

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

A Leader of the Council

1. You Keep me Hanging on

From Councillor Ken Wood

2. Digital Autopsy Facility

From Councillor Zaker Choudhry

3. Budget

From Councillor Bob Beauchamp

4. Parks

From Councillor Gareth Moore

5. Cultural Pound

From Councillor Robert Alden

6. Perry Beeches Academy

From Councillor Ron Storer

7. Records of Meetings – on line

From Councillor Mike Ward

B Cabinet Member for Children Services

1. Barring Orders

From Councillor Matt Bennett

2. School Crossing Patrols

From Councillor Gary Sambrook

3. Perry Beeches Model – Failed Children

From Councillor Jon Hunt

C Cabinet Member for Development, Transport and the Economy

1. Enforcement – Grass Verge Parking

From Councillor Sue Anderson

2. Parks

From Councillor Gareth Moore

3 Dropped Kerb Installation - Delays

From Councillor Neil Eustace

D Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Adult Care Social Workers

From Councillor Lyn Collin

E Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Management and Homes

Parks

From Councillor Gareth Moore

F Cabinet Member for Skills, Learning and Culture

Cultural Pound

From Councillor Gareth Moore

G Cabinet Member for Sustainability

1. We've been Here Before

From Councillor Robert Alden

2. Extent of Flytipping

From Councillor Carol Jones

3. Fleet and Waste – Overtime Payments

From Councillor Zaker **Choudhry**

4. Value for Money

From Councillor Gareth Moore

5. Prosecutions last 10 years - flytipping

From Councillor Jon Hunt

6. Reduced Street Cleaning – Which Streets

From Councillor Roger Harmer

7. Street Cleaning Budget - Reduction

From Councillor Jerry Evans

H To the Chair of Planning

1. Surplus Fees to Planning Dep

From Councillor Carol Jones

2. Planning – Threshold for Enforcement

From Councillor Jon Hunt

I Executive Member for Hodge Hill District

Meetings

From Councillor Robert Alden

J Executive Member for Hall Green District

Meetings

From Councillor Robert Alden

K Executive Member for Ladywood District

Meetings

From Councillor Robert Alden

L Executive Member for Perry Barr District

Meetings

From Councillor Robert Alden

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR KEN WOOD**

“You Keep me Hanging On”

Question:

Could the Leader of the City Council advise us as to what he believes to be the maximum amount of time a Councillor should have to wait for an answer to a written question to a member of his Cabinet?

Answer:

I would suggest that this would be determined by the complexity of the question and how accessible the answer is. If Cllr Wood has an outstanding matter and provides me with the details, I will pursue it on his behalf.

CITY COUNCIL - 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR
ZAKER CHOUDHRY**

“Digital Autopsy Facility”

Question:

If the Leader agrees with the Public Protection Committee that Birmingham should have its own digital autopsy facility, can he say when it will be done?

Answer:

A report providing information on Computed Tomography Post Mortems (CTPM) was presented to the Licensing and Public Protection Committee (LPPC) on 16th March 2016. The LPPC discussed the report; however, as it was an information report, a decision wasn't required to be taken.

Birmingham families currently have access to the facility at Sandwell and there is also a facility available at a hospital in Oxford, which also offers angiography. The facility at Oxford is only available out of normal office hours. Discussions are ongoing with health partners in the city to ascertain whether this facility can be provided here in this city.

The Senior Coroner has to first agree that the death is suitable for a CTPM and a fee is payable by families.

I am meeting with HM Senior Coroner next week and I shall discuss these issues with her in depth.

I will continue to push for there to be a world-class bereavement service supporting families at their most difficult time and have asked officers to explore how this can be achieved.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR BOB BEAUCHAMP**

“Budget”

Question:

The budget passed through by the Administration this year has widely been viewed as designed by Councillor Sir Albert Bore. Next year what does the Leader plan to do differently in his budget?

Answer:

Councils have a legal duty to set a balanced budget for the year ahead – the budget for 2016/17 approved on 1 March complied with this. The Improvement Panel requested that we set an indicative budget for 2017/18 and this was also balanced and detail was included in the Council Business Plan 2016+.

