues with parking here. Can the portfolio confirm if the relevant council department (which we believe is Children's Service) will get these repainted urgently to help keep children safe?

#### **Response**

Highways officers were unaware of these concerns. Officers will investigate and act if necessary. As an unadopted highway, the responsibility for enforcing parking transgressions falls to the owner of the highway.

**78. Councillor Janet Russell**

Residents living on Barrows Lane and Redcar Lane in Steeton are living with traffic speeding past their houses, which edge directly onto the narrow roadway, at all hours of the day and night. They suspect that some of the drivers are drug runners, and some definitely are on quad bikes going for a joy ride around the tarn and coming back down and through Whitley Head at speed. The police do not have a weekend or late night presence there. Is there anything Bradford Council can do for these residents in the immediate future, before the planned speed limit and traffic calming is installed?

**Response**

This is a police enforcement issue and the matter has been referred to the local NPT about roads policing coverage in the area. The matter will also be referred to the Anti-Social Behaviour Lead as part of the on-going Public Space Protection Order discussions between Highways and Neighbourhoods and Community Services.

**79. Councillor Matt Edwards**

The smart street lighting upgrade for Bradford is being rolled out across Bradford after starting in Tong Ward. However, large areas of Holmewood have still not had new street lights upgraded. Can the portfolio holder confirm when this will happen?

**Response**

Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide a definitive date as to when the street lighting conversion works in Holmewood will be carried out. This is due to the majority of column replacements being out-of-scope of the main Smart Street Lighting Contract due to the use of decorative columns and luminaires.

It is also worth noting that approximately 1,000 columns on the estate are already LED units following a programme of gear tray conversions (effectively a replacement for the lamp in an existing lantern, which provides a cost-effective LED unit without replacing the whole lantern) which was carried out about five years' ago. The existing LED units therefore will not be replaced but will merely have a CMS control node installed to link the column to the central management system.

Works which are in the out-of-scope contract will commence early in the New Year.