

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

MEETING 10

10 MARCH 2016

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Item no 5.1

QUESTION NO 1

By Councillor Rose for answer by the Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee at a meeting of the Council on 10 March 2016

Question

Despite the expensive processes to resolve outstanding statutory notice claims, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman has, since November 2015, published findings in at least four cases against the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) on issues of scope enlargement and inadequate communication where there was a formal finding against CEC e.g.

- a. Case 201402088: ‘ . . . we were critical of the quality of their (CEC) communication throughout the project. . . ’
- b. Case 201407198: ‘ . . . we noted there were significant delays in the council issuing the final invoice. . . ’
- c. Case 210403736 ‘ . . . the council had acknowledged carrying out non emergency repairs under the emergency statutory notice
- d. Case 20105881: ‘We were critical of the council’s handling of the sizeable cost increase.’

What has been the Council’s response to these and other adverse findings since April 2015, including any others not yet published by the SPSO?

Answer

The Council has in all these cases complied with the SPSO findings and will consider a response to any future findings on a case by case basis.

Item no 5.2

QUESTION NO 2

By Councillor Rose for answer by the Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee at a meeting of the Council on 10 March 2016

Question (1) How much money has been allocated by Edinburgh World Heritage for statutory notice repair work to or via the City of Edinburgh Council annually since 2007?

Answer (1) Since January 2006, £938,664.55 has been paid by Edinburgh World Heritage to eligible work on statutory notice repairs.

Question (2) Which premises (statutory notices issued) were affected?

Answer (2) A total of 19 projects across the World Heritage Site were affected.

Question (3) How has the money been applied to the payment of the works associated with each statutory notice?

Answer (3) The level of grant funding received was based on a percentage of the cost of “eligible work” carried out. The funding received by the Council on behalf of the owners was then deducted from the final invoices.

Item no 5.3

QUESTION NO 3

By Councillor Rust for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 10 March 2016

Question (1) When is the structural engineers' final report due and when will this be released/published?

Answer (1) The structural engineers report instructed by, and prepared for, the Edinburgh Schools Partnership (ESP) was provided to the Council for information on a confidential basis on Wednesday 2 March. The findings of the report are being discussed with ESP to inform any required actions.

Question (2) What discussions have taken place or are planned with Edinburgh Schools Partnership in relation to accountability?

Answer (2) Following the release of the report, meetings are being held with ESP to discuss the findings and agree ESP's associated accountability.

Question (3) What are the CEC contingency plans in place where a school has to be closed for a period of time?

Answer (3) The Council Resilience Group is in the process of developing a Loss of Premises Plan for council buildings which will include schools, however, in the interim, there are current robust systems in place. There are 3 scenarios

Emergency school closures

These arrangements are part of school severe weather/infection control resilience plans and Headteachers and Business Managers are briefed annually on requirements and as part of induction for new staff. Risk assessments are in place, which include management and liaison between the Headteacher/Senior Education Manager in making any closure decision.

Relocation for short period of time:

Where pupils require to be relocated for a short period of time, for example, if the school had to be evacuated for a number of hours due to a utility problem a “Buddy Map” system is used where we use maps showing available capacity within schools, this is ranked using a Red/Amber/Green system to show availability.

Closure for a period of time:

If a school is closed for a period of time we would firstly use asset management information held centrally which provides information on available capacity in local establishments. Senior Education Managers/Corporate Property/the C&F Resilience Co-ordinator then work with Headteachers and Establishment Managers to relocate to suitable alternative accommodation, as was the case in January 2012 when Kaimes Special School relocated to Fort.

In such circumstances, the safety of pupils and staff is paramount and this needs to take account of appropriate temporary transport arrangements where necessary.

Item no 5.4

QUESTION NO 4

By Councillor Burgess for answer by the Convener of the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee at a meeting of the Council on 10 March 2016

Question

To ask what action the Council is taking to improve insulation of homes in the City.

Answer

On 21 January 2016 the Council agreed, with cross party support, the HRA budget strategy which set out to accelerate heating and insulation programmes in support of the objective to reduce tenants' cost of living. The current capital investment programme assumes that 3,700 Council homes will benefit from improved insulation over the next five years. In addition, 3,500 homes will benefit from the installation of modern, efficient heating systems.

At that meeting, the Council also agreed to expand its house-building programme from 3,000 to 8,000 new homes over the next ten years. The building programme has adopted a "fabric first" approach. Homes have a highly insulated building envelope and a high level of air-tightness to minimise heat loss.

93% of Council homes have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or above, compared to private sector homes where 75% of homes have an EPC rating of D or above.

Working in partnership with Changeworks the Council is bidding for additional resources from the Scottish Government's Home Energy Efficiency Programme to provide loans to homeowners and private landlords for insulation. This programme is focussed on areas of fuel poverty.