

COUNCIL
20 October 2015

MEMBER QUESTION TIME

Questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12

1. Councillor Shafiq

Could the Leader advise what lessons have been learned by the Local Authority from the report published this week on the imposition of an Interim Executive Board (IEB) at Laisterdyke Business & Enterprise College?

Answer

The lessons learned were regarding the process of implementing the IEB. The report advised that the correct decision was made to implement the IEB however should another application need to be made processes as outlined in the report by Les Walton will be implemented by the Council including governance and independent Governor support. It should be noted that reviews of the role of the School Achievement Officers and School Specific Monitoring Group have already taken place.

2. Councillor Ellis

Can the Deputy Leader of Council inform colleagues of whether she agrees with Councillor Darryl Smith, Leader of the Conservative Group on Rossendale Borough Council, who says of licensing people to drive passengers, that Rossendale cannot “carry on the way we have been, if it is causing problems for us and neighbouring authorities” and would she further agree with Councillor Smith, that “it must be very frustrating when you are focussing on safeguarding and then look at neighbouring boroughs issuing licenses like confetti?”

Answer

Yes I agree that the licensing of vehicles by Rossendale Borough Council is causing significant problems for Bradford as well as many other Local Authorities. Officers from Bradford have been in dialogue with Rossendale Council for some time to bring their approach to licensing more in line with what we would expect from a licensing service. We will continue to work alongside them to deal with the issues that their large number of licensed vehicles not operating within their area presents, including joint enforcement operations with their officers whenever their staffing resources will allow. We will continue to do all we can to ensure the safety of the travelling public in the Bradford district.

Supplementary Question

Thank you for your answer and I do appreciate the trouble that we have as an authority to regulate drivers and vehicles from outside of our area. However what I would like is to ask you to consider the fact that we are able to put onto operators’ licences specific issues and other authorities have done this and I will read out from one of their licensing policies: “A separate telephone line and telephone number must be used and installed by the private hire operator and used for hackney carriage vehicles licensed by another authority which are undertaking private hire bookings within that operating base. There must be a pre-recorded interceptor message on the unique booking telephone line which

clearly states to prospective customers the following: The driver and vehicle you are about to book are not licensed by this Council and this Council is not empowered to take licensing action against them in the event of a complaint. In the event of a complaint customers will have to deal with the other authorities where they may be licensed.” Are you prepared to undertake such actions and to incorporate that in a policy for this Council?

Councillor Val Slater

Thank you Councillor Ellis. That does sound like a good policy and I will ask officers to look at it. A couple of things we are considering. We are working together as West Yorkshire Authorities to get some consistent approach so I will refer that to my colleagues in the other Councils. I will ask the Licensing Managers to do that. The other thing is working towards having an award scheme, gold, silver, bronze, that will give customers more satisfaction about the standards of particular cab companies and that could be one of the things that we look at. So if you will give me the details I will certainly look into it.

3. Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

To ask the Portfolio Holder for Education, Skills and Culture - Does the Portfolio Holder believe that the standard of education in Bradford should be judged by the progress of the most vulnerable?

Answer

We are committed to working together with others to provide the possible best education for every child and young person in a Bradford school, whatever the child’s background and whatever school the child attends this was recognised in the recent Ofsted inspection of the local authority’s school improvement function where it said “all children are in the authority’s line of sight”. We recognise that many of Bradford District’s most vulnerable and disadvantaged children have underperformed in their education in the past including those who are New to English. Therefore it is a key priority to accelerate the progress of these children so that the attainment gaps are narrowed between these children and other pupils across the district. Additional resources have been made available by the Council and the Schools Forum so that support can be targeted at these groups of children – the allocation and impact of this funding is being overseen by the newly formed Commissioning Board.

In answer to the question – Bradford District will be judged by the progress that every pupil makes, and by the accelerated progress that the most vulnerable must make to catch up with their peers.

4. Councillor Ahmed

Could the Portfolio holder update us on the percentage of Bradford Schools now judged to be Good or Outstanding by Ofsted?

Answer

Of Bradford’s 213 schools, 129 are currently judged ‘good’ or better by Ofsted and 9 have yet to be inspected. This gives a figure of 63.2% of Bradford schools that are ‘good’ or better.

5. Councillor Warnes

Does the Leader of Council welcome the recent decision by Norwich City Council to build 105 new Passivhaus homes and agree that this is a low carbon policy that Bradford Council should adopt immediately in line with our corporate commitment to decarbonise our district?

Answer

The Norwich City Council initiative to build 105 new Passivhaus homes is an interesting development. Building new homes to a much higher level of thermal performance, such as the Zero Carbon Homes Standard or the EU's new Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (NZEB) definition would ensure that residents' fuel bills would be reduced dramatically, helping to ensure that they will be at less risk of fuel poverty. In effect, this would be 'future proofing' people living in any new home built to this standard against the risk of fuel poverty for the lifetime of the property.

Some developers have claimed that building to this improved standard would drive up building costs, resulting in less new homes being built and those that are being unaffordable. However, there is a body of evidence pointing to the cost of building to this level of thermal performance is now falling to a comparable level to conventional construction costs.

Recent analysis by the Sweett Group (*source: Zero Carbon Hub 2014*), shows that the cost of delivering zero-carbon homes has halved since 2011, representing a fraction of the estimated costs when the target for all new homes to be zero carbon from 2016 was launched in 2007. This cost is set to fall even further over the next couple of years. Work carried out by Cardiff University demonstrates that zero carbon homes can currently be built at a cost of £1,000 per square metre, which is within the accepted range for social housing building of £800 to £1,000 per square meter (*source: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/archi/news-items/solcer-house>*).

To build for this price much of the construction work has to be done as "system build" and undertaken off-site. To obtain the higher performance standards at the lower cost quoted by Cardiff University requires off-site construction to be specified in the original plans and to use a developer that has the capability to build using these techniques.

It should be noted that Incommunities are currently planning a pilot scheme to build innovative system built energy efficient new dwellings on part of a development on a brownfield site on Green Lane in Manningham. This initial pilot scheme will be for six new homes. Incommunities (with backing from manufacturer) are considering looking for interest from a British firm to make the houses using this new ground-breaking building method under license, which would further reduce construction costs by as much as 20 per cent over traditional methods.

