

Questions and Answers

City of Edinburgh Council

10.00 am Thursday, 25th August, 2022

Virtual Meeting - via Microsoft Teams

Questions and Answers

Contacts

Email: gavin.king@edinburgh.gov.uk

Tel: 0131 529 4239

Nick Smith

Service Director, Legal and Assurance

This page is intentionally left blank

Item no 10.1

QUESTION NO 1

By Councillor Key for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Question (1) The last substantive meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee took place on 1 March 2022. The next substantive meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee is scheduled for 13 September 2022. Does the Convener believe that her Committee can effectively scrutinize the department with the largest slice of Council resources with meetings taking place every 6 months or so?

Answer (1) Education, Children and Families Committees (ECF) should meet every 8 weeks although there was a scheduled delay because of the elections, meaning there was no meeting in May 2022. The ECF Committee had an Introduction for New Members - Education, Children and Families Committee on the 21 June 2022 during which common objectives were agreed. The next committee is scheduled for 13 September 2022.

With regard to the concern about scrutiny members will be aware that all education and children's services are subject to ongoing and rigorous independent scrutiny by national bodies.

The care inspectorate and Education Scotland have visited schools and ELC through the pandemic and their findings are shared locally and celebrated as appropriate as well as being in the public domain. A report collating the good practice and lessons learned will be presented to ECF on 13th September. In addition, measures of attendance and attainment, the main KPIs for education delivery have been published nationally and show steady progress despite the significant challenges we have faced.

Question

(2) The Council Report Schedule dated 10/8/22 does not list any agenda items at all for the meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee on 13 September. Every other Committee scheduled in that paper between August and October has a comprehensive list of agenda items. Has the Convener taken her eye of the ball, does she need a Vice-Convener to help with the volume of work, and will her Committee continue to run with no transparency and no forward planning?

Answer

(2) There is not a prescribed timeline for updating the schedule. The Committee Schedule has been updated now that the final list of reports has been agreed, and the agenda for subsequent committees will be published in time for forward planning.

Item no 10.2

QUESTION NO 2

**By Councillor Campbell for answer
by the Convener of the Housing,
Homelessness and Fair Work
Committee at a meeting of the
Council on 25 August 2022**

Question

The Homelessness Task Force took in the Homelessness Forum, which was a forum for engagement with third sector stakeholders to enable good communications and relationship building between the council and charities working in homelessness in Edinburgh. It also took in the Welfare Reform Working Group, which included elected members, public sector and third sector stakeholders and enabled discussion and awareness on changes to welfare reform and actions that could be taken to address poverty. The Homelessness Task Force itself was set up to deal with the enormous challenges in homelessness, dealing with temporary accommodation, rough sleeping and the time it takes for a homeless household to resolve their homelessness, and was well attended by stakeholders and the Scottish Government, addressing challenges in the city.

The last two Homelessness Task Force meetings have been cancelled with short notice. Can the convener confirm that she intends to continue to convene the Homelessness Task Force, if so, could she confirm the date of the next meeting?

Answer

The intention is to continue the Homelessness Task Force Meetings however the Homelessness taskforce was a formal working group appointed by the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee in 2021/22. This group ceased at the end of the previous Council term, therefore the last meetings had to be cancelled. Future working groups will be considered as part of the review of political management arrangements and will require to be appointed by the appropriate Committee following agreement of the political management arrangements by Full Council.

The schedule will be sent out following agreement by Council and Committee. As reported to committee, work on Homelessness is continuing and involves close cooperation with the third sector.

Item no 10.3

QUESTION NO 3

By Councillor Thornley for answer by the Convener of the Policy and Sustainability Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

To ask the Convener of the Policy and Sustainability Committee to please confirm the following, with specific regard to the Homes for Ukraine scheme:

- Question** (1) How many volunteers came forward to house refugees?
- Answer** (1) 1,343 properties showed an expression of interest with 707 properties submitting information for home and disclosure checks. We are still awaiting information from 49 properties.
- Question** (2) How many have been fully vetted?
- Answer** (2) 658.
- Question** (3) How many passed the vetting process?
- Answer** (3) 658.
- Question** (4) How many have now dropped out of the scheme?
- Answer** (4) Out of 1,034 properties applying for the schemes, 636 properties did not respond to multiple contact attempts from Council colleagues. It is therefore assumed that these properties are not wishing to host Ukrainian Displaced persons (UDPs).
- Question** (5) How many refugees have now been placed?
- Answer** (5) Within Edinburgh, 239 individuals have been matched to Edinburgh properties via the Super Sponsor matching process and 707 individuals are matched via the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- Question** (6) How many refugees are currently waiting?
- Answer** (6) This is a national matching process so information solely for Edinburgh is unavailable.
- Question** (7) What is the longest time anyone has waited to date for placement, and what is the average time?

Answer

- (7) This varies depending on personal circumstances, geographical location and availability of properties nationwide.

Item no 10.4

QUESTION NO 4

**By Councillor Neil Ross for answer
by the Convener of the Planning
Committee at a meeting of the
Council on 25 August 2022**

Question (1) Given the increasing popularity of electric vehicles when will the Council publish guidance to explain its planning policy so that residents can comply with it when installing domestic EV charging points?

Answer (1) The Planning Service is currently reviewing the non-statutory Guidance for Householders to take into account forthcoming changes to national planning policy through National Planning Framework 4 and potential changes to permitted development rights. The guidance is expected to be published summer 2023.

Question (2) Will the guidance explain the circumstances where an EV charger would be permitted development and also when planning permission might be required?

Answer (2) Yes.

Item no 10.5

QUESTION NO 5

By Councillor Thornley for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Question (1) How many reports of a drain in need of clearing did the Council receive in the last year?

Answer (1) 5,104

Question (2) How many of these were actioned within a month?

Answer (2) Of these 3,668 have been actioned, the rest are awaiting action or are in the process of being resolved. Please see attached handout provided at Transport and Environment Committee on 27 January.2022 which explains in more detail the gully cleansing process.

