

COUNCIL

Tuesday 23 January 2024

MEMBER QUESTION TIME – Part 2

Questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12

35. Councillor Tariq Hussain

What has been the impact of the sudden closure of Aspire Igen college in the summer?

Response

Aspire-igen was the district's largest independent training provider of study programmes for 16-18 year olds, and their closure also followed two other training providers leaving the Bradford market last year. This disproportionately affected some of our most disadvantaged young people, and a lot of the students who had been in those settings have typically had a negative personal experience of compulsory education.

Since the closure the council has been working closely with the Department for Education and our local partners to resolve a range of immediate and longer-term issues. This included:

- Provision of additional support through our SkillsHouse service for young people to transition into an alternative positive engagement;
- Making new assessment arrangements for young people completing qualifications in the summer;
- Securing new places for students who were due to continue or start at Aspire-igen in September;
- Support to enable a sub-contractor of Aspire-igen to continue delivery with a new partner.

In the longer term, the closure of Aspire-igen both creates additional pressure on capacity for our colleges and a gap in the offer below Level 2 (GCSE grade 4+), and for young people who would benefit from a different learning environment to a large school or college setting. We are continuing to work with the DfE to ensure that we have sufficiency of the type and number of places we need for our young people.

This situation has been managed to date without having a significant impact on the NEET and Not Known rate in the district. The council has undertaken a significant amount of work to improve NEET data monitoring systems and the targeting of locality-based outreach over the past 12 months and this has driven a reduction in the NEET and Not Known rate. The rate was 5.2% at the end of December 2023 –

by comparison the three-month average for December 2022 to February 2023 (the period that the DfE report) was 6.8%.

Any young people, or parents and carers, who want information, advice or guidance about the range of education, training and employment opportunities available in the district can contact SkillsHouse via www.skillshouse.co.uk/contact, skillshouse@bradford.gov.uk or 01274 437373.

36. Councillor Andrew Loy

Would the Portfolio Holder for Healthy People and Places please provide figures for Ilkley Lido's total income and expenditure for 2022-23 and the financial year to date?

Response

In 2022/23 the net position of Ilkley lido was c.£280,000 deficit. The income was £901,000 with expenditure of £1,168,000. To ascertain an in-year spend for 2023-24 at the current time would give a misleading picture because shared service costs are added at the year end. I'll be happy to provide Cllr Loy with the year-end figure for 2023-24 when it is available. Further information about all facilities will also be made available through the Sports review.

37. Councillor Mike Pollard

As it has been clear to anyone who didn't avert their eyes, that the financial catastrophe which the Council is now, unacceptably belatedly facing up to, has developed over several years from the consistent financial mismanagement of Children's Services, would the Leader of the Council commit to requesting a Financial Reporting Council (FRC) investigation of the sort recently launched into former employee(s) at Thurrock Council and welcomed by Leader of Council Andrew Jefferies, to ascertain serious failings by senior officers and / or members of the Executive Committee?

Response

It has been reported in the press that the investigation you refer to relates to how Conservative-led Thurrock Council ran up its debts of around £1.3 billion after it made a series of large failed investments mainly in solar farms. That kind of aggressive or high-risk investment strategy is not something that Bradford Council has ever undertaken, therefore it is not an issue here.

38. Councillor Matt Edwards

At the July Full Council meeting, we passed a motion where we stated there was an animal homelessness crisis. We resolved to use social media channels to raise awareness of this issue. Can the Leader of Council tell me how many social media posts have been made since that date and has any work been done to expand the number of pet food banks operating in the district?

Response

The council has posted lately on its social media to raise awareness of the issue and we have asked the comms team to look for more opportunities to make more posts in the coming weeks and months. Often this may be best done by amplifying messages from specialist animal welfare organisations who know these issues best but we will do whatever we can to increase awareness of animal homelessness and wider animal welfare issues in the district.

Regarding the second part of your question, the unprecedented pressures on the system as a whole from the cost of living crisis are proving a significant challenge for the district, which we are working through with partners to ease the burden generally of the costs faced by households including those of looking after pets.