6. Councillor Hawkesworth

Will the Leader please confirm that should any community or group within the District wish to mark the 90th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II by holding a street party to mark Her Majesty's outstanding record of dedication and service all legal and administrative work necessary to secure an appropriate street closure will be carried out by Council staff without charge to the organisers of the party?

Answer

The Authority does not charge the public to administer road closures for events at this moment in time.

Supplementary Question

For clarification I think maybe my question has been a little misleading. Could you clarify will there be any charge whatsoever to communities who wish to enjoy a street party or whatever celebration in honour of the Queen's birthday?

Councillor Green

There is no charge for road closures but it depends what it is that they want to do in their celebration I guess. So I would not say that there is a blanket approach. I cannot think of anything that they would want to do that we would charge for but I am also aware that if I say no there will be no charge and somebody does come up with some spiffing wheeze that I will be caught between a rock and a hard place but there is no charge for road closures and we will treat any application in a sensible way.

7. Councillor Farley

Bradford District has a long standing tradition of acting as a safe haven for refugees fleeing from other countries, can the Leader tell us what the current position is regarding the possibility of further Syrian refugees being welcomed to the District?

Answer

The Council has agreed an initial intake of around 50 Syrian refugees during the next few weeks as an immediate response to the Home Office plans. The longer term intake will be dependent on government plans for the 20,000 intake (over 5 years). As more local authorities are likely to come forward to assist, Bradford's share may not be as great proportionately as has been the case so far. However as pioneers to the resettlement initiatives we should continue to do our best to accommodate more refugees, and may wish to maintain support at current levels of 50 refugees per annum subject to an annual assessment of our capability to respond to the individual needs e.g. availability of school places.

8. Councillor Dunbar

Have the recent cuts in ESOL funding in places like Bradford College been raised with the Government particularly in light of recent plans to accept more Syrian refugees?

Answer

ESOL provision plays an important beneficial role in the integration, citizenship, and employment for new arrivals, immigrants and asylum seekers. The supply of sufficient ESOL provision to meet local demand to promote better integration into wider society and the labour market is a key priority identified in our Employment and Skills Strategy.

It is difficult to determine whether there will be sufficient ESOL provision to meet any potential need for Syrian refugees as their eligibility for government funding and need would be determined by their individual circumstance. It is important to focus on what the learners themselves would need. Learners would come from a range of backgrounds. Some learners are likely to be highly educated and skilled; some with multiple life challenges; some that will be traumatised; and a range of ages and learning abilities involved.

Speaking more generally, there has been a significant reduction in government spending on ESOL provision. Access to government funded ESOL has been narrowed to those on active work-related benefits. However, other potential ESOL beneficiaries – the working poor and non-employed women, for example – do not meet the government’s criteria and are thus excluded. It is recognised that the funding and delivery of ESOL does not meet our local community needs and there have been on-going discussions with appropriate government departments on Bradford’s requirements.

We estimate that we have a shortfall of over 600 ESOL places in the District and we have had discussions with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) as part of our on-going strategic discussions with these agencies (these two Agencies fund the majority of ESOL or related provision). The impact of the reduction of funding for ESOL provision on childhood poverty has been raised with DWP through the Childhood Strategy Group.

9. Councillor Pennington

Can the Leader of the Council confirm whether the old Keighley College building in North Street will be demolished?

Answer

The Council employed Mark Brearley and Company to market the building to local, regional and national interests as the building is not listed, but in a conservation area. The combination of the complexity and size of the building, which was built in 5 phases, combined with the additional constraints associated with conservation area status have proved enough to frustrate progress to any sale.

As a consequence discussion is now underway with partners along with preparation of necessary related information to present to the Portfolio Holder later this year for decision-making on next steps.

It is a matter of public knowledge that funds were set aside some time ago in case demolition turned out to be the best way to return the site to a productive use.

10. Councillor Hassan Khan

Can the leader update Council on progress with sub-national devolution?

Answer

A formal submission was sent to HM Government on the 4th September from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. This was a Leeds City Region focussed submission, building on the existing City and Growth deals and seeking to secure additional, significant and transformative range of powers and resources. These are to be drawn down from Whitehall and Westminster to the sub-national level and protect the democratic legitimacy of local government.

This is all an extension of the existing Devolution Deal approved in March 2015 covering Transport, Housing, Business Support, Employment and Skills.

The LCR Submission is one of 38 in the UK set for consideration as part of the Spending Review. Announcements are expected to be in the Autumn Statement on the 25th November. On-going dialogue and negotiation remains in place both within the Spending

review process and as part of the continued involvement with government and other public bodies on addressing growth, public sector reform and well-being. Leaders in West Yorkshire remain committed and directly involved in protecting and promoting the best interests of their Districts and seeking the best possible powers and resources for greater self-determination, prosperity, well-being and resilience.

11. Councillor Shafiq

Can the Portfolio Holder for Education, Skills and Culture outline how the performance of students will be monitored at Laisterdyke Business & Enterprise College?

Answer

Students' performance at Laisterdyke is currently being tracked and monitored closely by interim leadership that has a proven track record in improving outcomes. Transition arrangements will be made to ensure that this remains a clear focus as the school moves towards becoming an academy.

12. Councillor Davies

At the last Full Council meeting, I asked about how the effectiveness of employing a Recruitment and Retention Strategy manager for Teaching would be measured and I was informed that you were “working on the criteria” – is it possible for the Portfolio Holder for Education, Skills and Culture provide an update on any progress to date?

Answer

There are two main measures which are being used to measure success.

- Increasing the number of applications by 50% within the Bradford District
- To retain high quality teachers and leaders in the Bradford District – this level of data is not easy to access however a baseline data set is being established at the moment and will be ready by the end of October so that a Key Performance Indicator can be determined.

Measures to be presented (both quantitative and qualitative data) against the above on an annual basis over the next three years, with emerging patterns being addressed.

Supplementary Question

Thanks for the answer. On the first point it says increase the number of applications by 50%. What is the average number of applications at the moment per vacancy?

Councillor Hinchcliffe

I do not have those to hand but I can let you have those.