Of the 3,668 that have been completed 1,282 were completed within 1 month.

Question (3) What is the average delay between drains being reported as needing to be cleared and them being successfully cleared?

Answer (3) The average time taken is 10.8 weeks.

This average time covers all jobs relating to gullies, ranging from simple emptying at the first visit through to complex jobs which require full excavation and replacement of drainage infrastructure.

Question (4) Against what criteria are areas currently prioritised for regular clearing, where a report has not necessarily been made?

Answer (4) There is a full 24 month programme for cyclic maintenance which is categorised into route type to capture the various different constraints on gully emptying (Traffic Management required, TTRO required, weekend access required, standard access, hand clean, etc). Routes are grouped on an area basis for efficiency and in general we operate in 3 areas simultaneously to provide wider coverage to help reactive maintenance alongside cyclic. Further to this there are a small list of sensitive gullies which are cleansed twice a year ahead of typical storm periods (early summer and winter) in known problematic areas.

Question (5) Which areas, by ward, are planned for regular clearing in the next six months?

Answer (5) I understand we do not have this information easily available by Ward as the assets are managed by route. The Officer responsible would be happy to meet/present to Cllr Thornley (and others) to provide an understanding of how they, as a service, manage the roads drainage.

Item no 10.6

QUESTION NO 6

By Councillor Young for answer by the Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Question (1) What was the total income from cruise liner docking fees at the Hawes Pier in each of the last 5 years (calendar or financial years)?

Answer (1) 2017/2018 - £457k
2018/2019 - £610K
2019/2020 - £528k
2020/2021 - £99k
2021/2022 - £62k

Question (2) Taking into account the operating costs of providing this service, what is the total net profit made by the Council from cruise liner docking fees at the Hawes Pier in each of these last 5 years?

Answer (2) 2017/2018 - £346K
2018/2019 - £452K
2019/2020- £347K
2020/2021 - £5k
2021/2022 - Loss of 29K

Question (3) How has the money raised from these fees been used – please provide a breakdown?

Answer (3) All non-ringfenced income raised by charges within Place are spent across the whole range of services provided by Place.

Question (4) How many confirmed or provisional bookings have been made in terms of cruise liner dockings at the Hawes Pier in the next three years?

Answer

- (4)** Confirmed ships this year 2022/2023 are 18. We only have provisional numbers for 1 future year 2023-2024 of 29, it is too early for subsequent years.

Item no 10.7

QUESTION NO 7

By Councillor Lang for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Question (1) What legislative requirement exists on bus operators to consult with the Council before making significant changes to existing bus routes?

Answer (1) There is a requirement to consult with Local Authorities prior to submitting a bus service registration with the Traffic Commissioner. This is normally undertaken at least 28 days in advance of the service registration submission.

(2) Did Lothian Buses consult with the Council regarding the route changes which were subsequently announced on 5 June 2022?

(2) Yes, this was a full service re-registration that covered all Lothian Buses, Lothian Country and East Coast services.

(3) If Lothian Buses did consult with the Council, what feedback was provided by officers?

(3) A Confirmation of Local Authority Notification (CLAN) form was returned for each service.

An officer also met with representatives from Lothian Buses to review the service changes, discuss the reasons for the changes and the mitigation being provided. A summary of the changes is provided on the following pages. Most of the changes in this period were positive and reflected a reaction to patronage recovery from the pandemic. However, limited resource resulted in some reallocation of resource from areas of poor demand and where alternative provision could be utilised, including interchange.

(4) Is there any expectation on officers to seek the views of ward councillors on proposed changes to bus routes before offering formal feedback to bus operators?

- (4) No, there is currently no formal process for officers to notify ward councillors. It is a commercial bus network and effectively operates independently of Council influence. However, I would be happy to liaise with public transport providers to see if Transport & Environment Committee members can receive a briefing on any future notification of planned changes.

Details of the service change:

Lothian City and Airport Buses

Services 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 14, 15, 19, 23, 24, X26, 27, 29, X29, 31, X31, 33, X33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 42, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 200, 300, 400

Minor timetable changes

Service 3

Revised route and timetable. All journeys operate to Mayfield. The Dalkeith Campus service is replaced by an extension of East Coast Buses service 139.

Service 10

Revised route and timetable. All journeys operate to Bonaly. The Torphin service is replaced by an extension of service 16.

Service 11

Revised timetable. The Saturday daytime frequency is increased to every 12 minutes, and the Sunday daytime frequency is increased to every 15 minutes.

Service 12

Revised timetable with later evening journeys introduced.

Service 16

Revised route and timetable. Service 16 is extended from Colinton to Torphin. The Saturday daytime frequency is increased to every 12 minutes, and the Sunday daytime frequency is increased to every 15 minutes.

Service 21

Revised timetable. The Saturday daytime frequency is increased to every 15 minutes.

Service 22

Revised route and timetable. The east side of the route (Ocean Terminal – City Centre) is withdrawn, service 22 will only operate between Gyle Centre and Regent Road. The Monday-Friday frequency is reduced to every 15 minutes, but a 12 minutes service is maintained at peak times. The evening frequency is reduced to every 30 minutes.

Service 25

Revised timetable. The Sunday daytime frequency is increased to every 15 minutes.

Service 26

Revised timetable. The Monday-Friday and Saturday daytime frequency are increased to every 10 minutes (between Clerwood and Prestonpans, then every 20 minutes to either Seton Sands or Tranent). On Sunday, a 15 minutes frequency continues to operate (every 30 minutes on each leg), but additional vehicles will operate during the day to allow for a 7/8 minutes frequency between Eastfield and Frederick Street.

Service 30

Revised timetable. The Monday-Friday and Saturday daytime frequencies are increased to every 10 minutes.