The Council has adopted a medium-term approach to its financial planning and, therefore, the Business Plan includes detailed financial plans for a four year period up to 2019/20.

The Secretary of State has now finally given some initial details of the arrangements for the setting of 4 year budgets by councils in any event, and should we avail ourselves of this approach there may be a need to review budgets more fundamentally and more long-term in the light of this.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR GARETH MOORE**

“Parks”

Question:

This year and in future years, your administration plans to build on at least 8 acres of park land, which parks will be built on?

Answer:

The proposal within the Council Business Plan (Proposal SN45 Disposal of unwanted/underutilised parks land (8 acres per year)) refers to 'unwanted / underutilised parks land' – there is no proposal to develop public open space or parks, which are well used.

At this time there is no comprehensive list of “unwanted / underused” sites. However, the Councillor only has to look at sites like Jarvis Road in Erdington, where we are building 116 new homes, through the Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust, as an example of bringing such underused sites back into use. Local Members will be consulted on such future developments, as the opportunities arise.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“Cultural Pound”

Question:

What does the Council value the “Cultural Pound” at?

Answer:

The Culture Pound was defined by the Council in 2014 as the minimum amount of funding necessary to sustain the existing arts infrastructure at the time. It was a mechanism for quantifying the target for contributions from other sources, as the Council started to have to make savings and its budget to support the arts declined. The initial estimate of the Culture Pound was £6.8m.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR RON STORER**

“Perry Beeches Academy”

Question:

How many meetings has the Leader of the Council had with staff from the Perry Beeches Academy Trust since becoming Leader?

Answer:

In the role of an advocate for children, I visited the Perry Beeches III Academy at the beginning of March 2016. As the school was placed into special measures, I met with the executive head teacher Liam Nolan and his Deputy and had a full, frank and challenging conversation with him both generally and in discussing the way forward. This is the only meeting I have ever had with Mr. Nolan. Perry Beeches is a Free School, but remains part of the Birmingham school family. The pupils at this school deserve the best possible education, as do all the young people in this city.

CITY COUNCIL - 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR
MIKE WARD**

“Records of Meetings - on line”

Question:

I know that you are as concerned as I am that records of meetings prior to June 2014 are not currently available online. Can you please say whether we are any nearer rectifying this deficiency?

Answer:

Since the introduction of CMIS last year, Committee Services staff have identified ‘Public’ reports and converted them from ‘Private’ following requests from members of the public wishing to view reports at an average of 20 requests per month.

Whilst the situation is far from ideal, every effort is being made to rectify the matter and a range of options are being considered to resolve this matter as soon as possible.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN
SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR MATT BENNETT**

“Barring Orders”

Question:

In response to a written question at the last full Council meeting you informed us that 15 barring orders had been issued against the council by the SENDIST Tribunal since March 2015. You also advised of steps being taken to prevent this from happening again.

At the Education & Vulnerable Children Scrutiny Committee on 16th March, the Committee was told that "as of March, we (SENAR), are completely up to date" and that "as soon as it came to light we had 100% compliance (with tribunal deadlines) and we will have 100% compliance going forward".

How many Barring Orders have been issued since the last full Council meeting?

Answer:

There has been one barring order since the last full Council Meeting.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN
SERVICES FROM COUNCILLOR GARY SAMBROOK**

“School Crossing Patrols”

Question:

While I would prefer to see the Council securing the future of school crossing patrols, I will of course try to make the trust idea work, given the Council is now not funding school crossing patrols long term. Therefore, what is the planned timeline for the school crossing patrol trust including what is needed to establish the Trust?

Answer:

Further to the public consultation about the Council's 2016/17 budget proposals, the specific proposal regarding the School Crossing Patrol service was significantly modified, such that no staff will be made compulsorily redundant this year. The work to develop the Young Active Travel initiative and the Trust model is being actively pursued in order to secure a solution in time for 2017/18.

CITY COUNCIL - 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
FROM COUNCILLOR JON HUNT**

“Perry Beeches Model - Failed Children”

Question:

The Cabinet Member stated in the Evening Mail that the “Perry Beeches model”, developed on the edge of my ward by a school which serves many of the families in my ward, has “failed thousands of Birmingham’s school children already”.

