



Coventry City Council

Council Meeting

6 July 2010

Booklet 2

Answers to Written Questions

1.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Nellist</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Mutton</p>
<p>TEXT OF QUESTION:</p> <p>Will he list those areas which consultants are, or have been, studying in order to propose efficiency savings; will he list the consultants engaged for each area in question; and set out how much the Council has paid, or is scheduled to pay, for their advice?</p> <p>Answer – please see attached</p>	

2.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Nellist</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Harvard</p>
<p>TEXT OF QUESTION:</p> <p>How much does the Council charge housing developers to attach advertisements or direction signs to street furniture; what is the average length of time an advertisement is attached, and what income is derived; and what has been the total income raised in each the last three years?</p> <p>Answer:</p> <p>The Council currently does not charge a fee to housing developers to attach direction signs to street furniture therefore no income has been derived from such signs in each of the last three years.</p> <p>It is possible that a charge will be introduced in the future and this is subject to a policy review, which is currently taking place. The review will seek to recommend the introduction of a new policy for the erection of temporary housing development signs on the public highway, which will establish matters such as the fee level and the permitted time period after which such signs have to be removed.</p>	

3.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Andrews</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Harvard</p>
<p>TEXT OF QUESTION:</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member list the work planned under the Pedestrian Facilities Budget for 2010/11 and what work would be discontinued/not commenced if the budget was cut by £100k?</p>	

Answer:

Even if the budget for pedestrian facilities is reduced by £100,000, this still represents a massive increase on the pedestrian budget for 2009/10. If the reduction goes ahead, it is proposed to slip part of the city centre works, into 2011/12. There would be no impact on the rest of the city. It should be noted that £400,000 will still be spent on improving pedestrian facilities in the city centre this year. This does not include the Gosford Street scheme which will create a major improvement to pedestrian routes around the University.

4.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Andrews

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Harvard

TEXT OF QUESTION:

Which Local Safety Schemes and Safer Routes to School schemes are scheduled for implementation under the approved budget for 2010/11, and which of those schemes would not go forward if the budgets for Local Safety Schemes and Safer Routes to School schemes were each cut by £100k?

Answer:

The full list of Local Safety and Safe Routes to Schools Schemes is being presented to Cabinet on 20 July 2010 for approval. Subject to approval by Cabinet, it is no longer proposed to cut the safe routes to school or local safety scheme budgets.

5.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Andrews

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Harvard

TEXT OF QUESTION:

Would the Cabinet Member agree that the UK, and Coventry in particular, needs to pursue a major expansion in waste from energy via anaerobic digestion?

Answer:

Anaerobic Digestion (AD) involves the breakdown of organic waste by bacteria in an oxygen-free environment. It is particularly suited to wet, organic material and has historically been used to treat sewage sludge. It is now however being applied to the treatment of other biodegradable materials like food waste. AD is only suitable for treating organic waste and requires that this fraction is sorted from the municipal waste stream. Non organic materials can damage the equipment, make the process less efficient and result in an end product that is contaminated with particles of glass, metals, etc. that make it unfit for purpose.

The Coventry Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2008-2020 commits the Council to review the collection of food waste at the strategy's first review in

2013. This waste stream would provide an ideal feedstock for an AD plant that has the potential to supply energy in the form of electricity or heat.

Coventry Council therefore supports the expansion of the Anaerobic Digestion infrastructure and welcomes the recent planning approvals for this type of waste facility in Warwickshire. In the delivery of its Waste Strategy it is important that the Council continues to consider all options for treatment of waste at the different stages of the waste hierarchy and this will include the use of AD.

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

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Harvard

TEXT OF QUESTION:

What savings would be made, including estimates of potential additional income to be received from CSWDC LTD, by the City Council between 2010/11 and 2019/20 if the implementation of a new residual waste solution under Project Transform was delayed until 2020 to allow for the impact of increased recycling, lower waste streams and alternative technologies to be considered?

Answer:

In terms of its waste disposal arrangements, the Council is looking to ensure secure and robust arrangements which represent value for money in the long term. The decisions about when and how to replace the waste from energy plant at Whitley is a very important one for the Council and has very significant implications for the environment of the City and the Council's finances.

Project Transform aims to deliver a new residual waste treatment facility through PFI in 2015. The advantages of this approach are the significant Government subsidy through PFI credits and transfer of some risk to the private sector.

A delay to the project would mean a deferral of the costs required to procure a replacement. Coventry's share of the procurement costs that remain unspent as at today are approximately £1m in total. These costs have been budgeted for up to 2012/13. A delay would also mean a deferral of the additional costs associated with funding the new facility itself which are £4.3m per annum from 2015/16. The Council has set aside a fund to pay for these additional costs – starting with £0.5m in 2010/11, rising to £1.5m in 2011/12 and £2.5m in 2012/13.

The waste disposal company is starting to generate returns and delaying the project would provide an additional period between 2015 and 2020, when the company could operate and generate cash – the company is currently completing further work on its business plan to inform our understanding of this figure.

Delaying the project is very likely to mean the loss of PFI credits which are currently part funding the costs of a new facility, so we need to think carefully about the wider implications of a delay and to be certain that the existing plant could continue to operate effectively in the meantime. There may also be investment required to extend the life of the plant should the decision to replace be deferred.

It is difficult to be precise about the amounts that would be saved, or any additional costs, at this point in time. Officers are still working on this complex area with a view to bringing this information back to Members for a decision.

We continue to consider our options over this summer alongside our partners in Solihull and Warwickshire

7.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Nellist

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Harvard

TEXT OF QUESTION:

Will he make a further statement about the dispute in street cleansing and grounds maintenance?