Service 36

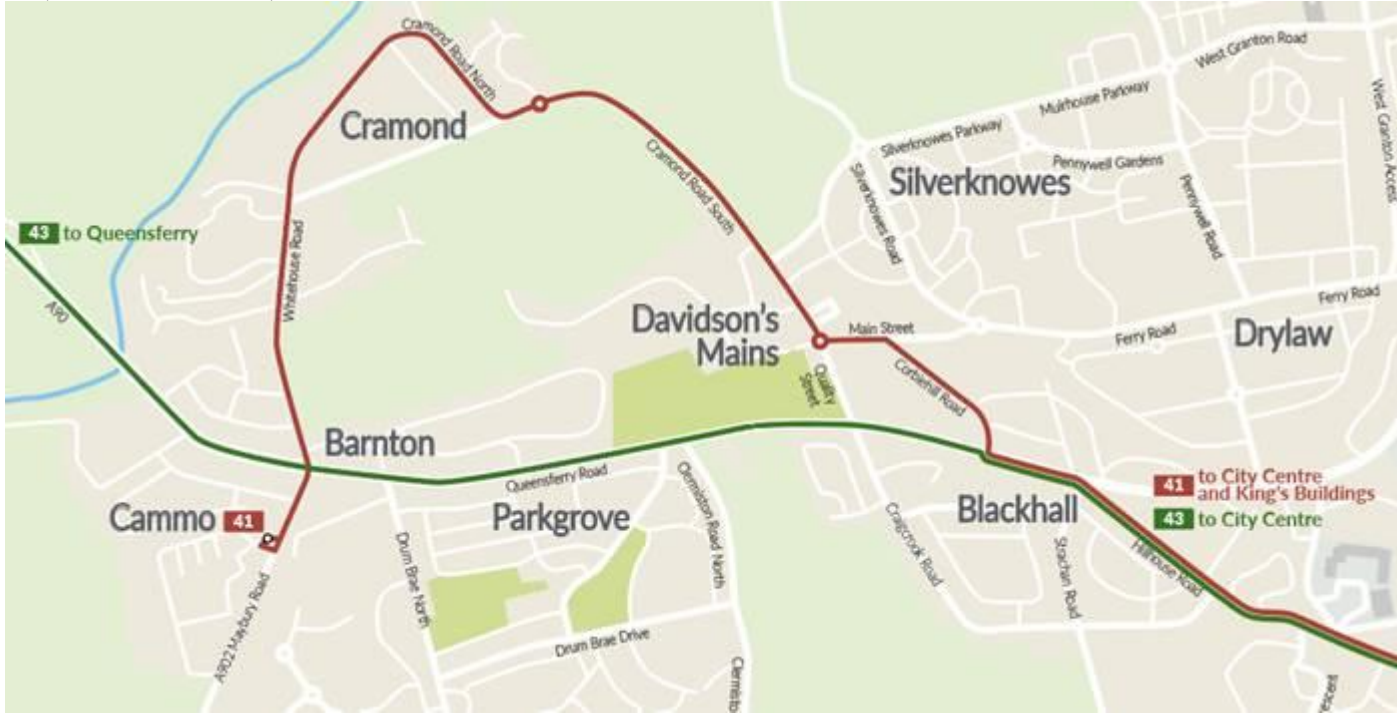
Revised timetable. The Monday-Friday peak frequency is increased, and later evening journeys are introduced.

Service X37

Revised timetable. The 07:26 journey from Penicuik is replaced by a new service 47 journey operating at the same time.

Service 41

Revised route and timetable. From Davidson's Mains service 41 operates via Cramond Road South, Barnton Gardens, Cramond Road North, Whitehouse Road, Maybury Road and terminates at the new terminus at Cammo (Meadowsweet Drive).



Map showing revised 41 route along with service 43 in the Cammo, Cramond, Parkgrove areas

Service X44

Revised timetable. Revised stopping pattern with additional stop at Portobello High School in both directions.

Lothiancountry

Services X18, X27, X28

Minor timetable changes.

Service 43

Revised timetable. The Monday-Friday frequency is increased to every 20 minutes, with additional journeys introduced at peak hours. The Saturday frequency is also increased to every 20 minutes

Service 275

Service withdrawn, partly replaced by revised service 276.

Service 276

Revised route and timetable, serving Ladywell, St. John's Hospital and Pumpherston (partly replacing service 275). The Monday-Friday and Saturday daytime frequency remains at every 30 minutes, except on section between Loganlea and Bathgate, which remains hourly. The Sunday daytime frequency is increased to every 30 minutes, with one bus per hour extending between Loganlea and Bathgate. In Bathgate the route is extended from Morrisons to Wester Inch (Simpsons Avenue), partly replacing service 275.

EastCoastbuses

A complete review of the network has been undertaken. New limited stop patterns will be introduced within the city, as shown on the map below, reducing journey times from East Lothian. Alternative services continue to exist on the Lothian network for those using buses in the city section.



Map showing EastCoastbuses services in Edinburgh

Service 104

Service renumbered X6.

Service 106

Minor timetable changes.

Service 113

Revised route and timetable. All buses terminate at Western General, the section of route between West Granton and Western General is withdrawn. A limited stopping pattern is introduced between Brunstane and Abbeyhill.

Service 124

Revised route and timetable. Service 124 will operate via Willowbrae instead of Portobello to maximise use of bus lanes. A limited stopping pattern is introduced between Brunstane and Abbeyhill.

Service X5

Service reintroduced on Monday-Friday and Saturday, operating hourly between North Berwick and Edinburgh. In the City Centre buses terminate at Frederick Street instead of Seemple Street.

Service X6

New service replacing service 104, with a revised timetable. A limited stopping pattern is introduced between The Jewel and Abbeyhill.

Service X7

Minor timetable changes.

Nightbus & Nighthawk (from morning of 2 May)

Services N3, N14, N16, N22

Minor timetable changes

Service N26

Revised timetable. On Saturday and Sunday mornings the frequency is increased to every 30 minutes.

