

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

MEETING 6

19 NOVEMBER 2015

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Item no 5.1

QUESTION NO 1

By Councillor Rust for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 19 November 2015

Question (1) What overspend (if any) has there been in Devolved School Management Budgets per Primary School in each of the past three financial years (a) in real terms and (b) as a percentage of budget?

Answer (1) See attached. 75% of our primary schools reported no overspend over that time. From the figures provided it should be noted that the majority of overspends related to sums under 1% of budget, with none exceeding 4% this year.

Finance officers are fully engaged with schools to support school based staff and where necessary ensure that budgets are brought into line over an agreed period.

Question (2) Has any such overspend been written off? If yes, please advise (a) the name of school and (b) the amount of write off?

Answer (2) None of the overspends was written off. The schools repaid the overspends within two years. Sighthill Primary, which currently has the highest percentage overspend, is projected to be in budget by the end of session 2015/16.

Business Managers have undergone significant training on monitoring and controlling expenditure which has reduced the overspend levels over the years.

Primary School Overspends 2012/13 to 2014/15

School	2012/13		2013/14		2014/15	
	Actual Carry Forward Overspend	Percentage of Total Budget	Actual Carry Forward Overspend	Percentage of Total Budget	Actual Carry Forward Overspend	Percentage of Total Budget
Abbeyhill Primary						
Balgreen Primary						
Blackhall Primary						
Bonaly Primary						
Broomhouse Primary						
Broughton Primary	52,453	3.90%				
Brunstane Primary						
Bruntsfield Primary						
Buckstone Primary						
Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce					1,063	0.14%
Canal View Primary						
Carrick Knowe Primary						
Castleview Primary						
Clermiston Primary						
Clovenstone Primary						
Colinton Primary						
Corstorphine Primary	25,432	1.8%	19,985	1.46%		
Craigentenny Primary						
Craiglockhart Primary						
Craigour Park Primary	2,576	0.2%	6,399	0.52%		
Craigroyston Primary						
Cramond Primary						
Currie Primary						
Dalmeny Primary						
Dalry Primary						
Davidson's Mains Primary						
Dean Park Primary			7,709	0.55%	2,207	0.16%
Duddingston Primary						
East Craigs Primary						
Echline Primary						
Ferryhill Primary						
Flora Stevenson Primary					4,860	0.32%
Forthview Primary						
Fox Covert Primary						
Fox Covert RC Primary						
Gilmerton Primary	20,910	2.0%				
Gracemount Primary						
Granton Primary						
Gylemuir Primary	4,655	0.3%				

Hermitage Park Primary						
Hillwood Primary						
Holy Cross Primary			8,205	0.86%	6,525	0.69%
James Gillespie's Primary	13,305	1.1%			15,451	1.26%
Juniper Green Primary						
Kirkliston Primary						
Leith Primary						
Leith Walk Primary						
Liberton Primary			6,108	0.51%	1,478	0.13%
Longstone Primary	5,638	0.7%	7,844	1.02%	13,775	1.71%
Lorne Primary						
Murrayburn Primary	10,962	0.7%				
Nether Currie Primary						
Newcraighall Primary						
Niddrie Mill Primary						
Oxgangs Primary						
Parson's Green Primary						
Pentland Primary						
Pirniehall Primary						
Preston Street Primary						
Prestonfield Primary			13,846	2.00%		
Queensferry Primary						
Ratho Primary						
Roseburn Primary						
Royal Mile Primary						
Sciennes Primary						
Sighthill Primary					30,869	3.83%
South Morningside Primary						
St Catherine's Primary						
St Cuthbert's Primary	17,963	2.6%	5,621	0.82%		
St David's Primary						
St Francis Primary						
St John Vianney Primary						
St John's Primary						
St Joseph's Primary						
St Margaret's S.Q Primary						
St Mark's Primary						
St Mary's (Edin) Primary			4,453	0.47%		
St Mary's (Leith) Primary			3,684	0.38%	7,575	0.77%
St Ninian's Primary			3,789	0.50%		
St Peter's Primary						
Stenhouse Primary						
Stockbridge Primary			6,667	0.93%		
The Royal High Primary						
Tollcross Primary			5,892	0.80%		
Towerbank Primary						

Trinity Primary						
Victoria Primary	25,320	4.7%	2,479	0.49%		
Wardie Primary						
Total Overspends	179,214		102,680		83,804	

Note:

None of the overspends were written off.

