

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

MEETING 3

27 JUNE 2019

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Item no 5.1

QUESTION NO 1

By Councillor Miller for answer by the Convener of the Housing and Economy Committee at a meeting of the Council on 27 June 2019

Question

How many properties have been the subject of investigation due to short term holiday lettings in the last 12 months and the previous 12 months, including issues relating to planning, antisocial behaviour, noise, waste, and safety including fire risks and overcrowding

Answer

The most recent update on Short Term Lets was considered by [Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee](#) in May 2019.

The Communications team has taken additional steps to raise awareness of the Scottish Government Consultation both through media communications and social media.

The Council is looking at new ways of working in response to the growth of short stay lets, including a proactive approach to enforcement and engagement with residents. This includes the use of impact warning letters to tackle a large concentration of short stay lets. The planning service has also successfully piloted taking enforcement action against key safes on listed buildings.

The data below has been updated to take account of most recent information, alongside a change in how complaints about short term lets are categorised:

Area	Period	Cases
Planning Enforcement	January to December 2018	117
	January to June 2019	109
Private Rented Sector Enforcement and Trading Standards	June 2017 to June 2018	21
	June 2018 to June 2019	20
Family Household and support (ASB)	From April 2019*	22
Environmental Health	From July 2018	5
Total		294

*Recording of complaints in respect of short term lets was changed in April 2019 from categories of Antisocial Behaviour. Complaint figures prior to that could only be provided by manual checking of all ASB complaints received by the Council.

Item no 5.2

QUESTION NO 2

**By Councillor Johnston for answer
by the Convener of the Transport and
Environment Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 27 June 2019**

Tram Extension – Final Design

Question

What opportunities will the public have to engage with the final design?

Answer

As you will no doubt be aware, extensive consultation was undertaken and evidenced during the development of the final business case. Workshops for local residents and interest groups were held throughout the comprehensive design process. The designs presented to Committee have formed the basis of the engagement with contractors.

As part of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) statutory process, members of the public will have further opportunity to give their views on the finalised road design.

Further information on the project can be found at:

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/tramstonewhaven.

Item no 5.3

QUESTION NO 3

By Councillor Laidlaw for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 27 June 2019

Question (1) What new measures have been implemented this year to address the issue of weeds on our streets and pavements?

Answer (1) The Council's approach to weed control was reported to Transport and Environment Committee on 9 August 2018 - [http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/58090/item_81 -
_progress in implementing the integrated weed control programme](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/58090/item_81_-_progress_in_implementing_the_integrated_weed_control_programme). This successful approach has continued in 2019.

Question (2) Can the convener provide details of the number of referrals, number of treatments administered and number of repeat treatments?

Answer (2) Under the approach outlined in August 2018, it is intended to administer two treatments per year. This was achieved in 2018. The delivery of this in 2019 is weather dependent, and treatments cannot of course be delivered effectively during periods of inclement weather, as recently experienced.

There have been approximately 65 contacts with the Council about excessive weeds since January 2019. In addition, there have been a further 11 relating to the treatment of weeds.

Question (3) What system is in place to gauge effectiveness of the treatments?

Answer (3) Following treatment, visual inspections are undertaken on a regular basis to assess the effectiveness of treatment.

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 27 June 2019

To ask the Convener of Transport and Environment to:

Question (1) Provide details of the numbers of choked drains that have been unblocked in the past 12 months by Ward?

Answer (1) In the past 12 months 30,172 gullies have been visited, 23,760 gullies were unblocked. These visits are broken down by ward as follows:

Ward	Number of Gullies Unblocked
1	2,341
2	1,897
3	3,071
4	4,023
5	3,632
6	2,705
7	1,961
8	481
9	641
10	666
11	2,219
12	1,031
13	1,207
14	944
15	1,102
16	1,331
17	920

Question (2) Provide details of whether these have been treated as a result of individual complaints being raised by members of the public or as part of regular maintenance?

Answer

(2) Of the 23,760 gullies treated:

- 3,378 reports were raised by members of the public in the past 12 months (around 3,000 enquires are received per annum); and
- 20,382 were part of regular maintenance.

Broadly, there are usually around 3,000 enquiries/contacts about gullies per annum. The predominant reasons are where the sump is blocked with silt and other debris, or the grating is blocked with leaves. Taken over the size of the Edinburgh road network, this figure can be considered reasonable

Question

(3) Confirm there is a planned maintenance schedule for the clearing of choked drains and could this be provided, broken down by Ward?

Answer

(3) The routine gully cleaning rota is based on a 24-month schedule. Sensitive gullies are attended to on a six-monthly basis. The routine gully cleaning programme (overleaf) is based on routes within the old neighbourhood areas therefore, we are unable to provide this information by individual ward.