Service N28

Revised timetable. An additional journey after 3a.m. from Edinburgh City Centre is introduced on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Service N31

Revised timetable. An additional journey after 3a.m from Edinburgh City Centre is introduced on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Service N43

Revised timetable. An additional journey after 2a.m from Edinburgh City Centre is introduced on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Service N106

Revised timetable. An additional journey after 3a.m from Edinburgh City Centre is introduced on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Service N113

Revised timetable. An additional journey after 3a.m from Edinburgh City Centre is introduced on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Service N124

Revised route and timetable. An additional journey after 3a.m from Edinburgh City Centre is introduced on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Service N124 will operate via Willowbrae instead of Portobello as per daytime service 124.

Item no 10.8

QUESTION NO 8

By Councillor Lang for answer by the Leader of the Council at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Davidson's Mains Roundabout

Question (1) Further to the answers given to question 9.1 at the June 2022 meeting of the Council, when will the statutory process for the redetermination order commence?

Answer (1) The Executive Director's report needed to commence the statutory process for the necessary traffic orders has been drafted and this has been reviewed by the Traffic Orders team. The report is now being finalised for approval and it is expected to be issued to the Traffic Orders team within the next two weeks.

Item no 10.9

QUESTION NO 9

By Councillor Lang for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Question (1) How many bus stops are there within the Council area?

Answer (1) 2,238

Question (2) Of these, how many have a bus shelter?

Answer (2) 1,432

Question (3) What criteria is used to determine whether a bus stop without a shelter should be prioritised for a new shelter?

Answer (3) Following a request for a new shelter, the location will be inspected to determine if there is sufficient space for a shelter to be installed, any obstructions, sightline issues with junctions or driveways and if there are underlying public utilities or cellars. Consultation is also carried out with local bus operators to seek their views on patronage levels and to determine if a stop is predominately a set down or pick up location.

Question (4) What is the budget allocated for 2022/23 for new bus shelters and bus shelter replacements?

Answer (4) Exact figure is still to be determined from the Capital budget allocation to the Public Transport team but will be approximately £50-100k. There has been significant investment in new and replacement bus shelters in recent years, averaging approximately £300k per year in last 5 years.

Question (5) What is the expected percentage split in this budget between installing new shelters and replacing existing shelters?

Answer

- (5) Existing shelters are generally replaced if they have been vandalised or damaged in a road traffic collision. They will also be replaced if their condition is considered to be a health and safety risk, for example if the shelter supports are rusting and there are concerns about their structural stability. There is no fixed split, a decision will be taken each year dependant on existing shelter conditions, number of new shelter requests and the available budget.

Item no 10.10

QUESTION NO 10

**By Councillor McFarlane for answer
by the Convener of the Transport and
Environment Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 25 August 2022**

Question

What measures additional to those anticipated to be delivered as part of the Trams to Newhaven scheme will be put in place to further protect the segregated cycle way *and pedestrian amenity* on Leith Street from vehicles parking within it?

Answer

There are not currently plans to design further interventions in this area. While the Trams to Newhaven project is ongoing there is additional pressure on road space, which may be leading to some of the pavement parking observed.

Despite the challenges of the project, the administration does not condone pavement parking and will press for enforcement action whenever possible. There were 21 enforcement requests for Leith Street and streets in the vicinity, and 134 parking tickets issued specifically on Leith Street between 1 Jan 22 and 31 July 22.

The Tram works and Leith are discussed on a weekly basis at the Enforcement operational calls and there are currently Parking Attendants dedicated to patrolling the Tram works/Leith area.

During construction the Trams to Newhaven project is working to deter pavement parking by taking the following measures:

1. Provision of staffed logistics hubs;
2. Alerting delivery drivers to locating of logistics hubs and loading bays
3. Discussing loading requirements with local businesses.

In addition, additional powers to allow the Council to respond to pavement parking more effectively have now been legislated for, though haven't yet come into force.

Therefore, it is proposed to monitor the position after the project is complete and additional powers are in force, to determine what, if any, further steps should be taken.

QUESTION NO 11

By Councillor McVey for answer by the Convener of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Question (1) How much has been invested in upgrading Cables Wynd House in the last 5 years? How does this compare against the median investment figure of the per-capita spend for Council houses?

Answer (1) There has been capital investment of £169,606 in Cables Wynd House over the last five years. This related to the full replacement of all lifts in the block. There are 212 flats in Cables Wynd House, of which 4 are privately owned. This therefore equates to c£800 per home.

It should be noted that Cables Wynd House benefitted from major investment programmes such as kitchen and bathroom and communal heating replacement in the years 2010 – 2012. This investment should have the effect of reducing the spend on repairs in later years.

It is not possible to provide a figure that would provide a meaningful comparison for Council homes citywide as the total annual capital spend includes other costs and overheads.

The information regarding capital spend on Cables Wynd House has been obtained through manual checking of records. To obtain this for all multi storey blocks would involve significant manual officer resource and is not readily available.

Question (2) How much has been spent on reactive repairs in Cables Wynd House in the last 5 years? How does this compare against the median investment figure of the per-capita spend for Council houses?

Answer (2) Between 2017/18 and 2021/22, records indicate that £184,728 was spent on responsive repairs to communal areas at Cables Wynd House. The average cost of communal repairs for each home in Cables Wynd House across this 5 year period is therefore c£174 per year.

Information on the spend on repairs for individual homes in Cables Wynd House is only available for 2020/21 and 2021/22. Over these two years, records indicate that £221,398 was spent on repairs in the 208 Council homes in the block. This is the equivalent of an average of £532 in each home across this two year period per year.

It is not possible to provide a figure that would provide a meaningful comparison for Council homes citywide as the total annual spend on repairs includes other costs and overheads.

Question (3) What is the average repair time for actions identified by residents and concierge service and completed in the building, including a breakdown of lift repairs?

Answer (3) Between April and July 2022, the average repair time for communal areas, including lifts, between a repair being reported and completed was 5.4 working days.