Answer:

The implementation of the new ways of working for street cleansing and grounds maintenance operatives went live on Monday 21st June.

Senior managers continue to hold weekly meetings with union officials and operational managers are meeting shop stewards on a regular basis. The Action Plan has been revised in the light of issues thrown up by the implementation and continues to be used as a working document to capture issues and determine the management actions required to resolve them.

All outstanding 121's and Occupational Health referrals have now been completed. Following these and some moves between shifts and depots to accommodate staff requests where possible, 84% of staff have been accommodated with their preferred shift and depot location, 14% received one or the other and 2% of staff were not able to be accommodated for either their

preferred shift or depot location.

The unions have not withdrawn their notice of intention to ballot for strike action. However, staff have been working to the new arrangements since the 21st June.

8.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Nellist

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Kelly

TEXT OF QUESTION:

Which schools are she or her officers aware of that are considering applications to become Academies?

Answer:

The Secretary of State for Education wrote to all schools inviting them to become an Academy. For schools judged to be "outstanding" in their last OFSTED inspection, this could be achieved by a fast track route. Schools were invited to find out more about the process by registering an interest and receiving more detailed information.

I know that eight Coventry schools have sent for the information of which two are judged by OFSTED to be "outstanding". To date one governing body, that of the Blue Coat School, have taken the decision in principle to explore Academy status.

List of schools registering an interest:

Blue Coat (Outstanding)
Caludon Castle (Outstanding)

Finham Park
Cardinal Newman
Whitley Abbey
Woodlands
Finham Primary
Longford Park Primary

Background Information

List of current schools judged by OFSTED to be outstanding:

Hillfields Nursery Centre
Ernesford Grange Primary
St Elizabeths Primary
Alice Stevens Special School
Blue Coat C of E Secondary
Caludon Castle Secondary

Question to Councillor Duggins from Councillor Nellist

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The following information is extracted from the *Transformation programme – Partnership Progress Report 2010* which is scheduled to go to Cabinet on 20 July 2010.

1. Progress in undertaking VfM reviews

A number of reviews were commenced under the Value for Money Partnership Programme and have been completed in the last 12 months, prior to the development of the abc fundamental service review methodology. These are summarised in the table below:

<u>Projects Completed</u>	<u>Total PwC Fees Paid</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Savings taken from budgets</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Operational/Support Services – a pilot review of the front office/back office arrangements in City Services, and a Council wide analysis of front office/back office activities	248	326	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End to end review savings in 2009-10 budget
Fees and Charges	20	1,028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional income included in 2009-10 budget
Human Resources	0	350	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings of £200,000 were delivered from phase 1 of implementation and a further £150,000 is forecast from 2010
Services for Young People	67	360	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings deducted from 2009-10 budget
Children's Transport	88	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost reductions of £250,000 anticipated from 2010-11; to reduce budget pressure
Debt Management and Income Collection	105	200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £160,000 deducted from 2009-10 budget • Savings of £40,000 to be delivered in 2010-11.
Value Added Tax	267	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1.854m repaid to date, on which PwC fees of £0.267m have been paid
Procurement	56	827	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £327,000 deducted from 2009-10 budget from quick wins • Savings of £0.5m deducted from 2010-11 budget
TOTAL	851	3,091	Ongoing savings; excludes one off VAT reclaims

2. abc Transformation Programme

In addition to the reviews shown above there are 11 Transformation Programme reviews running at the current time, together with the Migration project (Customer First) and the I-Cov project to deliver an in-house IT service which will also achieve ongoing savings of circa £12m over the next three years and £5m per annum thereafter.

The table below sets out the current fee commitments and target savings from the current fundamental service reviews in progress.

<u>Projects in Progress</u>	<u>Fees Committed</u>	<u>Full Year Savings Target</u>	<u>Comments</u>
	£000	£000	
Customer First	461	N/A	This project is developing the front office so that back office savings can be delivered in Directorates
Admin and Business Support	618	2,300	Business case forecasts savings by 2011-12
Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing	309	470	On target to achieve full year savings
Operational Property	326	200	Interim saving deducted from 2010-11 budget; further savings dependent on future project design
Facilities Management	179	600	Business case forecasts savings by 2011-12
Catering	201	1,072	Target saving not yet fully determined – savings from primary and special school meals forecast to deliver by 2013-14
Corporate Transport	207	1,133	Target saving forecast to deliver by 2013-14
Printing and Paper	14	660	Business case identifies savings by 2012-13
ICT review	412	5,000	Forecast annual savings beyond 2013-14
Personalisation	144	2,700	Initial savings deducted from 2010-11 budget – further savings anticipated by 2012-13 (iMPower providing consultancy support to this review)
Financial Management	169	350	Forecast savings to be delivered by 2012-13
Building Control	13	0	New service design to reduce costs and attract more custom, to keep spend within budget
Neighbourhood Management	N/A	500	Full year savings included in

<u>Projects in Progress</u>	<u>Fees Committed</u>	<u>Full Year Savings Target</u>	<u>Comments</u>
			2011-12 budget
Highways	N/A		Savings yet to be determined
Commercial Waste	N/A	250	Forecast savings by 2011-12
Policy and Performance	N/A		Savings yet to be determined
TOTAL	3,053	15,235	

Note - Cabinet approved a report at its June 2010 meeting on the Fundamental Service Review of ICT – the figures approved are shown in the table below

<u>Project in Progress</u>	<u>Fees Committed</u>	<u>Full Year Savings Target</u>	<u>Comments</u>
ICT implementation	2,250	12,770	Forecast savings 2010/11 – 2012/13 with annual savings of £5m thereafter

In addition, depending upon decisions taken, there will be further fees, on the above projects and future projects, and progress reports will be presented to Members on a regular basis.