Could she set out the evidence for that statement, including available GCSE results over the last five years and Ofsted reports? In particular, could she indicate whether she is referring to the educational model or the governance model (ie the Academy system)? She will appreciate I am concerned that my constituents should have confidence in the education their children are receiving.

Answer:

On 8th March 2016 a letter was sent to the chair of the Perry Beeches: The Academy Trust telling them to repay £118,291 which was claimed for children who were on Free School Meals where no evidence of eligibility exists. The investigation that this letter resulted from concluded that up to £2.8m may have been claimed for children who weren't entitled. This money was meant for children who are in genuine need, and it has been taken from them and given to children who weren't. These children have been failed.

On 24th March 2016 a report was published by the Department for Education into financial management and governance at Perry Beeches: The Academy Trust. This found that £160,000 meant for the education of children at the schools had been siphoned off through opaque governance arrangements into a company solely owned by the Executive Head Teacher. That £160,000 was meant for the education of the children in the Perry Beeches secondary schools. Those children have been failed.

The Department for Education website states that in 2015, 62% of children Perry Beeches: the Academy achieved 5A*-Cs including English and Mathematics at GCSE, a decline from 77% in 2014, 80% in 2013 and 77% in 2012. This is a significant decline.

No other Perry Beeches school has yet produced GCSE results.

The education provided at Perry Beeches: The Academy and Perry Beeches II: The Free School is rated Outstanding by Ofsted, three years ago and two years ago respectively.

The education provided at Perry Beeches III: The Free School was rated by Ofsted as requiring Special Measures in both May and December 2015. The children there are being failed.

No other Perry Beeches school has yet been inspected.

CITY COUNCIL - 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT,
TRANSPORT AND THE ECONOMY FROM COUNCILLOR SUE ANDERSON**

“Enforcement - Grass Verge Parking”

Question:

Could the Cabinet Member set out in detail the steps that need to be taken to get enforcement on grass verge parking and the legislation supporting this?

Answer:

The City Council is aware that demand for parking space often exceeds availability of off-street facilities and believes that it is appropriate to accept a degree of parking on the highway, where this is safe, does not cause an obstruction, and does not damage the highway or any buried services and equipment within the highway. Nevertheless, the Council will always prefer motorists to provide or to find off-street parking space, wherever this is possible.

Parking of vehicles on grass verges is ever increasing and widespread, creating significant problems in many areas for highway users, residents and the Council. Circumstances of each location differ greatly from one to another and it is therefore difficult to identify a single solution that can be applied. However, it has become apparent that a number of locations throughout Birmingham may need to be regulated by preventing parking on the verges.

The Council has therefore introduced a ‘Pilot’ scheme to trial a process where verge parking need to be eradicated. It is aimed at tackling the problems by means of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and not physical changes. The pilot scheme on Brownfield Road, Shard End, is now in place. We will look to learn lessons from this pilot.

The treatment of verge parking by TRO needs to take into consideration factors, such as: road safety, the expeditious movement of traffic, the effect on potential displaced vehicles from imposed parking restrictions, and the resulting overall effect on the street scene. The introduction of legally enforceable parking controls to deal with verge parking problems will only be effective with the full support of the community in minimising the need for that enforcement. It is not likely to be appropriate in every area and will be used only where the needs of a particular site make it the most effective solution.

The process may include the amendment of the existing TRO, requiring informal and formal consultation, consideration of traffic and infrastructure issues, and prioritisation of resources.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT,
TRANSPORT AND THE ECONOMY FROM COUNCILLOR GARETH MOORE**

“Parks”

Question:

This year and in future years, your administration plans to build on at least 8 acres of park land, which parks will be built on?

Answer:

The proposal within the Council Business Plan (Proposal SN45 Disposal of unwanted/underutilised parks land (8 acres per year)) refers to 'unwanted / underutilised parks land' – there is no proposal to develop public open space or parks, which are well used.

At this time there is no comprehensive list of “unwanted / underused” sites. However, the Councillor only has to look at sites like Jarvis Road in Erdington, where we are building 116 new homes, through the Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust, as an example of bringing such underused sites back into use. Local Members will be consulted on such future developments, as the opportunities arise.