13. Councillor Dunbar

With one in 8 households living in fuel poverty in the Bradford District what is the anticipated impact on people in those households of the uncertain future of the Energy Company Obligation and the government's decision to end the Green Deal Scheme on fuel poor households in Bradford? What are the wider implications for the District of the Government's decision to cut subsidies for green energy?

Answer

There have been a number of recent policy changes by Government that have had a negative impact on the domestic energy efficiency market, the opportunities to obtain funding for domestic energy efficiency works and the ability of the Council and its partners to reduce fuel poverty in the District.

The scarcity of subsidy available for home energy efficiency measures has meant that potentially fuel poor households cannot afford to have retrofit work carried out on their homes (especially for the high value 'hard to treat' measures mostly required in Bradford). This has been made worse by the closure of the Green Deal and the reduced availability of easily sourced finance for any customer contributions that may be required.

This has had an immediate effect on the local domestic energy efficiency market. The regional Better Homes Yorkshire programme (with Bradford Council as a partner) has got off to a slow start, due to funding challenges for domestic energy measures and reduced level of subsidy depressing demand in the owner occupier / private landlord sectors. A number of well known green energy contractors have recently gone into administration, including Mark Group (one of the largest solar and insulation contractors in the country), Climate Energy (a large managing agent who have worked with the Council in the past) and Tadea UK Ltd (who worked successfully on the previous Bradford bwarm scheme) – the latter causing significant financial problems for a Bradford based building and insulation firm who worked for them as a sub-contractor.

Despite these recent developments, there is still a considerable need for these types of interventions. Latest figures show that there are nearly 30,000 households living in fuel poverty in the Bradford District. It is estimated that an investment of around half a billion pounds would be required to retrofit the homes of these residents and contribute to lifting them out of fuel poverty. This would have an enormous impact on both the lives of these people and the local economy, creating major savings for local health services as well as having significant social and economic benefits.

Supplementary Question

Thanks Portfolio Holder for the answer. I just want to ask do you not think in light of your answer that this makes a mockery of David Cameron's claim to be the greenest government ever and also make a further mockery of his claim at conference to make an assault on poverty when independent research shows that up to 600,000 people in the next year could fall into poverty as a result of their welfare reform bill?

Councillor Imran Khan

Yes and shame on them.

14. Councillor Stelling

To ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Transport - Winter is coming, can the Portfolio Holder detail what support local residents who signed up to the snow warden scheme can expect?

Answer

We will be providing advice and guidance on clearing snow, supplies of grit in small, manageable bags and snow shovels where required.

15. Councillor Swallow

Can the leader tell us how many working families in the District will lose money as a result of the Government's cuts to Working Tax Credits?

Answer

Tax Credits are administered by Her Majesties Revenue and Customs and the Council does not have access to information about the individual claims to make an informed assessment of the impact of the announced changes. Furthermore, the changes announced do not relate specifically to Working Tax Credit and it is the very complicated interplay between the various Benefits and taxation that will dictate the financial impact.

What the Council does know is that in December 2014, 33,000 families received Working Tax Credit, of which 27,000 also received Child Tax Credit. A further 23,000 families received Child Tax Credit only, 15,000 of whom are out of work.

From April 2016, the income threshold, above which Tax Credit is withdrawn, reduces from £6,420 to £3,850 per year, and the amount by which it reduces is increased. This means that the amount of Tax Credit a family is entitled to will be reduced. The Council does not hold the information about income levels for Tax Credit recipients, so it is difficult to predict the number affected. However, given the low level of income that is now protected, it seems likely that a high proportion of the 33,000 families will see some reduction.

Also from April 2016, Working Tax Credit is to be frozen at its current rate, for the next four years. This will affect all 33,000 of our families that are currently in receipt. The same freeze applies to Child Tax Credit, so a further 8,000 families in work and 15,000 out of work, will see no increase for four years. The freeze also applies to Housing Benefit.

From April 2017, Child Tax Credit will be limited to 2 children only, for families with children born after that date. Larger families that already receive Child Tax Credit will continue to receive it at the current level. The Council does not hold the information about how many awards are being made to families with two children

Officers continue to work on understanding the overall impact for our residents.

16. Councillor Cooke

Can the Leader of the Council advise when and by whom the decision was made to grant a license for test drilling on Harden Moor?

Answer

The decision to issue a licence to undertake up to 8 test boreholes on Harden Moor was taken in March this year by the Strategic Director, Regeneration following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Transport and Planning and Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sport & Sustainability.

Supplementary Question

Thank you for the answer. Can the relevant Portfolio Holder or the Leader explain why given the sensitivity of this site there was no consultation with ward councillors or indeed any information given to ward councillors meaning that we received the information that we were told that the drilling was going to take place by the first people who were going to conduct the drilling not by the Council. Can we get this right please?

Councillor Val Slater

I will apologise to Councillor Cooke. It was about 18 months ago when Councillor Thornton and I were consulted on this and I distinctly remember that both of us said that one of the first steps that must happen is they must consult with the ward councillors and if that did not happen then you have my apologies and I will raise it with the relevant officers.

17. Councillor Jabar

What is Bradford Council doing to tackle the problem of Dog Fouling? How many tickets/prosecutions has the Council issued in the last two years and how many in the Great Horton Ward?

Answer

The primary responsibility for preventing dog fouling lies with dog owners and it should be wholly unacceptable for people not to clean up after their dogs leaving local tax payers to foot the bill for clearing up their anti-social mess.

Reports of dog fouling are received via the Council's contact centre. Reports are either directed to Environmental Health or the Council Warden Service where further investigation is required.

Any complaints of dog fouling where the offender can be identified and the witness is prepared to provide a supporting witness statement are sent to Environmental Health who will issue a fixed penalty notice to the alleged offender.

Cases where the offender is known but the witness is not prepared to give a witness statement, or where there have been repeated incidents of fouling, are sent to the Council Warden Service. Wardens will write to or visit the alleged offender and will carry out patrols in order to try to identify the dog owners concerned. In addition Wardens will also carry out leaflet drops, door knocking and will place "no fouling" stickers at key locations in an effort to deter irresponsible dog ownership.

Where Council Wardens witness dog fouling incidents they will issue fixed penalty fines to offenders.

Targeted patrols are undertaken at known 'hot spots' including early morning, late night and weekend patrols. When necessary Wardens will undertake patrols in plain clothes in an attempt to identify offenders.