Question (4) What outstanding actions requiring work have been identified and when were they identified as needing to be repaired/actioned?

Answer (4) There are currently no outstanding reported repairs issues in communal areas awaiting action. Emergency repairs and health and safety issues are identified through daily inspections carried out by the local Concierge team therefore this position can change on a daily basis.

Council officers have been engaging with the recently established residents group through a recent meeting and a walkabout to listen to residents' concerns and their priorities for improvements. A number of areas of concern have been raised including décor of the common stairs, condition of the stair landing windows, vandalism and graffiti, dog fouling, etc. The next meeting with the residents group is due to take place on 30 August 2022 when feedback and further discussion on these concerns will take place.

In addition, officers have been working to progress the replacement of the CCTV hub which is situated at Cables Wynd House. Engagement is underway with private owners to enable this to proceed

Question (5) Can the Convener make available to ward Councillors the outstanding list of short, medium and long term identified actions for repair and investment for the building that residents have been informed exists but haven't yet been able to see?

Answer (5) There is not currently a list of short, medium and long term actions for repair and investment. A citywide Stock Condition Survey is underway and will be used to inform future investment plans for Cables Wynd House, together with the feedback from the ongoing engagement with residents.

Ward Councillors will be provided with the results of the stock condition survey once it is available and officers would be happy to meet with ward Councillors to discuss this further.

Item no 10.12

QUESTION NO 12

By Councillor Biagi for answer by the Leader of the Council at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

- Question** (1) What arrangements are in place to mitigate risk of industrial action in core service areas?
- Answer** (1) In order to mitigate the risk of industrial action, the Council undertakes negotiations with Trade Unions at a local level and, where required, jointly negotiates with Trade Unions at a national level through COSLA.
- Question** (2) How much Council resource has been spent to date on retention agreements and all other agreements with external companies as part of those service plans during industrial action?
- Answer** (2) There are no retention agreements in place with external companies to specifically undertake any work in areas where there is industrial action. The only exception would relate to agency workers provided by contracted agency suppliers that are already engaged in a service prior to the industrial action starting.
- Question** (3) How much Council resource would be spent, on a per day basis, with external companies through any industrial action broken down into service areas?
- Answer** (3) This would depend on the size and impact of the industrial action.

Item no 10.13

QUESTION NO 13

By Councillor McNeese-Mechan for answer by the Convener of the Culture and Communities Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

- Question** (1) How many trees in the city's parks and greenspaces have died over the summer months due to the increased hot dry weather driven by climate change?
- Answer** (1) This information is not available at this time. The hot weather will have dramatically increased the number of trees that have died and when resources permit a count will be undertaken.
- Question** (2) How has this impacted on Edinburgh's commitment to becoming a Million Tree City?
- Answer** (2) Whilst the loss of any tree is regrettable, the tree planting target for the Edinburgh Million Trees City project has an allowance for tree losses to ensure we reach becoming a Million Tree City by 2030.
- Question** (3) How much additional officer time and resource has been committed if any to preventing our trees from dying from the recent weather?
- Answer** (3) Staff have been working on overtime to water trees. It is not possible to identify the specific number hours (and the associated cost) spent on this task.
- Question** (4) What plans are in place to mitigate the impact of weather extremes on the Edinburgh's biodiversity?
- Answer** (4) To mitigate against weather extremes a diverse range of tree species are planted. While native species remain an important element of the programme, other suitable species are included to increase diversity and limit the effects of drought and disease.

QUESTION NO 14

By Councillor Davidson for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Question

What steps is the convener intending to take in order to tackle the attainment gap, following recent SQA results showing a significant increase in the problem?

Answer

We note that SQA figures show that the gap in pass rates for Highers in 2022, between those living in the 20% least-deprived and 20% most-deprived areas of Scotland, was 15 percentage points. Although this was an increase compared to the gap of 8 percentage points in 2021, and 6.5 percentage points in 2020, the gap actually decreased compared to 2019 when it was 17 percentage points (the last time young people sat a formal SQA examination diet). Given that different assessment approaches were used in 2020 and 2021 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is difficult to make direct comparisons with these years and 2022.

We do not yet have data for the gap in Edinburgh in 2022. This will be available to officers in late September, via the Scottish Government's *Insight* website. However, initial analysis of our available data suggests that the pattern of attainment in Edinburgh has followed the national one, ie we expect the gap for 2022 to be smaller than for 2019.

NOTE: This information is drawn from the forthcoming briefing for ECF members on the Poverty Related Attainment Gap.

Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap has been a requirement of all local authorities since the introduction of the Education Act (2016) and the establishment of the National Improvement Framework. The outcome is referred to as:

- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people (NIF Priority 3)

Quality Assurance and Managing Performance

Closing the attainment gap has been a major priority for several years, with a high level of energy and targeted work directed towards this from our central teams, senior leaders and practitioners across schools and early learning centres. Approaches and activities undertaken, have led to a steady improvement in school performance and a narrowing of the gap.

In 2017 we set out the strategy to deliver excellence and equity in education: Edinburgh Learns. This comprised a range of strategic guidance frameworks schools were asked to use to improve quality and consistency across the city. Officers also increased support and challenge of schools that were underperforming. The result was that the gap narrowed, however more work is required, particularly post-pandemic as referred to in the Councillor's question.

The Education Improvement Plan 2021-24 sets out in detail how we meet the aims of the National Improvement Framework and the council's overarching framework for Education was refreshed to become Edinburgh Learns for Life. Almost all of the high level improvements detailed in the Education Improvement Plan 21-24 relate directly or indirectly to closing the poverty related attainment gap.