The majority of schools repaid the overspend within two years

Overspends often correlated with absence of a Business Manager

Business Managers have undergone significant training on monitoring and controlling expenditure which has reduced the overspending levels over the years

Item no 5.2

QUESTION NO 2

**By Councillor Rust for answer by the
Convener of the Finance and
Resources Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 19 November 2015**

- Question** (1) Is City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) anticipating meeting the Scottish Government public sector target of having all land owned by CEC registered on the Land Register of Scotland by 2019?
- Answer** (1) Yes
- Question** (2) What work has been undertaken by CEC to estimate the cost of registering all land owned by CEC on the Land Register by 2019?
- Answer** (2) An initial scoping exercise has been completed.
- Question** (3) What work has been undertaken by CEC to assess the staffing requirement for this work?
- Answer** (3) The staffing requirement is as follows: solicitor, archivist/historian, surveyor and a property research officer, administrative support.
- Question** (4) What is the anticipated total cost at present?
- Answer** (4) The cost has been estimated at £250,000 per annum not including registration dues which are based on the capital value of individual properties.
- Question** (5) From what CEC budget will registration dues and any other related costs be met?
- Answer** (5) As this is a statutory function, the cost will be contained in the 2016/17 budget with appropriate prioritisation of existing resources reducing the overall cost to the Council.

Item no 5.3

QUESTION NO 3

By Councillor Rose for answer by the
Convener of the Transport and
Environment Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 19 November 2015

- Question** (1) Which renewable companies in, or associated with, Edinburgh in the last five years have:
- (a) gone into administration?
 - (b) withdrawn from previously publicised investment plans?
- Answer** (1) (a) As far as officers are aware there are two renewable energy companies based in Edinburgh that have gone into administration in the last five years. Pelamis went into administration in December 2014 and Aquamarine Power in October 2015.
- (b) Other than Mitsubishi Power Systems looking at potential research and development for wind, officers are not aware of other companies looking to withdraw from previous plans.
- Question** (2) How many of the above have received Council or Government funding or support, and how much?
- Answer** (2) The Council has provided a range of non financial support services to Pelamis and Aquamarine Power as part of the economic development service. This includes advice and support from officers in Enterprise, Innovation and Investment. Scottish Enterprise has provided funding of £12.9M to Pelamis Wave Power and £15.5M to Aquamarine Power.

Item no 5.4

QUESTION NO 4

By Councillor Mowat for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 19 November 2015

- Question** (1) Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990: Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (Scotland) 2006 CEC must classify all areas in the city according to 12 zones; 1 being town centres, shopping centres and shopping streets, 2 being high density residential areas – Where is this information published?
- Answer** (1) The Council has classified all its streets according to the EPA. This information is held in a Geographical Information System (GIS) format, which is not easily accessible. However, it is available on request from the Environment Service Support Unit. In addition, the information on zoning was previously communicated to all Elected Members as part of the Zero Based Resourcing (ZBR) project. As part of the development of Edinburgh's Litter Strategy, the zoning information will be made available in a more publically accessible format.
- Question** (2) Under the above act there are recommended timescales associated with clearing of litter in each of the zones – could the Convener detail how the Council's performance is measured under this matrix, to whom this is reported and whether this reporting is publically available or reported to Councillors.

- Answer** (2) Performance data is collated and reported to the Transport and Environment Committee every quarter. A complete picture of the standard of cleanliness across the city is derived from a number of sources as follows:-
- (a) assessment of street cleanliness through the Keep Scotland Beautiful CIMS report and LEAMs surveys;
 - (b) operational performance and data from the Council's Confirm on Demand asset and works order management software; and,
 - (c) feedback from members of the public and businesses via the Edinburgh People Survey.

Question (3) Does the Convener commit to meeting the timescales for clearing litter in the relevant zones?

Answer (3) As Councillor Mowat is aware, all Members of the Council should be committed to ensuring a clean Environment in the city and all Councillors should be striving to put pressure on officers to meet these timescales.

Through the Transformation Programme we are reviewing how operational teams can react more efficiently to issues whilst minimising the impact on other scheduled work.

Question (4) Does the Convener consider that the application of regulations appropriate to individual household bins i.e. the non collection of side waste when applied to large on street bins leads to additional littering and hampers the Council's ability to meet its obligations under the EPA 1990 (Scotland) 2006?