By way of further background, since October 2021 the Council has used its Household Support Fund allocations to support the district's network of Foodbanks and Food Pantries with funding for household food needs, as needed week by week. There have also been monetary grants provided to more than 70 local community settings and local organisations to support the households they work with, if they are experiencing food insecurity. In addition, during the last two winters, low-income and other vulnerable households (based on the households with a reduced council tax bill) have received additional direct payments, using Household Support Fund monies – a dignity-first approach which allows households to prioritise where their need lies.

Since the motion was brought to council, part of the Council's allocation of the government's Household Support Fund for 2023-24 has again been used to maintain and increase household food supplies. This funding has allowed local VCS organisations, foodbanks and pantries to respond to need, which may include support with food for household pets. There are no restrictions applied to foodbanks on what they can purchase to meet the food related needs of households receiving their support in line with their specialist knowledge and experience. Anecdotally, now we are having the conversation, they are reporting to us that they don't generally provide pet food as they have found the main demand is for general household foods as opposed to specifically pet foods.

We are arranging to speak with the Feeding Bradford and Keighley Food Network about promoting the Blue Cross offer to their members, as somewhere for foodbanks to access pet food, and for foodbanks to advertise the fact via Blue Cross, if they do support pet owners. We will also add useful pet information to the local cost of living information that we publish.

39. Councillor Anna Watson

Does the Council Leader agree that, given our budget crisis, it would be far better for the government to invest in decent local services for our residents rather than fritter away millions on a Shipley Eastern By-pass which would not even solve the traffic issues in Shipley?

Response

Irrespective of a bypass project or not, the government should of course be investing in decent local services for our residents. As discussed at a recent Full Council meeting our preference would be to take a more holistic look at the traffic issues in and around Shipley town centre and develop a transport plan that works best for Shipley. The announcement made by the Prime Minister, on 4 October 2023, of the cancellation of HS2 on the grounds of escalating costs, and the delivery of a number of schemes across the country as part of a new 'strategy' called Network North has come under criticism.

The Prime Minister specifically mentioned Shipley Eastern Bypass in his speech, however since then despite attempts by our officers to engage with the Department for Transport, there has been no further communication or engagement from officials on this scheme and therefore no further funding has been released towards the development.

On the other matter, the financial challenges of the council are well known but it's important to note that the money for this kind of capital project cannot be used to deliver everyday council services.

40. Councillor Aislin Naylor

Does the proposal in the financial plan to standardise car parking charges include Idle village? Has consideration been given to the impact of displacing parking to neighbouring streets in this and similar locations and do the financial assumptions allow for likely reduced car park usage where such alternatives exist?

Response

The proposal in the consultation is to potentially introduce Pay and Display car parks at six locations across the district, this includes The Green car park in Idle Village. Parking charges are common in our urban centres, towns and villages and where local highways issues arise they are dealt with by the local highways team.

41. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

In the Report of the Director of Finance to the Executive concerning the 2023-25 Budget Proposals dated 11th January 2024 at paragraph 4.21 there is the statement "Childrens Services are also undertaking a number of mitigating actions to address existing pressures previously outlined. These will not result in budget reductions but would stop overspends recurring and reduce future pressures on Adult Social Care." Can the Portfolio Holder detail the actual problems or potential risks, exactly what actions are being taken and how do these actions provide mitigation against overspends recurring and precisely how will these action reduce future pressure on Adult Social care?

Response

For young disabled people, the transition into adult social care can occur at various stages throughout a young person's life: including turning 18, finishing their education any time up to age 25 and/or preparing for independence and leaving home. Each transition can contain uncertainty, fear, confusion, or, if handled

positively, can be embraced with enthusiasm and excitement about what happens next. These transitions coincide with physical, emotional and psychological developments that are coupled with changes to roles and relationships with family and friends, professionals and the wider community.

What makes the difference in how these transitions are experienced is the planning, understanding and information available to those facing transition. When it goes well children, young people and their families can look to the future, confident that the individual and their families will be prepared for adult years with whatever guidance, support and community opportunities are available.