The Capacity and Risk Register of School Performance is updated regularly through analysis of leadership, data such as SQA and ACEL and school inspections. Officers and senior managers provide intensive levels of support to schools with identified areas for improvement or concerns. This includes:

- Rigorous evaluation of standards & quality reports and school improvement plans
- Guidance re effective strategies to ensure the highest quality teaching and learning
- Participation in inspection follow-through activity to ensure recommendations have been implemented
- Supported self-evaluation visits, including shared classroom experiences to ensure high quality teaching and learning and rigorous self-evaluation

- Performance management of senior leaders and practitioners
- Signposting to relevant professional learning

Culture

Leadership for Equity is the externally accredited approach to change the culture within our schools, to remove the stigma of poverty and to raise aspirations for all. Topics covered include:

- Social justice, equity, poverty and associated implications for school and classroom ethos and culture
- Interpreting data to plan interventions which improve attainment and close the poverty-related attainment gap
- Teaching and learning for equity; working with parents, carers and partners.

This approach has been in its pilot year and will be delivered year on year, as a mandatory programme, to ensure all staff in schools demonstrate attitudes and practices which eradicate poverty related stigma and which enable our most disadvantaged learners to make their best progress in learning

Highly Skilled Workforce

Each year we are training our teachers in The Edinburgh Teachers' Charter. This incorporates the main elements of teaching practice which are known to deliver excellence and equity. To date more than 20% of teachers have taken part in this programme which has exceeded our target. Over the course of the next 2 years we expect that figure to rise to 60%.

Additional Funding

Additional Covid Recovery Funding was allocated (£2,692,000) to schools to secure additional staffing to address gaps in learning. Further funding (£1,238,734) has been allocated to each learning community to appoint a transition teacher to provide targeted support to learners in P5-S3 to address gaps in literacy, numeracy and to support health & wellbeing. Senior leaders have been issued with guidance to encouraging working as a “learning community” for financial, and improvement, planning which ensures both best value and better outcomes for learners. This includes the use of equity funding received as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge 2.0. A Senior Development Officer (Equity and Closing the Gap) has been appointed to support schools in ensuring pupil equity funding is used to support our most disadvantaged learners and to model effective teaching and learning approaches which close the gap and accelerate progress in learning.

Item no 10.15

QUESTION NO 15

**By Councillor Davidson for answer
by the Chair of the Integration Joint
Board at a meeting of the Council on
25 August 2022**

Question

In light of recent freedom of information data showing that some individuals in the NHS Lothian region are waiting for up to eight months for access to PrEP Medication what discussions has he had within the Health and Social Care Partnership about what steps can be taken to improve access?

Answer

An FOI request in June 2022 identified to date in 2022 there was a range of a 90 to 260 day wait for an initial PrEP appointment with an average wait overall was 115 days (i.e. closer to the lower end of the range than the upper end). Nevertheless, having such a long wait for access to initial PrEP appointments is a matter of concern for EHSCP and Lothian Sexual & Reproductive Health Services (LSRHS). LSRHS keeps a waiting list for PrEP so they can gauge the unmet need for PrEP in their area. Following the lifting of COVID restrictions, PrEP demand has increased significantly and has continued to increase. Comparative data for Quarter 1 in the last three financial years has seen PrEP attendances grow from 709 in 2020/21, to 866 in 2021/22, to 1,217 in 2022/23. EHSCP has committed additional resources to PrEP delivery and have recently recruited new team members to increase the number of PrEP clinics available to reduce the waiting time to start PrEP. These additional clinics have been delayed because of the pressures resulting from the recent Monkeypox outbreak and the need to prioritise Monkeypox vaccination. LSRHS will provide these additional clinics over the coming weeks and months to reduce the waiting time for PrEP, so we expect to see an improvement over the coming months. There is already evidence that the current waiting time is now approximately 12 weeks / 84 days.

QUESTION NO 16

**By Councillor Davidson for answer
by the Chair of the Integration Joint
Board at a meeting of the Council on
25 August 2022**

Question (1) How many individuals in target groups have accessed the MVA vaccine?

Answer (1) NHS Lothian Public Health are leading on the promotion and delivery of the vaccine and are working with the Lothian Sexual and Reproductive Health Service, which is hosted and managed by the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership in this.

We have vaccinated 676 high-risk people with the first dose of the monkeypox vaccine as of 18/08/22.

In terms of the programme, supplies of pre-exposure vaccine for Monkeypox were made available to clinics in Scotland on 12th July. In Lothian, the first dose of pre-exposure vaccine was provided at Chalmers Clinic on 14th July. Clinics for the opportunistic vaccination of high-risk Gay, Bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) commenced on 18th July and the first outreach vaccination session to a sex-on-premises venue was held on 19th July. GBMSM at highest risk of Monkeypox are being pro-actively called for vaccination, as well as identified opportunistically via clinics. Lothian Sexual and Reproductive Health Service in conjunction with Health Protection and Public Health colleagues are working as quickly as possible to mitigate the impact of Monkeypox on GBMSM in Lothian by implementing the national targeted pre-exposure vaccination strategy.

Question (2) What discussions he has had with Health and Social Care Partnership Colleagues about promoting the vaccine to at risk groups?

Answer

- (2) NHS Lothian Public Health is leading this work and has been working with Public Health Scotland and the UK Health Security Agency on the Monkeypox response, including taking forward the pre-exposure Monkeypox vaccination programme. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) proposed that vaccination should be offered as soon as feasible to gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) at highest risk due to a large number of contacts, as well as those people with an occupational risk e.g. staff in sexual health clinics. The committee agreed that GBMSM at highest risk could be identified amongst those who attend sexual health services, using markers of high-risk behaviour. These risk criteria would include a recent history of multiple partners, participating in group sex or attending sex on premises venues.

The JCVI recommended that wider vaccination in low risk GBMSM individuals or the general population is **not** advised at this time. In view of the current epidemiology and vaccine supply available, this selective vaccine strategy aims to interrupt transmission in the subset of individuals at increased risk. The JCVI concluded that this would be the best way to bring the current outbreak under control.

Item no 10.17

QUESTION NO 17

By Councillor Dijkstra-Downie for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Question (1) How many bins were removed from Victoria Park in each of the last 5 years?