Tackling dog fouling is a priority for the Service but enforcing these offences is difficult because offenders have to be caught in the act. However, support from the public is helping to address this longstanding problem.

The Green Dog walkers scheme is a community led initiative that encourages people to take a pledge to be a responsible dog owner and clean up after their dog. Local volunteers approach other dog walkers in a non-confrontational manner to promote responsible dog ownership. The Neighbourhood Service provides support for such things as armbands, promotional materials and bags. Groups are also encouraged to organise fund raising events to ensure sustainability of the scheme. Its success depends on visibility, and friendly peer pressure to encourage change in attitude. Volunteers sign up to the pledge, wear the armband and commit to carrying extra dog poo bags with them so that they can offer these to anyone that they see who has not got one.

Bradford Council has recently joined forces with environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy and is piloting a new campaign to tackle dog fouling hotspots. Dog fouling tends to occur at night time and during the months with shorter days, as some dog owners feel that they can't be seen 'under the cover of darkness'. The 'We're watching you' series of signs are visible after dark, and use innovative cutting edge materials and are designed to deter dog fouling offences. Pilots in other parts of the country have seen up to an average reduction of 46% in the levels of dog fouling in areas where the posters were used. The pilot campaign is taking place in Shipley and following evaluation of its success a decision will be made on a district wide campaign.

In terms of enforcement action for dog fouling in the financial year 2014/15, 26 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) were issued with 2 prosecutions. From April 2015 to 30th September 2015, 4 FPNs have been issued with 2 successful prosecutions. No FPNs have been issued in the Great Horton Ward.

18. **Councillor Ahmed**

What criteria are used for accepting local community asset nominations and what criteria are used for rejecting local community asset nominations in Bradford?

Answer

The Council only accepts nominations for the listing of land and property as assets of community value under the Localism Act. The validity of a nomination is assessed against criteria set out in the Act. To be valid the following conditions must be met;

1. The Property

The property's current primary use must further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, and it is realistic to think that this use will continue. Social interests include culture, recreation and sport. A property will also qualify when its main use in the recent past meets the definition, and it is realistic to think that its use may again fall within the definition within the next five years (whether or not in the same way as before).

2. The applicant must be eligible to nominate;

- A local voluntary or community group that is incorporated – this means it has a separate legal status from its members.
- A local voluntary or community group that is not incorporated but has at least 21 members who appear on the electoral roll within CBMDC or a neighboring authority.
- A parish council.
- Neighboring parish councils – if a parish council borders an un-parish area it may nominate asset within that area.

Community interest groups with a local connection which has one of the following structures:

- A charity
- A community interest company
- A company limited by guarantee that is non profit distributing
- An industrial provident society that is none profit distributing.

For a local group to be able to nominate it must be able to demonstrate that its activities are wholly or partly concerned with the local authority area within which the asset is located or with a neighbouring authority (which shares a boundary with Bradford).

Requests for properties to be transferred by community asset transfer are assessed on a case by case basis having regard to the community benefits and viability of proposed projects. Proposals are assessed against the framework set out in the Council's 2015 Community Asset Transfer Policy which can be accessed on the council's website. Operational, properties required to support corporate priorities and properties forming part of the investment estate are excluded from CAT.

19. Councillor Greenwood

What numbers of psychiatric patients were sent to hospitals out of Bradford last year and how many since the Mental Health crisis care concordat was launched?

Answer

In 2014 Bradford District Care Foundation Trust Acute Care service was sending an average of 7 service users a week to private sector or out of area hospitals. The maximum number of people based in private or out of area hospitals reached a maximum of 20 at one point.

I am please to report that the developments introduced by all agencies working within the Crisis Care Concordat have made a major difference to this situation in 2015.

There have been no out of area acute care placements and no private sector acute care placements made by Bradford/Airedale Mental Health services for 217 days up to today. This figure is for people placed in acute care beds. There are still specialist placements made when necessary.

The reason for this improvement is as follows:

1. The First Response service has been developed by the Care Trust. All NHS, Police and Local Authority crisis response services are now working together in an integrated way.
2. The Local Authority is supporting this with housing, access to support services, integrated social care workers and Approved Mental Health Professionals.
3. We have worked with the voluntary sector to develop the MIND Sanctuary for people in Mental Health crisis.
4. These developments are supported by the Crisis Care Concordat Implementation group that reports to the health and wellbeing board. Bradford now has national recognition for the success of this 'whole system' approach and has recently been part of the Urgent and Emergency Care Vanguard regional bid. This will support further development in this area.

20. Councillor Sykes

As a result of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning's apparent change of stance regarding the need to concrete over the Green Belt, can we expect the Council to revise

downwards the number of houses planned to be constructed in the Green Belt, as contained in the Council's Local Development Plan?

Answer

First of all I must emphasise that I have not had a recent change of stance. My position has consistently been to ensure that the future needs of the district are positively met and where possible and achievable in so doing seek to promote the reuse of previously developed land and by so reducing the need for change to the green belt. However it has always been recognised that the scale of need necessitates some change to green belt to meet needs in full to 2030 in line with government policy.

As the member will appreciate, the Council's Local Plan is required by the Government to plan positively to meet the needs of the district's population. The approach to assessing both overall housing need and to how and where to accommodate that need has to be in accordance with Government policy and based on a range of evidence including the available land supply. So I can confirm three things:

One - there have been no changes in Government policy or evidence to change the assumption that the district will need at least 42,100 new homes up to 2030.

Two - there have been no significant changes in the evidence base regarding land supply as set out in the Council's latest Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). This shows that the district cannot meet its housing needs without a significant contribution from green belt land. While the Government have made some limited but welcome announcements which are aimed at encouraging development on brown field land this does not alter the fundamental problem that there simply is not enough available and deliverable brownfield land in the district to meet its huge need for new homes.

Three - there have been no significant changes to the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) relating to green belt.

In conclusion though the Council will be working hard to minimise development within the green belt and will work within its budgetary constraints to stimulate and encourage brown field land, there are no plans to change nor any justification for any change the Core Strategy's policy with regards to the amount of housing or the exceptional circumstances that warrant change to Green Belt in order to meet development needs.