Bradford Adult Social Care works closely with Bradford Children and Families Trust, the local NHS and other partners to ensure that those young people who are likely to have eligible needs to transition into adult social care are well supported to do so. There is a formal Protocol in place which describes the arrangements between the Bradford Children and Families Trust and the Council's Adult Social Care Department where a young person is likely to have continuing eligible needs for care and support beyond their 18th birthday. This is underpinned by the following principles:

1. Opportunities for further education and employment
2. Independent living including access to supported living
3. Having friends, relationships and being part of the community
4. Being healthy

We are working very collaboratively at present as the Children's Trust seeks to review and calibrate its caseload of young people, with requests for Care Act assessments for young adults being greater than previously experienced. We are planning this work together and looking at options to meet both eligible social care needs and other needs for example for housing or for health services.

42. Councillor Allison Coates

Would the Portfolio Holder for Healthy People and Places confirm whether and if so, since what date, it has engaged with Libraries Connected, regarding support programmes for libraries at risk during coming budget setting procedures and can she inform members of any progress made?

Response

I can confirm that our Head of Libraries, Christine May, has engaged with the Libraries Connected support programme. We will use the resources, training and advice provided as part of the programme to inform the proposed Library Service Review in Bradford.

43. Councillor Mike Pollard

Further to The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) decision to order Nottingham City Council to release a report on how it manages its finances, following

“significant misspending”, coupled with the Leader of Bradford Council’s insistence that the Council’s financial woes are due solely to public sector wide problems and do not in any way result from any consistent mismanagement of the Council’s finances on her watch, would the Leader of the Council commit, for the record, to the commissioning and release of a report of similar remit to the one made by Ernst & Young for Nottingham City Council?

Response

We had our CIPFA report carried out in September, this was commissioned by Government and we welcomed it. That’s the proper process that government expects councils in our position, requiring exceptional financial support, to follow. The CIPFA report is not ours to release but we are assured by government that they will release it in full in their own time.

44. Councillor Matt Edwards

Twelve months ago, this Council resolved to take action on HGV-using rural roads. We instructed officers to ensure that the ‘National and Local Information Requirements – Planning Applications (including Outline, Reserved Matters and Variation of Condition)’ document was updated to make the submission of a ‘Construction Traffic Management Plan’ a mandatory validation requirement for planning applications for major developments. When was this completed?

Response

We will be updating the validation requirements to include reference to a ‘construction traffic management plan’ and preparing guidance as part of the Development Services work programme in 2024.

When updates are made to the validation checklist we are required to consult on this with interested parties.

The Council will need to take into account established planning law and local government ombudsman findings on this matter. Information requested with a particular planning application must be:

- reasonable having regard, in particular, to the nature and scale of the proposed development; and
- about a matter which it is reasonable to think will be a material consideration in the determination of the application.

Where development proposals have a high number of vehicle movements that would affect the immediate surrounding area, Council highway teams currently take into account such considerations as part of a pre-application or planning application. A developer’s proposal would include a traffic assessment that would include how traffic makes its way to and from a development site, and the local authority has the ability to require the developer to put in place restrictions whereby traffic would only use appropriate parts of the road network, normally through a planning condition. It should be noted that applicants of major applications normally engage their own traffic consultant to deal with such matters. However, ward members will be

consulted regarding routes to be considered during development of construction traffic management plans.

45. Councillor Janet Russell

Could the Portfolio holder please reassure the chamber that checks are being done on dog breeders in the Bradford district to ensure that no American Bully XL dogs are being bred, in line with the new ban on this breed in England and Wales?

Response

From 31 December 2023 it became illegal for any person to breed from an XL bully breed of dog. From 1 February it then became an offence to own an XL bully without holding a valid certificate of exemption from DEFRA. There are also rules about muzzling, insurance and microchipping.

The banned breed legislation is enforced by our colleagues at West Yorkshire Police and they will be the primary enforcement agency for any future concerns about XL bully breed dogs.

However, Environmental Health Service are responsible for licensing dog breeding in the district and will monitor to ensure that licensed breeders are complying with this new requirement. If, during the investigation of any allegations of illicit dog breeding, the officers identify the existence of XL bully breeding or a wider failure to comply with the new controls required of this breed, then they will liaise with our colleagues at West Yorkshire Police, as they do with the previously banned breeds, to effect a resolution.