Answer

- (4)** I acknowledge the challenges that Waste Services and local Task Forces face in relation to this issue.

However, Departmental policy for communal bins has to be different compared to the practice for dealing with side waste at individual household bins.

This involves the collection of smaller side waste beside on-street communal bins when these bins are serviced. Larger items have to be collected by a separate vehicle, as refuse collection vehicles are not designed to collect items of this size. When issues which may result in side waste are identified or when they occur, Waste Services and Task Force Teams work together to minimise the impact.

Item no 5.5

QUESTION NO 5

By Councillor Orr for answer by the Leader of the Council at a meeting of the Council on 19 November 2015

Question

The decision of the new capital coalition in 2012 to make a number of pledges and monitor the outcomes was widely welcomed, but a number of them are now out of date. Pledge 45 for example to “Spend 5% of the transport budget on provision for cyclists” is old news as the council are doing much more. Would it not be a good idea to revise a number of pledges to reflect the progress made in the last three and a half years so that the full potential of the five year council term can be optimised, especially as we approach its last year?

Answer

The pledges are the coalition’s commitments established at the outset of the administration in May 2012 and reports on progress will continue to be provided.

While some of the pledges have met or exceeded their target, the text within the report allows for the opportunity for further progress or details to be reported.

Revising the language of the pledges at this stage would impact on further monitoring of progress. The Coalition will continue to work with officers to ensure the evidence of progress is explicit.

Item no 5.6

QUESTION NO 6

**By Councillor Orr for answer by the
Leader of the Council at a meeting of
the Council on 19 November 2015**

Question

On 2nd November it was reported that tourists staying in Edinburgh could be charged some sort of “culture and events contribution” during the summer and winter festivals as part of the proposed City Deal. This is a significant and welcome development for those of us who support a Transient Visitor Levy but could the council leader please ensure that, in future, elected members of the council are fully and immediately informed of such proposals via a members’ briefing rather than through the press, particularly as we are now negotiating with both Westminster and Holyrood governments?

Answer

Thank you Councillor Orr. I have asked Council Officers to ensure that members are briefed as proposals are progressed.

Item no 5.7

QUESTION NO 7

**By Councillor Orr for answer by the
Convener of the Economy Committee
at a meeting of the Council on 19
November 2015**

- Question** (1) At Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on 24th March 2015 the council “agreed to make further representation to the Scottish Government and its Commission on the introduction of a TVL”. Many months on from that decision, the Council Leader confirmed on 22nd October that a political meeting will take place on 12th November with the Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism to push for a TVL (Transient Visitor Levy). Given the pressing need for the council to raise external funds, and the occasional lapses in urgency and communications on pushing for a TVL to date, could a minute of the meeting with the Minister please be circulated to elected members in time for the full council meeting on 19th November?
- Answer** (1) Due to the non-public nature of the meeting with the Minister, a full minute of the meeting will not be circulated. However a report of the discussion points will be circulated to members in due course.
- Question** (2) What representations on a TVL were finally made by the council to the cross party Local Tax Commission as agreed at CP&S and can this information also be circulated please?
- Answer** (2) The Council did not make a submission to the Local Tax Commission however political groups were encouraged to submit responses to the Commission directly. The Green Group of the City of Edinburgh Council submitted a response. Concerning TVL, the Green Group responded: *“Local authorities should gain the power to implement a visitor levy that could help authorities benefit financially from their investment in tourism and cultural events that attract visitors.”* The submission can be viewed on the [Local Tax Commission](#) website.

Item no 5.8

QUESTION NO 8

By Councillor Orr for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 19 November 2015

Question

In 2012 the City of Edinburgh Council won the Fields in Trust Landowner of the Year Award, and in 2013 the city as a whole won a Gold Award in the large city category of Britain in Bloom, following that up in 2014 with a gold medal for “management of natural and built environment” at the Entente Florale (European) awards. In 2015 “Edinburgh In Bloom” won yet another award from Eurocities at a ceremony in Malmo. The credit for such awards must be shared with all sorts of stakeholders across the city but does the Convener agree that the council’s parks and greenspace team have performed exceptionally well in recent years.

Answer

Yes, I agree that the parks and greenspace team have performed exceptionally well. However I would also like to recognise the work of the local parks and grounds maintenance staff in our neighbourhood teams who have also contributed towards these achievements.