21. Councillor Swallow

Could the Portfolio Holder comment on the take up of household recycling bins across the District - what percentage of households broken down by ward and constituency have taken a recycling bin?

Answer

The service does not hold data at ward or constituency level, as these are not co terminus with collection rounds.

In response to promoting recycling services, the take up of recycling bins continues to grow steadily as further requests for recycling bins are received from residents around the district. So far this year (January-September) 10,035 recycling bins have been issued, compared to 13,049 for the whole of last year.

22. Councillor Ferriby

Can the Portfolio Holder update the Council on Bradford's nomination for Social Worker of the year?

Answer

A Bradford Council social worker, Sylvana Keenan, has been shortlisted in the national Children's Social Worker of the year awards.

Sylvana is an outstanding and highly respected member of a skilled and committed multi-agency team that is working to support victims of child sexual exploitation (CSE), reduce the risks of CSE and bring offenders to justice.

Sylvana's nomination reflects not just her own professionalism and dedication but also that of the whole team and the seriousness that the Council, Police and their partners attach to tackling CSE.

On behalf of all members of the Council I want to commend Sylvana and her colleagues for the tremendous work that they are doing to address the scourge of CSE.

The awards ceremony is to be held at the end of November and we wish Sylvana the very best.

23. Councillor Leeming

To ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Transport - On the 10th September the Telegraph published comments from the Chair of the Bradford Area Planning Panel regarding retrospective planning applications. Do Councillor Lee's comments signal the Executive's commitment to alter the current planning process?

Answer

Firstly I would emphasis that the current planning application processes are set out in the relevant Legislation and Regulations and are not for the Council to change.

The question refers to those planning applications submitted for development that have either been started or completed without planning permission. In many cases, such submissions are as a result of challenge by the Council's planning enforcement section. Whilst regrettable, the existence of the development in question would not prejudice any decision the Council would subsequently make, in terms of approving or refusing planning permission. The planning process remains unaltered following Councillor Lee's comments.

24. Councillor Davies

Can the Portfolio Holder for Education, Skills and Culture explain why there is no mention of childminders in the new Education Covenant, as it isn't merely nurseries that provide valuable early years provision?

Answer

The Council are clear that it is the joint responsibility of families, parents and carers alongside the variety of settings which provide childcare and Early Education to ensure that all our children receive the very best start in life and in preparing them to be school ready and life-long learners. Parents can access the place of their choice from a range of early years settings not just nursery schools. We are at the start of a consultation process on the contents of the Bradford Education Covenant and will look at this suggestion by Cllr Davies as we consider the feedback received.

25. Councillor Dunbar

Will the Leader support the work of 'Just a Ball Game?' and their aim to promote the core values of 'safety, inclusion and respect' around LGBT people, sexual orientation and gender identity in sport and what could the local authority do to further support such work in schools and youth services? N.B. check justaballgame.co.uk for more information?

Answer

I was disappointed that other commitments prevented me from attending the launch of Just a Ball Game at Bradford Brewery but was pleased to send a message of support. The Council fully supports the principles of safety, inclusion and respect of LGBT people, sexual orientation and gender identity in all its work. The Youth Service is always keen to use the informal education sessions to further the understanding of the issues affecting LGBT young people and uses these sessions to challenge, promote and increase cohesion within communities. We welcome opportunity to support and further this work alongside others working in the district and officers will be making contact with the organisation to look at what opportunities are available for this locally.

26. Councillor Swallow

Could the Portfolio Holder comment on the standards of housing in the Bradford District and on the numbers of empty properties there are? Could she also comment on the work this Council has done to improve standards of housing and bring empty properties back into use?

Answer

The Council has recently commissioned a Stock Modelling assessment of housing conditions in the district. A comparison with the results from the previous Stock Condition Survey (2007) indicates that there has been a slight improvement in property conditions but that there are still significant issues with property condition in the private sector and, in particular, in the private rented sector.

The Council uses a range of approaches including advice and information, enforcement in the private rented sector and loans for vulnerable homeowners to improve housing standards. Through these approaches in 2014/15 housing conditions were improved in 2167 properties.

Empty Homes has been a key and successful area of work for the Council for some years. The Empty Homes and Loans Team targets long term empty properties which can have a detrimental effect on neighbours and the wider community. The team uses a combination of enforcement action, advice and financial assistance (equity loans) as well as working closely with community led partnerships and other housing providers to access funding opportunities and to produce solutions for particular properties.

Performance in bringing empty homes back into use has contributed significantly to the amount of New Homes Bonus received by the Council. At the end of 2014 Bradford Council was the 3rd highest performing authority in the country, behind Liverpool and Birmingham, for bringing long term empty properties back into use. Between 2009/10 and 2013/14 a total of 3,360 long term empty homes were brought back into use, contributing to the receipt of over £20m in New Homes Bonus (Please note: the 2014/15 figure for long term empties is yet to be validated and released following submission of the statutory return in October).

Housing standards and empty homes continue to present serious challenges in the District and this is why “Decent Homes That People Can Afford to Live In” continues to be a key cross cutting theme within our New Deal approach.

Supplementary Question

I was interested to read in the papers recently that the Shipley MP Philip Davies had a perspective on this question and I would like to know if the Portfolio Holder agrees that a law requiring homes to be fit for human habitation is an unnecessary burden and that landlords should not be burdened with this?

Councillor Val Slater

No Councillor Swallow I certainly do not agree with that. I think it indicates once more that Philip Davies MP does not live in the real world. We all know that there are homes in Bradford that have got problems. We do know that we have got landlords that do not keep their properties up to standard and in fact we did a pilot initiative checking flats above shops and we were shocked to find out the level of risk and danger there was there so we will be running a further initiative where we will be checking all shops, flats above shops and a particular concern was about fire safety. So yes Philip Davies does not live in the real world and I do not agree with him.

27. Councillor Cooke

Can the Deputy Leader of the Council confirm whether she has met with her counterpart in Leeds to discuss the impact of land allocations in the sensitive Green Belt between Leeds and Bradford and if so how did it go?