46. Councillor Riaz Ahmed

Until the publishing of the Budget proposals, residents parking permits have been free to those in the areas that are covered. Given the proposal to bring in a £35 a year charge will affect residents be offer the option to terminate the schemes in their area, to split the payment over the year and will the Council be pro-actively and directly contacting all residents affect so that they are given the opportunity to engage in the consultation.

Response

The proposals consulted on in the budget are in line with neighbouring local authorities; residents would not be given the option to split the £35 payment over the year due to the cost of setting up a process to facilitate this. The Council will be following the standard consultation process for advertising new on-street orders.

There is already an established process for revoking existing schemes, where supported requests would go on a waiting list for a future review to consider reversing the existing Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

47. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

In September 2023 the Great Northern Conference was held in Bradford. The Conference was sponsored by Nuclear Waste Services who took the opportunity to

explain more about their work to become a 'one stop shop' for the management of nuclear waste. Can the Leader of Council and the Executive Member for Regeneration, Planning and Transport advise Council if the Council or the West Yorkshire Combined Authority is investigating the potential of a site in the District or a site in a neighbouring district as a Geological Disposal Facility?

Response

The Government identifies sites for the disposal of nuclear waste, however, the Council has no knowledge of any plans for the future disposal of nuclear waste in Bradford or surrounding area.

48. Councillor Mike Pollard

Would the Leader of the Council confirm whether in 2017, she was involved in discussions with senior council officers and / or Executive colleagues and in some instances Graham Archer, the Department for Education lead Civil Servant for social care improvement, where she was made aware of a request for £1.4m to prevent an exodus of Child Social Workers to neighbouring councils, where in some cases, a 25 year old Children's Social Worker could earn £5,000 per annum more than in Bradford with the gap rising to £7,000 for a Level 3 Children's Social Worker?

Response

The local Conservatives should not try and rewrite history to make up for 14 years of Conservative Government austerity, £350 million has been taken away from Bradford district during this time. 2017 is a long time ago. I have no recollection of the conversation you allude to.

There is a national crisis in funding for children's social care and a broken market both for children's care placements and the recruitment and retention of social workers. These issues have been highlighted in multiple national reports, including the independent Macalister Review commissioned by government which called for £2.6 billion to tackle the scale of reform needed.

These structural problems of austerity Britain have been felt sharply in the Bradford district, with high levels of disadvantage and rising demands for care and support. We are backing the Trust in its plan to recruit and retain more permanent social workers as part of its vital improvement work as we also continue to call on government to implement the radical change required nationally.

49. Councillor Debbie Davies

In the 2024/25 Budget Proposals, under the budget growth heading for 2024/25 you include the refurbishment of Forster Square and new housing at Esholt but planning permission was given in September 2021 for the 150 houses in Esholt and there is no sign of any building work as yet and the Forster Square refurbishment was agreed 7 years ago and there is still no sign of this starting so, would the for Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport guarantee both these projects will be going ahead in the near future?

Response

Planning permission was granted for 150 dwellings and 100,000 sq.m. of employment uses by the Regulatory & Appeals Committee at their meeting on 23 September 2021. This was subject to a Section 106 agreement, to include several provisions including the phasing of this strategically important development. The applicant continues to be in discussion with Council officers to finalise matters in the S106 agreement. Obviously the Council cannot guarantee delivery of something entirely developed and delivered by a third party but we are keen to see it move forward as a high quality scheme that will provide quality homes in the district.

The improvement works to Forster Square funded under the West Yorkshire+ Transport Fund remain an active scheme for delivery by the Council. However, as members may be aware the Department for Transport's decision to invest in rail infrastructure and provide an additional platform at Forster Square station was recently announced after a lot of work behind the scenes to secure approval of this vital scheme. This project brings real opportunities to connect Bradford to London and its delivery is time critical.

The Council have been working closely with colleagues in Network Rail to ensure that this element of the Forster Square improvement can be delivered and completed in time for the 2025 City of Culture year.

To ensure that this aspiration can be achieved it has been necessary to reprogramme the delivery of the gateway station improvements to ensure that there is no delay to the new platform works. Officers remain committed to developing a transformational gateway station at this site and are currently targeting construction to commence in 2026, after the City of Culture year.

50. Councillor Martin Love

Can the Portfolio Holder tell us what the current lead time is to have streetlights repaired?