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT,
TRANSPORT AND THE ECONOMY FROM COUNCILLOR NEIL EUSTACE**

“Dropped Kerb Installation - Delays”

Question:

Could the Cabinet Member explain the delays in dropped kerb installation over the last 24 months, including:-

A - the number of addresses waiting for a kerb crossover; B - the average wait per installation once payment has been received from the resident and C - the most expensive kerb crossover installed during last 24 months?

Answer:

An update message was sent to all Members on 14 March 2016 acknowledging the problem and explaining the measures that were to be put in place to address the unsatisfactory situation. The message explained the following:

- *there are a substantial number of applications where customers have already paid but still not received a dropped kerb;*
- *The fundamental cause of the backlog has been a disconnect between applicants sending their payment to accounts payable and the dropped kerb service being made aware of the payment. This has now been addressed and the information is readily available to the dropped kerb team;*
- *The problem has been further compounded by a large increase in the number of applications;*
- *temporary staff are being employed to assist in coping with the current backlog;*
- *a recovery plan is being implemented that includes the following measures:*
 - ❖ *Service managers are prioritising applications by the date they have paid and contacting applicants to update them of the delays and advising them when an order will be placed with a contractor or their works are due to be completed;*
 - ❖ *A schedule of tree removal / root pruning where required in advance of the dropped kerb construction is being compiled for urgent implementation by Amey's arboricultural team;*
 - ❖ *Closer liaison with existing contractors and the supply chain to prioritise site delivery including workload planning;*
 - ❖ *All new applicants are being advised of the current backlog and the longer lead in time for the service delivery.*

We have now secured additional contractor resource to assist in clearing the backlog of work, and Amey have made good progress in clearing the backlog of tree removal /root pruning works.

A specific project team has been set up to ensure that the recovery plan is successful. They will be working with the City Transformation Team to overhaul the service and make sure that it is once again fit for purpose.

The answers to the specific points raised are as follows (at 01 April 2016)

A the number of addresses waiting for a kerb crossover;

The current list of addresses waiting for kerb crossover where the resident has paid is approx. 270. Further analysis is being undertaken to ensure that all the recorded information in relation to each application is complete and accurate.

B the average wait per installation once payment has been received from the resident;

Straight forward dropped kerb with no obstacle (tree / telegraph pole / street light)

April 2014 – Sept 2015 2 months

October 2015 – To date 3 months

Dropped kerb with obstacle (tree / telegraph pole / street light)

April 2014 – Sept 2015 3 months

October 2015 – To date 5 months

C the most expensive kerb crossover installed during last 24 months;

Straight forward dropped kerb with no obstacle (tree / telegraph pole / street light)

£1,885 with wide grass verge

(£900 – average crossing cost)

Dropped kerb with obstacle – Virgin Media box

£3,042

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND
SOCIAL CARE FROM COUNCILLOR LYN COLLIN**

“Adult Care Social Workers”

Question:

What is the current staff vacancy factor/turnover rate as a percentage for permanent Adult Care Social Workers?

Answer:

For permanent adult social workers the current vacancy rate is 17%. The current turnover rate (based on the last 12 months) is 14%.

These figures are based on the number of adult social workers being 407; the current number of vacancies being 70 and the current number of leavers over the year being 56.

We are currently recruiting and anticipate the vacancy rate will reduce.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD
MANAGEMENT AND HOMES FROM COUNCILLOR GARETH MOORE**

“Parks”

Question:

This year and in future years, your administration plans to build on at least 8 acres of park land, which parks will be built on?

Answer:

The proposal within the Council Business Plan (Proposal SN45 Disposal of unwanted/underutilised parks land (8 acres per year)) refers to 'unwanted / underutilised parks land' – there is no proposal to develop public open space or parks, which are well used.

At this time there is no comprehensive list of “unwanted / underused” sites. However, the Councillor only has to look at sites like Jarvis Road in Erdington, where we are building 116 new homes, through the Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust, as an example of bringing such underused sites back into use. Local Members will be consulted on such future developments, as the opportunities arise.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SKILLS, LEARNING
AND CULTURE FROM COUNCILLOR GARETH MOORE**

“Cultural Pound”

Question:

The administration has talked about the “Cultural Pound”, what is the Council’s definition of the “Cultural Pound”?