Cyclic Routine Gully Cleaning Programme for 2018 - 2020

Proposed Work Schedule by Old Neighbourhood Area

Neighbourhood	Start Date	Finish Date	weeks to complete
North	01/10/18	29/03/19	26
<i>Sensitive routes</i>	<i>29/10/18</i>	<i>17/11/18</i>	<i>03</i>
City Centre and Leith	01/04/19	19/07/19	16
<i>Sensitive routes</i>	<i>03/06/19</i>	<i>22/06/19</i>	<i>03</i>
East	22/07/19	18/10/19	13
<i>Sensitive routes</i>	<i>11/11/19</i>	<i>29/11/19</i>	<i>03</i>
South	21/10/19	31/01/20	15
South West	03/02/20	29/05/20	17
<i>Sensitive routes</i>	<i>08/06/20</i>	<i>26/06/20</i>	<i>03</i>
West	01/06/20	25/09/20	17
Proposed Programme Timescale – 24 MONTHS			

Adhoc Event (V) routes to be scheduled prior to large event / within 24-month programme - nightshift can attend where noise is not an issue.

NOTES: -

1. 'Sensitive' gullies are cleaned twice a year city wide in June (prior to summer rain storms) and November (after leaves fall of trees).
2. **The dates in this schedule are subject to change** as gully cleaning vehicles cannot operate in the winter months when temperatures are below 0°C. Long periods of heavy rain and vehicle availability can also reduce resources carrying out routine cyclic gully cleaning.
3. When all the gullies in a Neighbourhood Area have been attended on their routes (but not necessarily cleaned), and the area routes have been finished, ad-hoc (one-off) routes are carried out for gullies that could not be accessed during the routine cleaning (due to parked cars, road works, etc). These Ad-hoc routes are scheduled to be carried out within a few weeks of completing a Neighbourhood Area.

Item no 5.5

QUESTION NO 5

By Councillor Mowat for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 27 June 2019

In the plans put out for consultation on the Low Emission Zones the proposed boundaries have the effect of diverting traffic through adjacent residential areas. Can the Convener confirm:

Question (1) If there was an EIA carried out prior to proposing the boundaries?)

Answer (1) EIAs (Environmental Impact Assessments) are assessments undertaken for development proposals which may have significant environmental impacts. For public plans, strategies and programmes such as Low Emission Zones (LEZs), the relevant assessment framework is a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Integrated Impact Assessment work is being undertaken to support LEZs and includes environmental impacts. A pre-screening of whether the SEA framework applies has been undertaken and has been determined as not applicable.

LEZs primary objective is to achieve compliance with the Local Air Quality Management regime, as defined under the Environment Act 1995, including objectives for nitrogen dioxide (NO_x) concentrations. Tackling traffic management issues can be achieved through other means.

The development of the LEZs is in line with the [Scottish Government National Low Emissions Framework](#) (NLEF) guidance. The air quality model (developed and run by SEPA) to assess NO_x levels across the city is in line with the [National Modelling Framework](#) (NMF).

Question (2) If an EIA was carried out please append a link to it in the response to these questions?

Answer (2) See response to Q(1).

Question (3) Have baseline measurements for CO₂, NO_x, PM₁₀, PM 2.5 and noise been carried out along all the boundaries and adjacent streets proposed?

Answer (3) LEZ development is focussed on NOx Air Quality Management Areas. As such assessment against this pollutant is the focus.

A report setting out this assessment has been prepared by SEPA and was considered by Transport and Environment Committee in [February 2019](#).

Question (4) If the answer to 2, is yes, where is this information published?

Answer (4) The air quality evidence report is available on the Council's website
http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/CET/downloads/file/3/air_quality_evidence_report_%E2%80%93_edinburgh.

Question (5) What assessment has been made of the impact of displacement of non-compliant EuroVI engine vehicles on streets adjacent to the boundaries?

Answer (5) EuroVI diesel vehicles (both car and heavy diesel vehicles) are compliant. It should also be noted that Euro 4 petrol engines are compliant.

The city centre boundary has been defined taking into consideration:

- The location of air quality exceedances – defined partly by the AQMAs and the SEPA model;
- The need to provide clear and legible alternative routes for non-compliant vehicles; and
- The boundary aligns with arterial roads that are suitable to carry higher levels of traffic.

It should be acknowledged that the majority of streets in the wider city centre contain residential properties, not just those areas adjacent to the proposed city centre LEZ boundary.

Supporting measures and actions (including those targeting modal shift, reducing the use of private cars in the city centre, supporting sustainable travel in and around the city centre) will be delivered through the Edinburgh City Centre Transformation project and the City Mobility Plan, as well as other transport initiatives.

Question **(6)** If such an assessment has been made where can this data be found?