Response

As a result of the installation of the new LED luminaires for the Smart Street Lighting project this has reduced the repair times down to around five working days for general faults. This shows one of the many benefits of investing in our street lighting network.

Repair of street lighting faults which are down to electrical supply issues requiring response from Northern Powergrid are still around 20-30 working days.

51. Councillor Ursula Sutcliffe

Councillors have reported graffiti and litter in the subway under Tong Street multiple times, when can we tell residents this will be cleared? In addition to this, will the portfolio holder tell me how and when subways are maintained and cleaned? We also have extensive damage, ASB and litter in subways on Wakefield Road, and Rooley Lane.

Response

Street Scene have cleared the subways numerous times and most recently on 10 January 2024, but are finding trade waste from local businesses is being dumped on regular occasions which is being investigated. We clean offensive graffiti from the subways in the first instance when reported via Council Contact or online. Clearing every element of the graffiti in subways is near impossible with current resources and would limit our resource in other areas more visible to members of the public.

52. Councillor Debbie Davies

The Home to School Transport service forecast overspend is a massive £2m with some savings identified to bring it down to £1.1m – one suggestion to making savings here, as well as enabling more pupils to be independent, was through the Travel Assistance Service which trained individuals with particular needs to travel independently on public transport. However, on the Council website it states this is no longer available, plus the Council's Home to School Travel and Transport policy is out of date – are these areas you will be looking at to possibly make some financial savings?

Response

We are working in a context of a national crisis in home to school transport which is well publicised, the County Councils Network for example has said its 37 members are spending more than £700m a year on school transport for 85,000 children with special educational needs and disabilities, compared to less than £400m five years ago.

The council is looking to make savings in all areas of its work. Here in Bradford the business transformation team and colleagues from active travel social prescribing are working with us to develop a new travel training offer. We are hoping that staff within schools, colleges and adult centres can be trained to deliver travel training to pupils. This work is ongoing. In respect of the home to school transport policy, although there are no changes to the current policy, we are currently working with legal to review and make this clearer to parents/carers and align with DfE guidance which was issued as recently as 2023.

53. Councillor Debbie Davies

Markets are budgeted to cost £600,000 and yet we have the new Darley Street market costing millions opening soon which presumably is meant to be profitable and St James wholesale market is fully let so presumably brings money in, so how and why is this a budget pressure?

Response

Markets has seen a reduction in retail rental values over several years and the number of vacant stall/shops has increased. The consolidation of the markets offer in the city centre will see its two large city centre markets - Oastler and Kirkgate Market - close and replaced with a smaller modern market offer.

The service is in the process of driving vacant possession in two of its large city centre markets and numerous shop properties around the Oastler Centre, including

the former Rawson Temporary Market in preparation for the delivery of City Village and the opening of the new Darley Street Market.

The service's income budget is in the process of being changed to reflect the financial pressure it has faced over the years, including the managed closure of several market properties. It is worth pointing out that Markets do make an operational trading surplus, however, when currently set against historic operating budgets it leads to a £600,000 shortfall.

The investment of £600,000 allows the service to report an achievable income target.

54. Councillor Janet Russell

Given the number of residents of Addingham who commute by bike into Ilkley, is the council considering any sort of interim measure to create a segregated cycle lane (rather than a mixed use Greenway) from the junction of the Ilkley Old Road with the A65 in Addingham to Victoria Avenue in Ilkley (i.e. the most dangerous section of the route between the two areas)?

Response

There are no current proposals for such a link but the Cycle and Active Travel Champion has now included this as a line in the pipeline of active travel schemes for consideration and development for Bradford.

55. Councillor Celia Hickson

Could the Portfolio holder update me on progress in distributing the Asylum Dispersal Grants given to BMDC by HMG in both 2022 and 2023 as these excessive time delays are affecting those organisations seeking to support asylum seekers in Bradford?

Response

The delay has been due to necessary adjustments in internal procedures, these processes are now finalised and the recipients have been notified and have received their grant agreements. There has been no gap in support for individual asylum seekers.

56. Councillor Debbie Davies

Would the for Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport provide an update regarding the new Regional Food Hub at Staithgate Lane which is due to replace St James Wholesale Market?