Answer:

The Culture Pound was defined by the Council in 2014 as the minimum amount of funding necessary to sustain the existing arts infrastructure at the time. It was a mechanism for quantifying the target for contributions from other sources, as the Council started to have to make savings and its budget to support the arts declined. The initial estimate of the Culture Pound was £6.8m.

The Culture Pound was a means to engaging other parties in the city with an interest in the continuing quality and reach of the cultural offer - such as the university sector, business and public sector bodies, in consideration of how the total amount needed to sustain and grow the arts could be raised.

Working with the cultural sector, Aston Business School, the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce and Arts Council England, we have announced a new Cultural Investment Enquiry today, which will explore over the coming months the ways in which new investment models can be developed, linked to the city’s on-going economic growth.

This is a very exciting joint enterprise across the city, using the collective capacity and intellectual capability of the public, private and third sector, and I believe it offers the best opportunity to enable us to meet the challenge of future arts funding.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABILITY
FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“We’ve Bin Here Before”

Question:

Given the Wheelie bin collection rounds are currently having to be reviewed due to them being unable to collect the required number of bins a day, what is the anticipated increase in staff and costs from these changes?

Answer:

As the review is not complete we are not yet in a position to identify whether there will be any increase in staff or costs.

CITY COUNCIL - 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABILITY FROM
COUNCILLOR CAROL JONES**

“Extent of Flytipping”

Question:

Could the Cabinet Member update the Council on the extent of flytipping, giving the monthly figures for the last six months for both measurements - reports and logged incidents?

Answer:

The figures are as follows:

Month	Reported *	Logged
September	3011	834
October	3222	919
November	3145	973
December	3663	867
January	3228	504
February	2831	463

* The number of incidents reported is higher, unsurprisingly, as a number of residents will report the same incident. The logged incidents are then sent quarterly to DEFRA and collated annually.

CITY COUNCIL - 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABILITY FROM
COUNCILLOR ZAKER CHOUDHRY**

“Fleet and Waste - Overtime Payments”

Question:

Could the Cabinet Member set out how much has been spent on overtime payments in Fleet and Waste Management in each of the last four financial years (including 2015-2016)?

Answer:

The expenditure on overtime (across all Waste Management Services including waste collection, disposal and street cleaning) over the past 4 years is set out below:

2012/13 - £2.890m (or 9.9% of the employee budget)

2013/14 - £1.642m (or 5.7% of the employee budget)

2014/15 - £0.545m (or 2.0% of the employee budget)

2015/16 - £1.261m (or 4.3% of the employee budget)

There has been a significant reduction in expenditure over the last 4 years.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABILITY
FROM COUNCILLOR GARETH MOORE**

“Value for Money”

Question:

According to LGA research, the City Council spends more than the national average on refuse and street cleaning and more than the metropolitan average. Given Birmingham has been rated as more untidy than the average authority, does the Cabinet Member feel she is getting value for money for the service she runs ?

Answer:

Members will be aware, Birmingham is the largest metropolitan council in Europe and direct comparisons across local authorities are of limited value. We know that the Council budgeted to spend the equivalent of £1.03p per week per head of population in 2015/16 and this is similar to other core cities such as Manchester and Sheffield, lower than Newcastle, Leeds and Bristol but higher than Liverpool and Nottingham.

Our approach to cleaner streets includes a holistic strategic vision of delivering behavioural change to ensure moving forward we can look to reduce, reuse and recycle waste.

CITY COUNCIL - 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABILITY FROM
COUNCILLOR JON HUNT**

“Prosecutions last 10 years - flytipping”

Question:

Could the Cabinet Member report the annual number of successful prosecutions undertaken for flytipping by the Council over the last 10 years, including the current year?