Answer **(6)** These results will be presented to Transport and Environment Committee in October 2019.

Item no 5.6

QUESTION NO 6

By Councillor Mowat for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 27 June 2019

Question

Will the arrangement in place for the end of May and early June in response to Councillor Rose's question 5.3 answered at the May 2019 Council meeting relating to Southside, Fountainbridge and Newington, apply to other student areas e.g. City Centre Ward or elsewhere?

Answer

Yes, this arrangement applies to all areas with high student populations.

Item no 5.7

QUESTION NO 7

By Councillor Webber for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 27 June 2019

Can the Convener please reassure families that information previously provided stating the target intake date of spring 2020 is still correct as many families are counting on this timescale by confirming:

- Question** (1) When we can anticipate the building of the new Nether Currie Early Years facility to commence?
- a. If not yet known when can we expect the start date to be confirmed?
- Answer** (1) Construction will begin on Monday 1 July 2019.
- Question** (2) What date can we expect the first intake for pupils?
- a. If not yet known, when can we expect this to be confirmed?
- Answer** (2) August 2020.
- Question** (3) When will the staff recruitment process begin ahead of the building completion date?
- Answer** (3) Recruitment is ongoing on a city-wide basis for the 1140 Early Years programme.
- Question** (4) When can we expect the Landscape architects, engaged by CEC, to provide plans for the proposed improvements of existing primary schools (this was promised in 2018)?
- Answer** (4) The architects will work with stakeholders to develop plans from August 2019. The final plans should be available by Easter 2020

Item no 5.8

QUESTION NO 8

By Councillor Laidlaw for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 27 June 2019

Given the apparent lack of progress and detail around the West Edinburgh High School, can the convener please provide an update on:

- Question** (1) Proposed location of the school following the Education, Children and Families Committee decision to explore alternatives to the Ratho Station site?
- Answer** (1) Site options are still being considered. Statutory consultation would be required to establish the location and catchment area for the new school.
- Question** (2) Estimated construction completion timescales?
- Answer** (2) Latest projections indicate the new school would be required for August 2024.
- Question** (3) Funding available and funding required?
- Answer** (3) There is no funding currently allocated to the project. Depending on the size, the costs could range from £30m-£50m.
- Question** (4) How will pupils be accommodated at other schools until the project is completed, especially in light of sign-off of major new developments in this catchment?
- Answer** (4) Until 2024 pupils can be accommodated in their existing schools. A rising rolls project would be progressed for any school which has immediate accommodation issues.

Item no 5.9

QUESTION NO 9

By Councillor Rust for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 27 June 2019

Can the Convener please confirm;

- Question** (1) Who made the decision to issue letters to Primary School Headteachers regarding lack of money to provide special needs support?
- Answer** (1) The Executive Director for Communities and Families, in consultation with Head Teacher representatives, agreed that schools be communicated with by e-mail.
- Question** (2) On what date were these letters issued and on what date was a subsequent communication issued by the Council reversing the reduction in financial support?
- Answer** (2) An e-mail was sent to schools on 28 May 2019. A further e-mail advising that the devolved hours would be reinstated to 18/19 levels and the low incidence process would be advised shortly was sent on 6 June 2019. A meeting took place with HT representatives on 7 June 2019 to discuss and agree the approach for Low Incidence allocations after which a communication agreed with the Head Teacher representatives was issued to all primary HT's on 11 June 2019.
- Question** (3) Who made the decision to overturn the refusal to spend more money on additional support needs?
- Answer** (3) Following consultation with the Convener and Vice-Convener, the instruction was issued to the Executive Director for Communities and Families to reverse the decision with immediate effect.
- Question** (4) When and by what means were all elected members advised?
- Answer** (4) Following communications from Head Teachers, the Convener and Vice Convener raised the issue with officers and were advised of the email formally on 3 June 2019. The Leader and Deputy Leader were provided with a briefing on 6 June 2019.

Question (5) Where was the money located / from where will the spend be funded and will any sacrifices be made to accommodate this spend?

Answer (5) Additional resources have been identified within the budget and are currently being discussed with the Convener and Vice-Convener.

Question (6) Is the sum of £5million (as reported in the media) accurate?

Answer (6) The £5m is neither an actual nor a definitive figure but was based on the assumption that all applications received would be granted and at the highest level. All outstanding applications have since been assessed by officers and schools advised of the outcome on 24 June 2019.

Question (7) What was the overspend in budget last year?

Answer (7) The audit hours budget was overspent by £232k in 2018/19.

Item no 5.10

QUESTION NO 10

By Councillor Brown for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 27 June 2019

Question

Further to the Convener's comments at Full Council Budget Meeting on 21st February 2019 and the subsequent establishment that Road Mole was indeed more than a just a Computer Generated Image on Twitter, can the Convener offer an update on progress being made in conducting a trial of said machine as a way to help solve Edinburgh's potholes problems?