Response

Whilst some preparatory work has been undertaken on the plans for the relocation of the St James Wholesale Market and a potential Regional Food Hub, the options are currently being reviewed to consider the ongoing discussions with Government about the plans for the new Bradford Rail Station including timescales for its delivery, the location of the potential new track alignment and associated infrastructure.

57. Councillor Debbie Davies

It's disappointing that the budget of £1.9m for the Naturalising Bradford Beck Scheme that would have created a new linear park next to Valley Road in Shipley has been scrapped but isn't surprising when the £1.6m grant from the European Structural and Investment Funds towards this wasn't spent by the deadline – why is it that city centre projects are allowed to go massively over budget but projects outside the city centre are not?

Response

This is not the case.

The challenge for the Naturalising Bradford Beck scheme is the strict nature of the ESIF funding, which couldn't be extended further, as well as the fact the project generates no revenue so we have nothing to borrow against to increase available funding.

Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties with the project design meaning that construction costs exceeded the available budget, the decision was taken to pause the delivery of this element of the wider Bradford to Shipley Route Improvement scheme. However, we maintain a strong ambition to deliver this project and are looking at all funding opportunities, including incorporating back into the Shipley-Canal Road transport scheme, to deliver what remains a very good scheme.

58. Councillor Janet Russell

Can the portfolio holder please advise when funding to remake the canal towpath between Silsden and Kildwick might be expected, to match funding already in place from North Yorkshire Council for their share of this work?

Response

We have submitted a bid to Active Travel England, a Government Quango, for Active Travel Fund Tranche 4+ funding. We were due to hear back in January as to whether or not we have been successful. We have not heard anything from them as yet but expect to hear in the very near future.

59. Councillor Matt Edwards

There are ongoing issues with an individual removing waste from residents' bins and scattering it throughout the subways under Tong Street and paths around Dudley Hill. What work is being done to tackle this issue? Have local residents and businesses with cameras been contacted?

Response

Neighbourhood Wardens have attended two takeaway restaurants on Tong Street, Tong throughout January where complaints were made in regards to a homeless male going through commercial bins and removing discarded food waste and eating the food and disposing of packaging or any unwanted items in the subway areas on Tong Street.

The owners of the takeaway restaurants were advised about their duty of care regards their commercial waste. Both takeaways have Bradford Council bins however one was damaged and missing a lid. The Neighbourhood Wardens arranged for the lid to be replaced and takeaway staff were told to ensure that the bins were secure and inaccessible to unwanted removal of waste.

The Councils Environmental Enforcement Team have not received any complaints in relation to this male going through local residents household bins in the area.

The Neighbourhood Wardens and the Area Clean Team staff have continued to monitor and patrol the subway areas to try and identify the homeless male in order to assist and potentially refer him to the appropriate homeless outreach services. Due to a lack of CCTV cameras in the locality of the subway there has been no positive identification of the male.

60. Councillor Debbie Davies

Why have you decided to combine the Shipley and Keighley youth service team which covers a huge area to make savings but presumably are leaving the existing youth service arrangements in the rest of Bradford?

Response

The Proposal is currently in consultation as part of the package of measures being considered. Aside from the proposed Management change in the proposals, frontline delivery would remain unchanged in all areas including Keighley and Shipley.

61. Councillor Debbie Davies

Would the Leader of the Council agree to the removal of free parking for councillors as well as the proposed removal of staff permits?

Response

Councillor parking is not part of this year's budget proposals. No robust financial proposal has been identified. Most councillors use their permits infrequently given they are not in City Hall daily so would not otherwise buy a permit.

Councillor allowances are regularly reviewed and they have been cut significantly in real terms since 2010. Councillor pensions were also abolished in 2014. For reference, the basic allowance paid to a ward councillor in Bradford is £13,463.16, compared to £16,564.77 in Leeds, £16,211 in Kirklees, £13,906.14 in Wakefield and £10,720.21 in Calderdale.

62. Councillor Kevin Warnes

Will the Leader of Council please ensure that officers prioritise planning enforcement of the installation of operational EV charging points in the new Lidl on Otley Road and the new Coop on Bingley Road near Saltaire?