Answer

The Leeds City Region (LCR) Planning Portfolios Board was established to support the discharge of the Duty to Cooperate (introduced in the Localism Act) in the preparation of each Local Authorities Local Plan. The Leeds City Region Statement of Cooperation (approved September 2014 sets out the agreed approach for looking at strategic cross boundary implications and alignment of Local Plan Documents. As part of the agreed process emerging local plans are required to complete a duty to cooperate template which sets out the strategic and cross boundary implications of the respective Local Plan document and how they are being considered and addressed. The Local Plans are then presented together with an overview of the strategic and cross boundary issues at key stages to the LCR Planning Portfolio Holders Board. The Leeds Allocations DPD was presented to the meeting in July where cross boundary issues were discussed. While there have been ongoing meetings at an officer level on cross boundary issues, no individual meeting has taken place between the respective portfolio holder from Leeds outside the LCR meetings.

The Leeds Allocations DPD was published for formal comment on 22 September and officers are currently reviewing the proposals and will be briefing the Portfolio holder on any implications for the District and the nature of any response from the Council.

Supplementary Question

Thank you for the answer explaining the officer processes. I am taking that having read the answer that the answer to the question is no. Can the Portfolio Leader confirm that and confirm that she will take efforts to discuss what is really a sensitive and important issue for many thousands of residents of this district?

Councillor Val Slater

The answer is yes. Not no if you read the answer properly. I chair the Leeds City Region Planning Portfolio Holders Board. We discuss all plans coming forward so we have had a discussion with, well it depends what you meant by my counterpart at Leeds, did you want me to speak to my counterpart as Deputy Leader, as neither of them covers planning or did you mean my counterpart as the Planning Portfolio Holder? If you meant the latter then yes he was there and we did discuss it.

28. Councillor Wainwright

What can Council Wardens and PCSOs do to discourage unsafe and anti-social parking for example across driveways, on pavements forcing pedestrians non to the road and on grass verges and playing fields?

Answer

Council Wardens can issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to any vehicle parked across a driveway, but only at the request of the householder. They can also issue PCNs to any vehicle parked across a kerb dropped to assist pedestrians crossing a road.

Council Wardens cannot however issue to vehicles parked on a pavement, unless there are parking restrictions on the highway, which are usually enforceable to the back of the pavement.

In other circumstance, Police Officers may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if they consider a vehicle is obstructing a footway for pedestrians. If parking issues were considered to be persistent and part of wider neighbourhood nuisance police/council could consider ASB (Anti Social Behaviour) interventions including warning letters or referral to Restorative Justice (RJ) Hub.

29. Councillor Dunbar

Can the Portfolio Holder for Education, Skills and Culture please cite good examples of political education that is developing awareness of and participation in politics and democracy in our schools across the district and what more we could do to support schools who are less developed in this area?

Answer

Partnership reviews have not focused specifically on political education so we are not in a position to identify specific examples of good practice. However, all schools include aspects of political education within the PSHCE curriculum. Many schools use the election of student councils to teach about democracy and a number held mock elections this spring to raise awareness of the processes associated with the full election process.

As part of the development of the Language for Learning strategy, a group of primary schools created the 'Woolsack Debating Society'. Last year, 24 primary schools in 8 triads were involved in debating first Woolsack Debating Society annual competition which took place on Tuesday 16 June 2015. Two teams have a debate and the third team acts as the judges. The topic for the final of the debate was "Should museums and art galleries be free?". The children are exceptionally enthusiastic about their debating society and this was a wonderful opportunity for them all to come together.

It should also be noted that Beckfoot School won the Debating Matters National Final 2015 in June this year.

30. Councillor Sykes

Does the Council consider that the holding of a public consultation exercise regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy during August was conducive to maximising public participation?

Answer

It is critical to make progress towards adoption of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to ensure that development contributes appropriately to infrastructure costs within the District, especially given the restrictions on the use of Section 106 Agreements to secure financial contributions to local Infrastructure from April this year. To this end following approval of the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule at Executive on 21st July, consultation commenced on 31st July and ran until 11th September for the required 6 week period.

Given the specialist nature of the document the consultation, while open to the public, was targeted at those with the knowledge and competencies to comment on the technical issues contained in the document. The Consultation invited comments on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule, Draft Regulation 123 list, Draft Instalments Policy and the supporting Economic Viability Assessment. Apart from the Regulation 123 list which has high level list of types of infrastructure which could be funded by CIL, the consultation did not go into details of what and how infrastructure would be provided at the local level.

The Council is currently considering the comments received to the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule and is looking to take a Draft version to Executive in November followed by Full Council in December with a view to approving it for submission to government for examination.

Supplementary Question

Thanks Val for the answer. How many responses did we get to the CIL consultation?

Councillor Val Slater

I think it was around 46 but do not hold me to that. I will send you the exact figure.

31. Councillor Swallow

Can the Council quantify the cost of cleaning up chewing gum and what can be done to deal with the issue?

Answer

Removing chewing gum is an extremely time consuming and expensive operation. Since 2014 it is estimated between £30,000-35,000 has been spent on removing chewing gum, focused on the heritage streets and the City centre. In terms of enforcement, in the near future, the Council will be trialling a dedicated litter enforcement team. The team will focus predominantly in the town centres and will take a zero tolerance approach to those people who drop litter (which includes chewing gum) with on the spot fines for offenders.

32. Councillor Reid

To ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Transport - How many people work in the Network Resilience Team which deals with road closures?

Answer

The Network Resilience Team has 16 staff in total. Six staff within the team have the necessary delegated authority to prepare road closure orders.

Supplementary Question

I am grateful to the Portfolio Holder for setting my fears at rest. We clearly have the staff in place to do the job. I did wonder in the summer when we had the bizarre situation at Ravenscliffe of first pulling their buses off the estate before the closure order came into force but I am prepared to believe that was simply an occasional blip. We have got people to do the job and should such a thing happen again I trust the Portfolio Holder would support me in saying it should not happen.

Councillor Val Slater

Yes.

33. Councillor Ahmed

Can the leader please tell us how many children that the Council is responsible for went missing from care last year and the year before?

Answer

The total number of missing referrals is drawn from contacts made to the police.