Answer (1) In 2019 six 80 litre bins were removed from within the park. At the same time ten 240 litre litter bins were sited at the park entrance/exit gates, including bins at the Trinity Academy entrance and the lane that runs between Craighall Avenue and Newhaven Road. The overall capacity for litter in the park (and nearby school) has been increased by approximately 2,300 litres

Question (2) What was the reason for their removal?

Answer (2) It was considered that siting of bins in public parks and greenspaces presents some particular challenges in terms of efficiency, capacity and safety. It was viewed as beneficial to encourage park users to take their waste to strategic locations, usually at entrances and exits, so that the litter bin can be serviced safely without having to drive into or around the greenspace – this reduces the likelihood of vehicles coming into contact with park users and any damage that may be caused to grass.

This is included within approved Bin Siting Policy as approved by [Transport and Environment Committee](#) (see page 27 of link).

Question (3) What assessment has been made since then with regards to litter and waste issues in the park?

Answer (3) Street Cleansing Supervisors and Park Rangers check the park to ensure standards are being maintained and arrange litter picking as required. No significant increase in litter has been noted since this change in 2019.

Item no 10.18

QUESTION NO 18

By Councillor Booth for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Question (1) When did you last meet the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to discuss Gaelic Medium Education, and what was the outcome of the meeting?

Answer (1) Friday 5 August. The Cabinet Secretary was due to meet with GME parents and was going to confirm to them that no site in central Edinburgh had been identified which would be available for the development of a GME secondary school.

Question (2) When did you last meet with representatives from Comann nam Pàrant Dùn Èideann, and what was the outcome of the meeting?

Answer (2) There has been no meeting.

Question (3) What written communication have you had with the Cabinet Secretary or Comann nam Pàrant on the subject of Gaelic Medium Education since you were appointed, and will you publish this?

Answer (3) There has been no written communication.

Question (4) What are the council's plans for engagement with the Gaelic community over options for a site for a GME High School?

Answer (4) There are currently no plans for any further engagement.

Question (5) When will the Education, Children and Families Committee appoint members of the Gaelic Implementation Group, or its successor body?

Answer (5) As with all working groups, the decision on whether to retain the Gaelic Implementation Group will be a decision for the relevant committee. However, future working groups will first be considered as part of the review of political management arrangements to be considered by Council in autumn 2022.

Item no 10.19

QUESTION NO 19

By Councillor Heap for answer by the Leader of the Council at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Question

What plans does the Council have to

- (a) support residents to access help with energy bills and
- (b) to help the extremely large number of residents who very likely will not be able to afford to heat their homes, in particular how vulnerable residents will be supported and whether 'warm banks' in Council-owned buildings are being planned?

Answer

Item 7.5 on the Council agenda provides a full report on additional measures planned by the Council and partners to address the cost of living crisis in Edinburgh driven by rising energy prices.

Within this package of support, the Council 2022/23 budget included an allocation of £100,000 to fund crisis payments for families struggling with energy costs. This funding is being used to support the reduction in fuel poverty across the City of Edinburgh local authority area using Home Energy Scotland's Energy Care Service.

Energy Carers support their clients who are struggling to meet their energy costs and are who are in fuel debt. In most cases the awards made will not exceed £1,000 per household, however the Energy Carer can assess if a higher amount is necessary on a case by case basis. Only households within in the City of Edinburgh area will qualify for this award.

Other actions already in place or proposed in the report to Council include:

- Direct cash payments to low income families
- Additional Council funding for crisis (including energy crisis) grant payments through the Scottish Welfare Fund

- Funding to provide emergency food support projects
- Additional funding and support to build capacity for the income maximisation and money advice sector in Edinburgh
- Additional actions to promote awareness of and access to money advice and crisis support during this winter, and
- Asking the Council leader to write to UK and Scottish Governments urging them to increase welfare payments to those in need, and intensify efforts to increase the uptake of welfare entitlements.

Potential for other actions, including partnership approaches to providing access to warm spaces, are under review and being considered by officers.

QUESTION NO 20

**By Councillor Booth for answer by
the Leader of the Council at a
meeting of the Council on 25 August
2022**

Question

Further to his answer to my question at full council of 30 June 2022, can the council leader clarify that his administration will appoint a group to oversee the development of the council's Gaelic plan and ensure its effective delivery? If not, why not, and if so, when will this be appointed?

Answer

As with all working groups, the decision on whether to retain the Gaelic Implementation Group will be a decision for the relevant committee. However, future working groups will first be considered as part of the review of political management arrangements to be considered by Council in autumn 2022.

Item no 10.21

QUESTION NO 21

By Councillor Booth for answer by the Leader of the Council at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Question

Further to his supplementary answer to my question at full council of 30 June 2022, I am aware that the decision to appoint members of the Licensing Board was made on 26 May 2022, since I was present at that meeting. My question did not ask what date the decision was made - my question asked what were the reasons behind the decision to reduce the size of the board while also creating a new position of vice-convener. He will be aware that the amendment making these changes was in his name.

So can I offer the council leader a third opportunity to answer the question: what were the reasons behind his changes to the Licensing Board?

Answer

Proposals for the appointments of members to Committees, Boards and Joint Boards, including the Licensing Board, and Senior Councillor Responsibility Allowances were presented to the Council meeting on 26 May 2022 (adjourned from 19 May 2022) and were agreed.

Item no 10.22

QUESTION NO 22

By Councillor Mitchell for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Please could the Convener confirm:

Question (1) How many reports have been lodged per year since 2017 relating to missed or late bin collections from the Inverleith Park Allotments on East Fettes Avenue?

Answer (1) There have been a number of missed collection reports for these bins in recent months which have been made directly to officers via email. It has not been possible to quantify the total number across officer email inboxes at this time.

There are no records of missed collections having been raised through the Council contact centre, website, social media or waste service email accounts however

Question (2) If these bins are included within an existing collection route?

Answer (2) Yes.