Response

The Council's Planning Enforcement Team will ensure that all complaints relating to such matters are dealt with by the team in line with policy. The enforcement team has a significant caseload and has to balance a number of competing priorities but always endeavour to deal with complaints efficiently and effectively.

63. Councillor Matt Edwards

Following the cancellation of HS2, the government has made £150 million of funding available to local authorities this financial year to tackle potholes. How much has Bradford Council been awarded as part of this and how will this funding be split across Bradford?

Response

West Yorkshire was allocated funding of £6,484,800 from the announced £200m of additional pot holes monies as a result of the 2023 Budget for the 2023/24 financial year.

The funding was split amongst the five district partners of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority with Bradford receiving an additional allocation of £949,765 which has been allocated based on the Council's standard funding allocation formula as follows:

Bradford East (19.5%)

Bradford West & City (18.6%)

Bradford South (18.6%)

Keighley (22.7%)

Shipley (20.5%)

64. Councillor Matt Edwards

Can Leader of the Council confirm in Bradford Council have any IT contracts with Fujitsu? If so will the council be reviewing these in light of the unfolding Horizon Scandal?

Response

The Council has no IT contracts with Fujitsu, so no action is required for further review or contract changes.

65. Councillor Debbie Davies

With the proposed permit scheme for waste sites how many visits per year would residents be able to make?

Response

There are currently no limitations to the number of visits that residents can make to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC). Officers are reviewing the HWRC policy and will circulate any proposed changes for consultation. The arrangements at HWRCs operated by neighbouring local authorities will be considered in making

recommendations on whether there should be limitations on the number of visits per household.

66. Councillor Mike Pollard

Would the Leader of the Council join opposition members and residents alike in welcoming the Office for Local Government's (Oflog's) publication of readily accessible council performance metrics, to allow comparisons not only with national averages but also with neighbouring and other similar authorities, helping both residents and opposition councillors (maybe even controlling group backbenchers) to create an "early warning system", after determining where improvements need to be made, in order that they can quickly identify inept Council Executive Committees and highlight these early, in order to prevent the need for Government Interventions?

Response

Bradford Council created and has adopted the Bradford District Digital Strategy and within that we have made a firm commitment to Data Driven Decision Making. Before the establishment of OFLOG Bradford Council published performance reports against Key Performance Indicators and continues to do so. As Leader I welcome a robust and clear assurance framework underpinned by metrics. In its current form the metrics on the OFLOG database do not yet meet that standard. For example some of the metrics fail to give the context that give them meaning. The data currently has a significant lag for example planning data on the system refers to 2020 to 2022 and that means that the early warning system is flawed. Bradford Council are monitoring the OFLOG data and creating the deep dive approach to understanding context to ensure that the Council responds when need arises.

67. Councillor Mike Pollard

In light of the consistently below par academic attainment levels of schoolchildren in the Bradford District, coupled with the consistent failings of Children's Service, leading to their externalisation, would the Portfolio Holder for Education, Employment & Skills be so kind as to inform non-Executive members of the Council why the controlling Labour Group consider it appropriate for them to use the slogan, "Putting children at the heart of everything we do" and why the members of the Labour Executive Committee believe that non-Executive Labour members of the council should support their continued governance of "the youngest city in the country"?

Response

We are proud of putting children first and – despite the Conservative Group not supporting our ambitions to make this a child-friendly district – we make no apologies in doing so. The absence of children's concerns in the national policy agenda is deeply concerning. We found it shocking that in the Autumn Statement, for example, the Chancellor did not make a single mention of children. Just this month there was a report by experts from the Academy of Medical Sciences which found that the health of the youngest children in this country is worsening and they said society is betraying children and their future economic prosperity. Here in Bradford we

absolutely will continue in our ambition to put children at the heart of everything we do.

68. Councillor Debbie Davies

In an answer to a question asked at last month's Full Council meeting reference was made to a "Strategic Road Safety Pot" which was created for projects where the budget exceeds that available through Area Committees – could we have more details on this fund please?

Response

The Strategic Road Safety Pot is a portion of the Safe Roads allocation for Bradford from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). The pot is used for strategic road safety matters across the district that may cross constituency boundaries and may be too financially large for an Area Committee to fund. It is also used as a way of supporting local need through the Town and Parish Councils, where highway safety schemes are promoted and costs are jointly shared, extracting good value for money from the budget.