Quarter	Missing Referrals	Children Involved	No of children in care (% of total referrals)	Children missing multiple times
Apr- Jun	77	60	11 (28.6%)	8
Jul - Sep	128	107	23 (33%)	13
Oct - Dec	75	52	13 (41.3%)	8
Jan-Mar	155	115	23 (36.1%)	19
Total	435			

As per the table the number of children per quarter who ran away from a care setting is given in the 4th column as is the figure for the percentage of missing referrals for which that group was responsible. So for the first quarter Apr-Jun we had 77 missing referrals 28.6% of which were attributable to 11 children in care. Because the missing issue is analysed in terms of the total number of referrals it is necessary to manually check each quarter to ensure that children who run away on multiple occasions are not counted twice. The number of children looked after by the local authority that went missing in the financial year 2013-14 was 51 this includes 3 older children who went missing from supported placements.

Missing Statistics 2014-15

Quarter	Missing Referrals	Children Involved	No of Children in care(% of total referrals)	Children missing multiple times
Apr-Jun	138	103	23 (22.3%)	21
Jul -Sep	168	108	28 (25.9%)	15
Oct - Dec	204	131	29 (14.2%)	24
Jan - Mar	199	185	53 (26.6%)	26
Total	709			

For 2014 -15 the overall number of referrals had increased partly due to increased emphasis on missing and changes to the protocol for reporting such incidents but also because we have an increasing group of children who run away on multiple occasions and influence others to do so. In percentage terms the amount of children in care involved in missing incidents has gone down because the overall number of reported incidents has gone up significantly from 435 to 709.

The number of children looked after by the local authority that went missing in financial year 2014 – 15 was 86 including 5 older young who went missing from supported placements.

34. **Councillor Warnes**

Since the light timings at the pedestrian crossing on Saltaire Road (near the junction with Victoria Road) were altered to allow much swifter pedestrian access at the request of the ward councillors, how many other crossings have been similarly adjusted across our District?

Answer

The pedestrian crossing on Saltaire Road at Victoria Road was altered May 2015 as a result of Councillor Warnes request back in June 2013.

All mid-block PUFFIN crossings that are newly built or refurbished in the future will be configured using the Victoria Road generic specification. Since the introduction of the new methodology at Victoria Road we have modified/installed a further 8 crossings utilising the same specification.

The generic specification for pedestrian crossings will significantly reduce pedestrian waiting times when the signals have already been green to traffic for 20 seconds or more.

35. **Councillor Davies**

Can the Portfolio Holder for Education, Skills and Culture confirm the benefit of Bradford being a literacy hub when Key Stage 2 reading standards have fallen this year?

Answer

The work of the National Literacy Hub is welcomed in the district and the work is valuable. An outline of the work achieved and the workplan ahead is included below. However the National Literacy Hub resource provided by the National Literacy Trust is just one full time worker with a minimal budget so the local authority has never envisaged relying uniquely on the National Literacy Trust work to raise standards. Instead the work adds to an increasing level of support provided across all schools.

e.g. The Shine Partnership (a group of schools in Manningham) are leading on the Talk for Writing Project. The partnership held a conference with national speakers addressing the very pertinent issues of how to teach grammar creatively through Talk for Writing, how to support parents in developing language at home plus other talk-focused workshops.

As for the National Literacy Hub, in its first year, the literacy hub has targeted younger children and their families as outlined below.

As part of the improving school readiness, the Literacy Hub Manager has been working on early literacy through the implementation of the 'Early Words Together' programme working in partnership with 9 Children's Centres and 1 Family Centre within the district. The details and impact of this is outlined below:

The commitment was to develop 50 parent champions across Bradford who have the tools to engage in their children's literacy development. To date 35 parent champions have been trained and the programme has been delivered to at least 100 families across the district.

- Early Words Together surveys highlighted parents describing an increased confidence in sharing books with their children and improved concentration and attention to tasks by their children.
- Parents in the focus groups identified that their children had become more independent and that they as parents had learnt to allow their children to do things themselves.
- Parents who had been involved in the 6 week EWT programme were keen to either continue these sessions or to become involved in other programmes e.g. ESOL classes.

Premier League Reading Stars

The hub ran the National Literacy Trust's innovative programme Premier League Reading Stars which harnesses children's passion for football to boost results in reading and writing.

- Children who took part in Premier League Reading Stars activities were significantly more likely to enjoy reading at the end of the project. A small number of children who took part in this programme and their enjoyment of reading increased by 75%. Imran please provide actual number of children involved.
- The increase in reading enjoyment was particularly notable for boys and those on Free School Meals. 65% of children receiving FSMs enjoyed reading after the programme; up from 37%. There was a 74% increase in the number of boys who enjoy reading.

Creative Writing

This project focused on improving boys' writing and involved the use of Performance Poets working with groups of identified Years 6, 7 and 8 pupils in 3 Secondary schools, 2 Primary schools and 2 Supplementary schools.

The main impact of this programme was the shifting of the young people's (mainly boys) attitude towards writing. The students' work demonstrated a distinct improvement in their organisation and content of their writing. IH to provide number of students involved.

Dads' engagement

This project involved a particular focus on engaging Dads/Male carers in working with and alongside their children in the development of the home learning environment.

Around 45 dads/male carers participated in this project and the impact is in the process of being measured.

This project is to be further developed in 2015-16 to include staff's training on 'Best practice engaging male carers' with a specific focus on creating opportunities for male carers to support their children's literacy skills (reading, listening and talking skills).

New programme 2015-16

The Literacy hub has partnered with the National Literacy Trust's Picture the poet programme and internationally acclaimed performance poet and schools practitioner Francesca Beard to produce a programme that will support teachers to encourage their students develop a curiosity about poems and how they work, a willingness to play with language and a desire to discover and define their individual poetry style.

Supplementary Question

Thank you for the comprehensive reply. Just a couple of things that seem to be missing. It says "Imran please provide actual number of children involved under the Premier League Reading Stars" and "IH to provide the number of students involved under the Creative Writing." I do not know if you have got that information.

Councillor Hinchcliffe

Imran Hafeez is the National Literacy Hub Manager so he will provide those statistics. I am happy to pass those over. He is just one person. He does a huge amount as you say but he cannot solve all the problems we have.

36. Councillor Whiteley

Could the Portfolio Holder for Health and Social Care please provide an update of the working of the BEST team, who assess the needs of patients prior to them leaving hospital in preparation for admission in to residential care homes? How many patients required their service on leaving Bradford hospitals and how many assessments were carried out in September by this team?