Answer:

YEAR	SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTIONS
2007/2008	8
2008/2009	7
2009/2010	6
2010/2011	6
2011/2012	6
2012/2013	9
2013/2014	19
October 2014 Waste Enforcement Unit Created	
2014/2015 (18 submitted)	9
2015/2016 (119 submitted)	40
Prison sentences for two individuals caught fly tipping in Aston	

Information prior to 2007/2008 was not recorded.

CITY COUNCIL - 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABILITY FROM
COUNCILLOR ROGER HARMER**

“Reduced Street Cleaning - Which Streets”

Question:

Which streets will have their levels of street cleaning reduced as a result of the budget reductions voted through by the Council?

Answer:

The Street Cleaning review is not yet complete so details of proposed changes to cleaning schedules are not yet available.

The review will be informed by Members' own local leadership – Cleaner Street Plans submitted this Spring.

CITY COUNCIL - 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABILITY FROM
COUNCILLOR JERRY EVANS**

“Street Cleaning Budget - Reduction”

Question:

In her written answer last month the Cabinet Member stated that the street cleaning budget would be reduced by £2million in total in the coming year. The council business and budget plan proposed a £1.5million reduction. Where is the extra £500,000 coming from?

Answer:

We are committed to improving street cleaning and reducing costs through smarter working using new technology for litter bins, e.g., sensors, alternative bins with compactors to reduce frequency of emptying and mechanical sweepers where appropriate alongside a behavioural and communications campaign to change citizens behaviour reducing littering and working with businesses to help in the delivery of cleaner streets. The £500,000 from the existing street cleansing budget will be used to trial technology to support this approach.

CITY COUNCIL - 5 APRIL 2016

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF PLANNING FROM COUNCILLOR CAROL JONES

“Surplus Fees to Planning Dept”

Question:

According to the council’s latest budget report, the Planning Department has generated a surplus of more than £200,000 through increased income from fees. Currently the surplus is being returned to balance corporate accounts. If the Chair of Planning could retain the surplus in the planning department, what would he spend it on?

Answer:

It is important to note that the fee receipts from planning applications have primarily increased through additional workload rather than from an increase in the fee associated with individual applications. The end of year surplus is likely to be greater than £200,000; some of this is being used to fund the graduate programme which assists in supporting the service to deal with the additional work.

With the successful drive to attract major investment into the City, it becomes increasingly important to retain income derived from the planning service to fund the additional capacity that will be required to deal with the associated work. I am continuing to work with the Director to ensure that Planning and Regeneration provide the expertise to shape the City and provide the right environment to benefit from this additional investment and growth.

CITY COUNCIL - 5 APRIL 2016

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF PLANNING FROM COUNCILLOR JON HUNT

“Planning - Threshold for enforcement”

Question:

A few months ago the Chair of Planning assured me that the Council was not dropping enforcement cases and was pursuing its responsibilities. I was disappointed therefore to see correspondence with a resident stating that no action would be taken over a loft conversion that has exceeded permitted development levels by 6 cubic metres.

According to my reckoning, 6 cubic metres is about the size of small bedroom. This extension was put in very fast - almost overnight - as though daring the Department to take action. I have supplied details of the address privately. However, I wonder if the Chair could inform the Council what the threshold for enforcement is or confirm that there is no threshold for enforcement?

Answer:

Whilst not discussing individual cases, I would disagree that 6 cubic metres is the size of a small bedroom. Whilst officers do not condone a wilful breach of planning control, each case must be considered on its own merits and officers have to be mindful of the overarching central government advice that enforcement action is discretionary and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control, (for example, it is usually inappropriate to take formal enforcement action against a minor or technical breach of control which causes no harm to amenity in the locality).

Effective enforcement is important as a means of maintaining public confidence in the planning system. However, planning enforcement action is not automatic. Local planning authorities have responsibility for taking whatever enforcement action may be necessary, in the public interest.

Local planning authorities have discretion to take enforcement action, when they regard it as expedient to do so having regard to material considerations.

The consideration of expediency includes questions such as; ‘Is the development minor or commonplace?’, ‘Would planning permission likely be granted for what has taken place?’, ‘What is the harm being caused by the development?’, ‘Is the matter in the public interest to pursue?’