Answer

Officers met with CSJ Civil Engineering to better understand the current specification, ability, productivity and availability of the "Road Mole". The technology is in its early infancy and still under its development, and therefore not currently applicable to Edinburgh. From discussions it would appear to be more suited to trunk road scenarios than urban situations. However, a site visit to Liverpool on 8 July is planned to see it in operation.

Item no 5.11

QUESTION NO 11

**By Councillor Staniforth for answer
by the Convener of the Transport and
Environment Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 27 June 2019**

On the 9th June the road to Seafield Recycling Centre was closed due to safety concerns. In light of this:

Question (1) What was the extent of public consultation on the use of the road before the entrance on Fillyside Road was closed and the Seafield Road entrance opened?

Answer (1) The changes at Seafield Recycling Centre were made to maintain the health and safety of visitors to the site, as operational changes were being introduced. Consultation was undertaken as part of the planning process (site layout was included within the original planning application) therefore there was no expectation of a need for further public consultation.

Question (2) Why were traffic numbers so under-estimated at the site that the entrance had to be closed down?

Answer (2) There was no under-estimation in the forecasted use of the site. On occasion, and as can be reasonably expected, there can be peaks in use which are often weather influenced.

The site layout was designed based on analysis of previous site usage and provides an additional 100 yards of road space for vehicles to wait within the site.

For safety reasons on that particular day, when it was identified that there was a significant build-up of vehicles on the site and queuing, the decision was taken to temporarily close the site to new visitors for a short period.

Despite the Council continuing to make drivers aware of the change to the facility's access arrangements, some early users have not been adhering to the new traffic management system in place.

Question

(3) What is being done to ensure that entry to Seafeld Recycling Centre is both safe and efficient in the future?

Answer

(3) Officers are continuing to monitor the movement of vehicles entering and leaving the site, as well as while they are on the site. Adjustments are being made to the site layout to improve vehicle movement. Officers are also drafting business continuity arrangements to allow for any future pressures should they arise.

Item no 5.12

QUESTION NO 12

By Councillor Lang for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 27 June 2019

- Question** (1) What grass collection equipment is owned and operated by the parks and greenspaces team?
- Answer** (2) The Parks and Greenspaces team owns and operates three machines which can be used for collecting grass and/or litter, two are towed by large tractors and the third is operated by a mini tractor.
- Question** (2) On what basis is any such equipment deployed across the four localities?
- Answer** (2) This equipment is not deployed on a geographical basis, but rather it is used mainly on sports pitches across the city, in situations where the grass is too long and the clippings would interfere with play if left.

Item no 5.13

QUESTION NO 13

By Councillor Lang for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 27 June 2019

Question (1) 1. What percentage of streets have been treated for weeds this year, broken down by ward?

Answer (1) Percentage of herbicide application on streets - up to 18 June in 2018 and 2019:

Ward	2018	2019
1	80%	75%
2	60%	100%
3	100%	20%
4	100%	100%
5	25%	5%
6	60%	0%
7	100%	50%
8	30%	0%
9	50%	0%
10	85%	30%
11	35%	50%
12	40%	30%
13	30%	30%
14	40%	50%
15	65%	10%
16	70%	10%
17	65%	5%

Question (2) How do these figures compare to this time in (a) 2018 and (b) 2017?

Answer (2) The table above compares 2018 and 2019. In 2017 this work was recorded in spray log books and it has not been possible to collate this information in time to respond to this request.

Question (3) What further resources are being allocated to weed clearance over the next three months?

Answer (3) 6 quad bikes fitted with spraying equipment will be operational when weather conditions permit.

Question (4) Can the Council's weed control policy be uploaded to the section of the website relating to weed control?

Answer (4) This will be uploaded by the end of June 2019.

Question (5) How many complaints or requests for weed clearance have been received so far this year, broken down by ward?

Answer (5) There have been approximately 65 contacts with the Council about excessive weeds since January 2019. In addition, there have been 10 further contacts relating to the treatment of weeds. The breakdown below shows the number of contacts recorded on Confirm by ward. The remaining 25 have not been recorded by ward.

Wards	Volume
01-Almond	5
02-Pentland Hills	1
03-Drum Brae/Gyle	3
04-Forth	2
05-Inverleith	5
06-Corstorphine/Murrayfield	2
07-Sighthill/Gorgie	3
10-Meadows/Morningside	1
11-City Centre	7
12-Leith Walk	2
13-Leith	5
14-Craigentinny/Duddingston	6
15-Southside/Newington	2
16-Liberton/Gilmerton	4
17-Portobello/Craigmillar	2
Grand Total	50