69. Councillor Debbie Davies

I share the concerns expressed by councillors from other political groups regarding the loss of free tennis after the upgrades are complete especially as this was presented to us as a good news story and there was no mention about charging in the future. I understand that two of the six refurbished courts at Northcliffe Park are to be retained for free unrestricted access so can I request that in Baildon where we only have two courts, one is retained for free public use?

Response

Final details of the access, charging and coaching elements are as they were at the time of the announcement. Members will be further consulted and updated as these proposals are negotiated. The Council is currently seeking to recognise the Bradford Leisure Card within the proposed charging regime, as used by our sports facilities across the district, to ensure equitable and extended access for economically disadvantaged residents which aligns with the funder's requirements.

The booking and charging elements for this programme are to manage access to the courts and fund both the coaching sessions and provide a sinking fund to ensure the sustainability of the courts moving forward. The latter to ensure that the parks courts do not deteriorate to the point of becoming a significant impediment to participation as evidenced in the District's Playing Pitch Strategy a scenario which is reflected nationally owing to the historical lack of local and national funding opportunities for parks courts. The former allows the courts to be used for extended coaching activity leading to wider participation levels beyond the immediate local tennis community and those already engaged in playing tennis to ensure that there will be more opportunities to develop a larger and more diverse and inclusive audience.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to exclude courts at individual sites which benefit from this funding programme as developed by the Lawn Tennis Association the

sports National Governing Body. The two tennis courts at Northcliffe Park (a quarter of the total offer available at this location) are excluded from this programme as they were refurbished previously with alternative funding as 'Art Courts'.

70. Councillor Debbie Davies

Last year I asked if a Public Space Protection Order could be introduced to deter people asking for money from drivers who have stopped at traffic lights as it is both dangerous and intimidating, but I was informed that there are insufficient resources to do this. We have recently been awarded £185,000 Government Safer Streets funding and you say your priorities are to reduce anti-social behaviour and improve safety in the city centre, so why not use some of this money for this purpose or at least consult on where residents want this money spending?

Response

Since apportioning the Safer Streets Fund last August the Home Office has reduced the funds available. This means that the Bradford allocation now stands at £129,717 and government have indicated that this is likely to be reduced even further going forward. In addition, the government made supporting the implementation of Public Space Protection Orders ineligible under this Fund.

However, this does not mean that there is no action being taken as the issue of begging at traffic lights is recognised. The anti-social behaviour response to begging in the district is significant relative to other areas of the country and in Bradford we undertake a disproportionately high number of enforcements. For example, we have issued more Criminal Behaviour Orders against aggressive begging than other areas.

71. Councillor Debbie Davies

Could we have a breakdown of the annual costs to run the Clean Air Zone scheme which I understand is £2.7m?

Response

The information shown below provides the detail requested.

		2023/2024 cost to date
Employees		1,729,705
Operational Expenses	Equipment	319
	Furniture	698
	Print & Stationery	18,254
	Postages	121,810
	Computer Costs	467,628
	Services (CCTV support and communications)	9,487
	Professional Fees (TPT costs)	42,481
	Consultants Fees (external comms - launch related)	12,518

	TEC fees	2,500
	Laboratory Test fees	14,219
	Misc - Other	2,516
	Publicity	22,807
	CAZ Contact Centre	268,800
		2,713,742

72. Councillor Rebecca Poulsen

Would the Leader of the Council confirm how a review of the Staff Network and Respect could generate a proposed saving of £49,000 when there are 7 staff networks each with a budget of £1,500?

Response

The Council budget proposals of the £49,000 is broken down as £10,500 for the Staff Networks (£1,500 per network) and £38,500 for RESPECT. The budgets for these have supported staff networks to establish and become self directed, and also for the RESPECT initiative and programme to be set up, with investment into RESPECT learning and development, videos, guest speakers, toolkits and resources as part of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The staff networks and RESPECT programme are now established; thus, the proposed budget reduction is to reflect this while sustaining the staff networks and RESPECT programme on a reduced cost basis.