I continue to offer this Chamber my guarantee that officers within the Enforcement Team continue to successfully assess each alleged breach correctly and where necessary take appropriate legal action. Indeed, only in the last couple of months we have seen the first Proceeds of Crime application granted for an offence related to planning enforcement in the Crown Court resulting in a financial penalty amounting to just short of £14,000 and the successful prosecution of another enforcement notice where the Judge found the offender guilty with a total financial penalty of £22,719.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HODGE HILL
DISTRICT FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“Meetings”

Question:

How many Ward Committees/Forums, with attendance for each meeting, has the Wards in your District held this year?

Answer:

Following changes to support to Ward meetings, all Ward meetings are supported by two Community Governance Officers (formally Committee Service Managers) now in Place Directorate. These meetings are recorded below from 3rd September 2015 to date. Other meetings have obviously taken place in Wards but do not fall into the Ward Committee/Forum terms requested in the question.

Bordesley Green Ward – 2 meetings held

4 Feb 2016: no residents attended

17 March 2016: 3 residents attended

Hodge Hill Ward – 2 meetings held

2 December 2015: 10 residents attended

23 March 2016: 50 residents attended

Shard End Ward – 3 meetings held

16 Nov 2015: 18 residents attended

22 Feb 2016: 30 residents attended

14 March 2016: 30 residents attended

Washwood Heath Ward – no meetings held to date

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HALL GREEN
DISTRICT FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“Meetings”

Question:

How many Ward Committees/Forums, with attendance for each meeting, has the Wards in your District held this year?

Answer:

Following changes to support to Ward meetings, all Ward meetings are supported by two Community Governance Officers (formally Committee Service Managers) now in Place Directorate. These meetings are recorded below from 3rd September 2015 to date. Other meetings have obviously taken place in Wards, but do not fall into the Ward Committee/forum terms requested in the question.

Hall Green Ward – 3 meetings held

20 October 2015: 19 residents attended

19 January 2016: 160 + residents attended

15 March 2016: 11 residents attended

Sparkbrook Ward - 1 meeting held

27 January 2016: 25 residents attended

Springfield Ward – 2 meetings held

2 December 2015: 35 residents attended

3 February 2016: 42 residents attended

Moseley & Kings Heath Ward – 2 meetings held.

20 January 2016: 20 residents attended

8 March 2016: 20 residents attended

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LADYWOOD
DISTRICT FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“Meetings”

Question:

How many Ward Committees/Forums, with attendance for each meeting, has the Wards in your District held this year?

Answer:

Following changes to support to Ward meetings, all Ward meetings are supported by two Community Governance Officers (formally Committee Service Managers) now in Place Directorate. These meetings are recorded below from 3rd September 2015 to date. Other meetings have obviously taken place in Wards, but do not fall into the Ward Committee/Forum terms requested in the question.

Ladywood Ward – 2 meetings held

11 November 2015: 23 residents attended

24 February 2016: 34 residents attended

Soho Ward – 2 meetings held

24 November 2015: 50+ residents attended

23 February 2015: 15 residents attended

Nechells Ward – 1 meeting held

19 November 2015: 40 residents attended

Aston Ward – no meetings held to date

CITY COUNCIL – 5 APRIL 2016

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PERRY BARR
DISTRICT FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“Meetings”

Question:

How many Ward Committees/Forums, with attendance for each meeting, has the Wards in your District held this year?

Answer:

Following changes to support to Ward meetings, all Ward meetings are supported by two Community Governance Officers (formally Committee Service Managers) now in Place Directorate. These meetings are recorded below from 3rd September 2015 to date. Other meetings have obviously taken place in Wards, but do not fall into the Ward Committee/Forum terms requested in the question.

Perry Barr Ward – 2 meetings held

24 September 2015: 120+ residents attended

10 March 2016: 20 residents attended

Handsworth Wood Ward – 1 meeting held

16 December 2015: 14 residents attended

Lozells & East Handsworth Ward – 3 meetings held

13 October 2015: 26 residents attended,

15 December 2015: 15 residents attended

9 February 2016: 8 residents attended

Oscott Ward – 3 meetings held

15 October 2015: 42 residents attended

4 February 2016: 18 residents attended

17 March 2016: 16 residents attended