Answer

The Bradford Enablement Support Team (BEST) provides enablement across the District setting goals with new service users to jointly work toward independence. The BEST service is free for up to 6 weeks and ongoing support after BEST is placed through the Support Options Service commissioning with approved Independent Home Care Providers. 25% of BEST service users are fully independent at the end of enablement with a further 28% having a reduced care package. All new work is referred through the BEST service where home support is needed.

The Bradford Enablement Support Team does not assess for residential care the Social work team at BRI complete the assessments for Long Term Care. In September there were 11 admissions from the acute hospitals and four from the Community Hospitals, 15 in total.

There are currently two Home Care Seniors based in the hospitals, one in AGH working with the Social work Assessment Team/Airedale, Wharfedale & Craven Intermediate Care Hub and a second Home Care Senior is based at St Luke's working with the Virtual Ward in the Intermediate Care Hub. The Intermediate Care Hub is expanding to take all step up care from GPs with effect from 2nd November with a Health and Social Care MDT Triage and assessment. The new BEST Rapid Response team that will be based in the HUB will provide 24 hour rapid response social care prior to the BEST service picking up the work.

The hospital based Home Care Seniors support the discharge process setting enablement goals with patients (and describing the enablement process) from Airedale hospital and in Bradford ensuring a smooth transfer of care from the Virtual Ward into BEST when patients are clinically stable. The expansion of the Intermediate Care Hub in November 2015 will see the introduction of a small BEST Rapid Response Team based in the Hub that will provide a wrap around social care response to prevent hospital admissions.

BEST Plus provides the same service as BEST, but with additional support from therapists. Support is provided to help people regain strength, stamina and improve confidence as well as re-learn the skills necessary for daily living, and also with carrying out therapy plans, for example by supporting people to carry out exercise plans. This service is an integrated service with Occupational and Physiotherapists from Bradford Teaching Hospital.

The BEST/BEST plus team received 219 referrals in the month of September 2015, having analysed the data the source is as follows:-

Bradford Hospitals: 29%
Bradford Community Hospitals: 16%
AWC HUB Airedale General Hospital: 18%
Community: 37%

Supplementary Question

Thank you very much for the comprehensive answer and explaining the actors in the process. I would like to ask how is the assessment of people leaving hospital monitored given my understanding that the team responsible for these assessments was unable to complete all of them and especially those of people returning to care homes.

Councillor Berry

I will certainly get that looked into. I have spent some time with this particular team and I am very impressed with the work that they do but I am also aware that there have been some very significant pressures in the hospital system recently. If there are any concerns I will get that looked into very urgently and get back to you.

37. Councillor Sykes

Can the Portfolio Holder for Education, Skills and Culture advise colleagues of how many schools hold booster sessions before and/or after school for pupils who are struggling in key subjects such as English and Maths?

Answer

Unfortunately the local authority doesn't collect this kind of specific information. In our most successful schools the quality of class teaching is such that every pupil makes good progress and achieves their potential. This is the aspiration for all of our schools. However I would be surprised if we could find any Bradford school that doesn't use 'catch-up', 'intervention' or 'booster' classes to accelerate the progress of children and young people who could benefit from this additional targeted teaching.

Different schools run these sessions at different times to meet the needs of the pupils and their communities. So some are run before the formal school day begins, some after the end of the formal school day, some at lunchtime and others during the school day when additional teachers and teaching assistants are brought in to split a class into smaller groups during the lesson in that subject. These 'booster' lessons are most effective when children's gaps in learning have been analysed in detail and the teaching is planned to target those specific deficits in learning.

38. Councillor Fear

To ask the Leader of the Council - How much does the West Yorkshire Combined Authority have in its reserves?

Answer

The projected level of general (transport) reserves at the end of 2015/16 is £7m, arising from the cumulative position on the transport funding and expenditure. The figures were published in the Medium Term Financial Strategy as part of the report to the meeting of the Combined Authority on September 17th 2015

Supplementary Question

Given the amount of money £7m to the Combined Authorities Reserve and the financial pressures on this Council do we have a plan to get any of this money back?

Councillor Green

Just because money is in reserves does not mean it is uncommitted and as our Director of Finance will tell you every organisation keeps some reserves back in case of closure and payment and therefore an element of that is for that and others is for capital programme spends and other spends that have not been started or completed yet. I was out of the room when the West Yorkshire leaders were delegating responsibility for the Budget Sub-Committee of the Combined Authority and therefore I am chairing it. We are currently going through the budget and we are challenging all levels of the reserves line by line. You have to remember it is not all Bradford's money, it is the five local authorities and when we have looked at it and set a budget this year in which members of this authority will have a say we will be in a better position to tell you exactly where the financial situation of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority is.

39. Councillor Townend

Would the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sport and Sustainability agree, that instead of just trying to squeeze every last drop of recycling from Baildon and other wards where recycling rates are high, it would be worth increasing the focus on areas with poor recycling rates as this is where the more significant improvements can be achieved and would he confirm who by and why it was decided to roll out the new bins system in the order of the areas that it is to be?

Answer

We are implementing the Domestic Waste and Recycling Policy (the Bin Policy), which aims to increase recycling rates across the District, alongside a District-wide round restructuring exercise to deal with the increased number of domestic properties that must be serviced across the District.

One of the key aims of the Bin Policy is to "squeeze every last drop of recycling" out of the residual waste bin presented by **every** household in the District and into a recycling waste bin. With that in mind, our workforce will be targeting non-recycling households **wherever** they are in the District and encouraging them to correctly sort their recyclable waste into the grey recycling waste bin.

We have two depots in the district, one in Bradford and one in Keighley, and the decision was taken to start in the smaller area to try to minimise any potential disruption. The work will be completed in two phases, with the Keighley Depot based collection rounds, which includes Baildon, commencing in November and Bradford Depot based rounds following in February 2016.

We recognise that some Wards in the District have a poor recycling rate, particularly in areas of high density housing where there isn't as much room for recycling bins. Consequently, efforts will inevitably focus on areas of poor performance and, in addition, we are piloting a DCLG funded project to explore alternative means of collecting recyclable household waste through the creation of communal collection facilities.