



Coventry City Council

Council Meeting

24 June 2010

Booklet 3

Answers to Written Questions

1.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Nellist</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Mutton</p>
<p>TEXT OF QUESTION: "What representations has he made to Government about the announced closure of the Government agencies Becta and QCDA;</p> <p>ANSWER: "None"</p> <p>And, if he will agree to the City Council hosting an event to support the nearly 1000 staff and their families affected by the closure in their, and their union's, campaign to save their jobs?"</p> <p>ANSWER: 'If I am approached, I will give consideration to any request'.</p>	

2.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Nellist</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Duggins</p>
<p>TEXT OF QUESTION: "What response has he made to Government about the £3.5 million cut in this year's budget, said in the Coventry Telegraph of June 11th to be directly in the areas of education, Supporting People grants for the vulnerable, and the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative?"</p> <p>ANSWER:</p> <p>We have focused effort in trying to understand the totality of the cuts - detail is still emerging. We want to be sure we understand the full impact in Coventry.</p> <p>It is important also to understand the national picture to allow any response to government to be informed and strategic. The possibility of joint representation with other authorities merits serious consideration. Any response can also be informed by the Emergency Budget on June 22nd, which will be public by the time of the Council meeting.</p>	

3.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Andrews</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Harvard</p>
<p>TEXT OF QUESTION:</p> <p>"Can the Lead Member on the Project Transform Member Advisory Panel provide an update on the planning application in relation to the waste facility at Whitley."</p> <p>ANSWER:</p> <p>The joint project team (Solihull, Warwickshire and Coventry) for Project Transform continue to work on the outline planning application for the new waste facility. The application is programmed for submission in autumn of this year. However, as with the remainder of the project, this continues to be under review (see answer below).</p>	

4.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Nellist</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Harvard</p>
<p>TEXT OF QUESTION:</p> <p>"Will he make a statement about the new administration's attitude to the proposed replacement PFI incinerator at Whitley?"</p> <p>ANSWER:</p> <p>The decisions about when and how to replace the waste from energy plant at Whitley are very important ones for the Council and have very significant implications for the environment of the City and the Council's finances. The new administration is currently considering all of its options for long term waste disposal to decide whether or not to pursue the PFI option. Our partners in Warwickshire and Solihull are also taking stock. We hope to come to a decision in the summer.</p>	

5.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Nellist</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Harvard</p>
<p>TEXT OF QUESTION:</p> <p>"Following the securing of section 106 funds for a residents' parking scheme in Hillfields won by the effort of local residents, would the Cabinet Member meet with St Michaels Ward Councillors and local residents who have helped to win the promise of the scheme in the area to look at the boundaries and issues of a scheme in order to shape the Council' s consultation on it?"</p>	

ANSWER:

Officers are currently working to develop a preliminary design for a residents parking scheme for the Hillfields area. The preliminary work involves undertaking traffic surveys to understand the extent of the parking problem and will look to examine possible boundaries for the scheme and the type of restrictions to be introduced.

A meeting with Ward Councillors and residents representatives at this stage is welcomed in order to help progress the preliminary design into a more detailed proposal, which will then form the basis of a wider consultation exercise with residents, businesses and other interested parties within the Hillfields area.

6. **QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Nellist**

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Harvard

TEXT OF QUESTION:

"What action does he intend to take to resolve the dispute in grounds maintenance and street cleansing?"

ANSWER:

A fundamental service review of street cleansing and ground maintenance has been completed and a pilot of part of the new working arrangements has been in place from Fulwood depot since mid May.

Following a comprehensive consultation exercise with staff, it was intended to implement the new working arrangements fully from Monday 14th June. However, at the trade unions request, the Chief Executive agreed to delay the implementation by a week as there were still some issues the unions felt were outstanding. The new ways of working went live for all cleansing and grounds maintenance staff on Monday 21st June.

On Friday 11th June, the unions sent a letter advising of their intention to ballot for strike action in the street cleansing area.

Senior managers have held a number of meetings with union officials over the last couple of weeks to determine what the outstanding issues are and put in place management actions to resolve them. The Chief Executive also spent the morning of Tuesday 15th June attending a mass meeting of all affected staff, individual staff groups, shop stewards and local convenors.

An Action Plan has been put together, capturing the issues raised by staff and their unions, with the management actions required to attempt to resolve them. This has been shared with the full time union officials and local shop stewards.

Further 121's and Occupational Health referrals took place last week and will continue this week. No member of staff will be asked to undertake new duties

until they have been seen by Occupational Health, if they have declared a medical issue to managers.

The unions have not withdrawn their notice of intention to ballot for strike actions. However, it is hoped that managers are able to put in place actions that will resolve staff issues to a large extent. The strength of feeling however, of some cleansing staff is running high, as people have been moved to new duties, new locations and shift patterns.

The new ways of working were implemented on Monday 21st June. All staff reported for their new shifts and were deployed accordingly. A number of letters were received by managers from staff registering their unhappiness with the new working arrangements.

Managers will continue to monitor the situation and talk to both staff and union representatives on a regular basis to capture and deal with issues as they arise through the implementation process.

7. **QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Nellist**

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Kelly

TEXT OF QUESTION:

"Following the magnificent campaign by parents of children at John Gulson School in December and January, what assurances is she able to offer in terms of the building of a new school?"

ANSWER:

City Council officers are working with the school to help them develop a long term strategy to extend and refurbish the existing building at John Gulson School. Following the results of the full condition surveys, structurally the buildings are shown to be in good condition and worthy of further investment for the medium to long term. Carrying out the repairs and maintenance identified will enable the school to continue to be used for years to come.

The Authority has a number of other schools that are not in such a fortunate position and require replacement as soon as funds permit. This includes the "Hills" buildings of Alderman's Green, Wyken Croft and Richard Lee schools.

Central government funding programmes present the authority with uncertainty at the current time and this is particularly true in respect of future capital allocations.

The Authority is planning to invest substantial secured capital into John Gulson School, to provide additional accommodation for increasing pupil numbers in this part of the city for September 2011. Working with architects, proposals are developing to expand the school by an additional 4 classrooms, new toilets and significant refurbishment. The extent of the refurbishment is also dependent on the investment made from school funds. The school management team and governors are committed to this approach and see it as best meeting the needs of the pupils, staff and community given the financial limitations.

Public consultations will shortly be starting, prior to a planning application being submitted over the summer break. Subject to planning consent, works are anticipated to commence before Christmas 2010 for completion in time for September 2011.

8. **QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Mrs Johnson**

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Khan

TEXT OF QUESTION:

"Please give details of the funding (how much and source of funding) for the TV screen to be installed in the wall of the Motor Museum, overlooking Millennium Place."

ANSWER:

The screen itself and associated steel work is funded through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (the Olympic budget). In addition this pays for the installation, connection testing and training.

The BBC employs content managers up to 2012, who put the actual pictures and content onto the screen. The total cost of the above items is not set as this is bespoke and may vary from screen to screen.

Coventry City Council pays for ground preparation, planning permission, any changes to existing power supply, control room ICT cabling ready for connection, and a local content manager to supply information about local events to the BBC. Where possible this is being linked to existing work, such as the ICT WAN project which is ensuring that the area has sufficient cabling. We do not yet have a final price for this work as variables are still being worked through. Estimates are in place for most of this, and will be finalised over the coming months as the installation information is finalised with LOCOG (Local Organisation Committee of Olympic Games), size of the screen is to be confirmed. To date we have committed £8,463.40 on: Ground Survey, Architects for planning submission, planning fees, noise report for planning and structural engineer design for planning.