Question (3) To which address are these bins attached?

Answer (3) East Fettes Avenue (Recreation Department Allotments Inverleith)

Question (4) What is his understanding of why these bins are not being consistently emptied?

Answer (4) My understanding is that the bins are not being presented at the designated collection point.

QUESTION NO 23

By Councillor Whyte for answer by the Convener of the Culture and Communities Committee at a meeting of the Council on 25 August 2022

Question (1) Given the restrictions of the City of Edinburgh District Council Order Confirmation Act 1991, what process was followed to allow Crops in Pots Leith/Earth in Common to undertake the ongoing building project in Leith Links at the former tennis court pavilion?

Please note that the Act states:

Subject to the provisions of this Order there shall not be constructed in any of the parks specified in the first column of the following table any permanent buildings other than buildings of the description specified in the second column of that table in relation to such park:—

¹ <i>Park</i>	² <i>Description of buildings</i>
The Meadows, Bruntsfield Links, Leith Links	Bandstands, public conveniences, police boxes and buildings for housing apparatus for the supply of electricity or gas.

Answer (1) The matter was considered in full at the Finance and Resources Committee on [20 May 2021](#). As the report was on the B Agenda no link can be provided

Question (2) What permissions are in place for the numerous containers and sheds that are on the site?

Answer (2) The containers and sheds are linked to the construction works and are therefore temporary. They are located in the area leased to the tenant.

Question (3) Has any public access/use been secured to the building for wider public use such as the long-standing aim of having public toilets in Leith Links?

Answer (3) See answer 1 above.

Question (4) Does all activity on the site comply in full with the restrictions of the City of Edinburgh District Council Order Confirmation Act 1991 and the requirements on Common Good Land?

Answer (4) See answer 1 above.

Question (5) What contractual obligations have been placed on the organisation by way of lease or other obligation in regard to maintenance of the site, for example in relation to maintenance of the hedges that form the site boundary?

Answer (5) See answer 1 above.

QUESTION NO 24

**By Councillor Biagi for answer by the
Convener of the Planning Committee
at a meeting of the Council on 25
August 2022**

Question

What contact have the Convener of the Planning Committee and/or officials had with the Ministry of Defence about possibly bringing forward the expected date for the disposal of Redford Barracks?

Answer

Officers have recently been in touch with UK Government around the current programme for disposal and whether any acceleration is possible. The matter has also been raised with the Scottish Government. Discussions will take place in the near future and any outcome can be reported back to Members through the appropriate channels.

QUESTION NO 25

**By Councillor Neil Ross for answer
by the Convener of the Transport and
Environment Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 25 August 2022**

Additional parking bays are currently being installed in the B2 PPA in south Morningside. The related process started with a consultation with local residents in 2011 but there have been no subsequent communications until recently. The first direct notification residents received was by letter from the Council a few weeks in advance of bays being painted on the street.

Question (1) Given the passage of time and the limited nature of advertising associated with a TRO, what additional generic publicity was undertaken in relation to this scheme to inform residents in advance of implementation?

Answer (1) The B2 Priority Parking Area (PPA) was first installed in 2012. Minor changes were subsequently made to this PPA in response to concerns raised by residents, with the full statutory TRO process being followed, including a public consultation, on each occasion.

The process of expanding the B2 PPA, to which the current changes relate, started in 2016 with a full consultation carried out in December 2017. At that time information was distributed to almost 2,000 households in the area and almost 500 responses were received to the consultation.

In June 2019 the Transport and Environment Committee decided to proceed to expand B2 in line with the indications of support from residents and in early 2020 the associated Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was advertised. This included statutory consultations with Ward Councillors, Community Council groups and other key stakeholders, as well as a further public consultation.

Since the TRO was advertised, unfortunately there have been some delays in progressing these proposals due to the impact of Covid-19 on services and aspirations to align these changes with wider traffic management proposals for Braidburn Terrace.

- Question** (2) In future, would a leaflet drop into the affected area be an appropriate way to provide notice to residents in advance of the start of implementation of parking schemes?
- Answer** (2) A letter drop was undertaken prior to works starting, with all households in the affected area being issued with details of the proposals and a link to the Council's website where further information has been made available - [B2 priority parking area – The City of Edinburgh Council](#).

QUESTION NO 26

**By Councillor Neil Ross for answer
by the Convener of the Transport and
Environment Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 25 August 2022**

Transport Scotland published a report on Public Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure in Scotland in July 2021. One of its objectives is to encourage the deployment of private capital through partnerships with the public sector, complementing and improving the existing public charging base for electric vehicles. A report to the Transport Committee on 31 March 2022 makes reference to a Scottish Futures Trust Business case with a view to securing funding for a pilot EV Charge points scheme.

Question (1) What progress has been made on this SFT business case, which was due to be completed by the end of April 2022?

Answer (1) An Outline Business Case was submitted to Transport Scotland on 30 June 2022. This followed agreement with them on a revised submission date.

Question (2) Has funding been secured for a pilot EV charge points scheme?

Answer (2) Funding has not yet been secured yet for a pilot EV charge points scheme. The level of funding allocated will not be confirmed until the business case has been considered

Question (3) What engagement has been undertaken with private sector EV charging providers with a view to establishing a partnership approach?

Answer (3) Council officers regularly engage with suppliers on an informal basis. And, as part of the preparation of the Outline Business Case, a formal Prior Information Notice to suppliers was published at the end of 2021. This sought to better understand EV operating models and opportunities for the city and the supplier responses were used to inform the Outline Business Case.

In order to gather intelligence and finalise the full Business Case, it is proposed to host a Supplier Day to further engage with EV Charging Providers. This will incorporate individual sessions to explore the potential for commercial partnerships and related delivery models.

Question (4) When are proposals likely to be brought forward for consideration by councillors?

Answer (4) Subject to a positive response to supplier engagement, it is hoped that a finalised Business Case will be presented to Elected Members for approval by the end of the 2022/23 financial year.