
Council Meeting

6 September, 2016

Booklet 1

Written Answers

1.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Williams

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Innes , Cabinet Member for City Services

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“Would the Cabinet Member provide the following information – 1) How much has the Council spent so far in the present financial year on clearing Fly-tipping across the City? 2) How much has been raised so far this financial year from residents booking the ‘disposal of large items service’?”

ANSWER:

1) The estimated cost at the end of August for the clearing of fly tipped material is £33,600. The number of incidents for period 1 of this year is up at 761 compared to 516 for the same period last year. Despite the increase it is still lower than the same period 2014 /15.

2) The income from the collection of bulky items from April to the end of July is £29,683.14. Since the introduction of the Emmaus contract (August 2015) for the collection of bulky items the uptake of the service has increased. The reason for this is a combination of a simpler charging mechanism and the expansion of the service to a six day a week collection with bookable morning or afternoon slots. For comparison we have done 1001 collections this year so far compared to 796 collections for the same period last year. There are costs associated with the service (which is a statutory requirement) namely around disposal of the waste collected and the collection costs themselves. The estimated net cost (costs minus income) of the service is around £20,000 per year. This has not increased despite the uptake in the use of the service due to Emmaus separating suitable items for reuse and therefore reducing the amount of waste being sent for disposal.

2.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Williams

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Maton, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“Would the Cabinet Member confirm how many times between January 1st 2016 and August 26th 2016 the libraries in Earlsdon, Coundon, Cheylesmore,

Finham, Caludon Castle, Arena Park and the Mobile library, have been used for: 1) Borrowing books; 2) Using a computer.”

ANSWER:

This information includes all items borrowed i.e including both books and audio visual (CD’s, DVD’s and Talking Books).

Computer Sessions includes both Library computers and access via Wi-Fi.

The Mobile Library does not provide public computer access hence its “0” score.

The Mobile Library data includes some data following its closure and ceasing to travel around the City and this reflects borrowers renewing items borrowed previously from the mobile either online, by phone or by visiting a static library.

Library	Items borrowed	Computer sessions
Alder Moor	7359	2883
Allesley Park	25167	1442
Arena	46932	14622
Bell Green	28741	12002
Canley	8246	1245
Central	153190	109889
Cheylesmore	16348	1531
Coundon	28449	3198
Caludon Castle	12038	2912
Earlsdon	59493	11041
Finham	27676	1447
Foleshill	44138	20903
Hillfields	4720	1534
Jubilee Crescent	24958	6879
Mobile	6608	0
Stoke	34462	13918
Tile Hill	57547	9553
Willenhall	31813	11821

3.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Mayer</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor J Mutton, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources</p>
	<p>TEXT OF QUESTION:</p> <p>“Could the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources (John Mutton) explain to me the rules around business rates, and any possible sanctions against an elected member, if they are involved in a business that ends up in arrears?”</p>

ANSWER:

The collection of business rates is governed by the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Local lists) Regulations 1989 as amended.

As billing authority, the City Council issues demand notices to all those liable to pay Non-Domestic Rates (business rates) on an annual basis. The demand notice requires the rates to be paid by monthly statutory instalments. If an instalment is not paid by the due date, the City Council serves a reminder notice giving 7 days to bring the account up to date.

If the account remains unpaid, the right to pay by instalments is lost and the full balance to the end of the financial year is due within 7 days.

At the end of those 7 days if the account has not been paid the Local authority will apply for a summons to be issued by the Magistrates Court requiring the debtor's appearance at court in 21 days. On that date, if the Magistrates are satisfied that the amount is due, they are required to make a liability order.

The granting of a liability order provides the local authority the following options to enforce the debt:

1. Taking control of goods – the account is passed to an Enforcement Agent (previously known as bailiffs)
2. Insolvency
3. Security for unpaid rates
4. Committal to prison

Before commencing proceedings in the Magistrates Court, the City Council will seek to resolve any disputes with the Ratepayer and recover arrears without the need for legal action.

The approach taken in collecting business rates owed by a councillor would be no different to if it were a member of the public.

The rules in relation to Council Tax arrears, which require Councillors to declare arrears and prevent them from participating in decisions relevant to Council Tax do not apply to business rates arrears.

A Councillor's liability to pay business rates usually arises out of their private business interests. Therefore, any failure to pay rates does not amount to a breach of the Member Code of Conduct because the Code only applies to Councillors when they are acting in their official capacity.