

Questions and Answers

City of Edinburgh Council

10.00 am Thursday, 22nd September, 2022

Main Council Chamber - City Chambers

Questions and Answers

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Agenda Annex

Item no 10.1

QUESTION NO 1

By Councillor Younie for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

Question (1) What action is being taken to reduce the enormous waiting times for young people to receive appointments from Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS)?

Answer (1) CAMHS is an NHS service, the response provided is in relation to what the Council has in place in relation to waiting times.

The City of Edinburgh has put in place a £1.343m budget from the Scottish Government allocated across the four localities to successfully deliver mental health supports to divert children and young people from CAMHS, this should help CAMHS to reduce their waiting lists. Edinburgh is one of the few local authorities in Scotland to also create a profession of School Counsellors based in all 23 secondary schools who deliver services to our young people – to divert away from CAMHS referrals to again allow waiting lists to be addressed by CAMHS. Each secondary school also provided funding for a wellbeing hub.

Every school has also retained their Educational Psychologist with set levels of service, this does not happen in some other authorities. Psychological Services have worked with the NHS to establish Wellbeing Academies in 50 schools. We also deliver support to families via Barnardos, Children 1st and Canongate Youth through a programme called Edinburgh Together.

Question (2) What outsourcing is being utilised to address these unsustainable waiting times?

Answer (2) CAMHS have outsourced part of their waiting list to take forward Autism Diagnoses. Council outsourcing is to Third Sector organisations as detailed above.

Question (3) What support is being provided to care givers and parents to support them alongside those in their care

Answer (3) Edinburgh has established the *We Matter* team to address support for care experienced children and young people. This team has a manager, a psychologist and a teacher working to help the Care Experienced. Work is in progress to commission the services of a psychologist and two trainee psychologists to provide support across our residential estate and foster care services.

Social workers will offer direct support to children and their care givers. They will also link with third sector and voluntary organisations to identify other supports as well as linking with schools.

In situations of significant need we commission trained psychiatric nurses to support parents and children and to also support staff in our residential units and social work teams. We have also commissioned therapeutic supports for specific children on occasions.

We have been working with partner agencies in the four Locality Operational Groups (LOGs) to problem solve and to meet local needs. Since April 2020 they have dealt with 550 individual needs forms. 139 related to Mental health difficulties and 57 related to parents' mental health.

Item no 10.2

QUESTION NO 2

By Councillor Flannery for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

Question

Given we are 5 weeks into the new academic year, with regards the placement of Ukrainian Refugee Children can the Convener give figures for:

- a) How many children have been placed with a school, the names of the schools and the numbers each school has taken?
- b) How many are still on the waiting list?
- c) What contingency plans are in place for those waiting and for any future children coming to Edinburgh?

Answer

- a) Total number of children enrolled in schools = 492.

There are 319 children in temporary accommodation so far. This is from the 492 who have enrolled in our schools

| SCHOOL | No of Ukrainian CYP enrolled |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Abbeyhill PS | 1 |
| Balerno Community HS | 5 |
| Balgreen PS | 2 |
| Bonally PS | 1 |
| Boroughmuir HS | 1 |
| Broughton PS | 7 |
| Bruntsfield PS | 3 |
| Carrick Knowe PS | 2 |
| Castlebrae Community HS | 32 |
| Castleview Primary School | 17 |
| Clerminston | 3 |
| Colinton | 1 |
| Corstorphine | 5 |
| Craigentinney | 1 |
| Craigentinney EYC | 1 |
| Craiglockhart PS | 4 |
| Craigmillar EYC | 3 |

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Craigmount HS | 2 |
| Craigour Park PS | 1 |
| Craigroyston CHS | 1 |
| Ceamond PS | 1 |
| Currie CHS | 2 |
| Currie PS | 3 |
| Dalmeny PS | 1 |
| Dalry PS | 5 |
| Davidson's Main PS | 3 |
| Dean Park PS | 1 |
| Drummond CHS | 13 |
| Duddingston PS | 3 |
| East Craigs PS | 3 |
| Firrhill HS | 1 |
| Flora Stevenson PS | 2 |
| Fox Covert PS | 1 |
| Gracemount PS | 2 |
| Granton PS | 3 |
| Gylemuir PS | 3 |
| Hermitage Park PS | 11 |
| James Gillespie PS | 7 |
| Juniper Green PS | 1 |
| Leith Academy | 102 |
| Leith Primary School | 10 |
| Leith Walk PS | 3 |
| Liberton HS | 1 |
| Liberton PS | 1 |
| Lorne PS | 20 |
| Niddrie Mill PS | 1 |
| Oxgangs ELC | 2 |
| Oxgangs PS | 1 |
| Pentland PS | 2 |
| Parsons Green PS | 1 |
| Pirniehall PS | 1 |
| Portobellos HS | 4 |
| Preston Street PS | 1 |
| Queensferry Community HS | 1 |
| Roseburn PS | 5 |
| Royal Mile PS | 4 |
| Sciennes PS | 5 |
| St Andrew Fox Covert PS | 1 |
| St Augustines RC HS | 3 |
| St John Vianney PS | 4 |
| St Marys RC PS | 27 |
| St Peter's PS | 7 |
| St Thomas Aquin | 2 |
| Stockbridge PS | 3 |
| The Royal High School | 4 |
| Tollcross PS | 2 |
| Towerbank PS | 2 |
| Trinity Academy | 9 |

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Trinity PS | 32 |
| Tynecastle HS | 10 |
| Victoria PS | 55 |
| Victoria EYC | 6 |
| Viewforth EYC | 1 |
| TOTAL | 492 |

- b) As this figure is not held centrally we have to ask for a return from schools and will provide this snapshot before Council meets.
- c) We have expanded the team supporting the Ukrainian children and young people, including more teachers, bilingual support assistants and a Senior Education Officer. Previously we had scoped out additional contingency arrangements such as creating a 'Ukraine School', creating flexible timetables and increased outdoor education. To date we have only taken the outdoor education work stream forward.

We will allocate future placement requests across the city until we are at capacity. We are now centrally enrolling all Ukrainian families by asking them to apply electronically for a school and ELC place. Places will be allocated within 5 days maximum.

Item no 10.3

QUESTION NO 3

By Councillor Parker for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

Question

Given the decision at Transport & Environment Committee on 27th October 2015 to phase out the use of glyphosate by the council, what work has been done on this already, and how close are we to seeing all use of glyphosate ended?

Answer

Although the use of glyphosate is permitted for use by the SNP/Green Government, the Council has trialled the use of alternative chemicals, notably acid-based products that are increasingly coming onto the market.

At its meeting of [27 February 2020](#) Transport and Environment Committee considered introducing a trial of “Foamstream” in Balerno. This trial went ahead in 2021 with the conclusion that it was not a viable alternative on a city-wide basis for the treatment of street weeds. An update on the use of Glyphosate and the outcome of the trial in Balerno was reported to the Transport and Environment Committee on [31 March 2022](#).

This most recent update summarised the progress made in reducing the use of glyphosate across the city.

Officers are now progressing the steps outlined in the March update and hope to bring a report on the maintenance of cycle and footpaths to Transport and Environment Committee in December 2022 which will outline how an integrated approach to weed control can be further developed.

To reduce the use of chemicals even further, the most efficient long-term solution to tackle unwanted weed growth requires an integrated approach, including an increase in the frequency use of mechanical sweepers to remove the

build-up of organic detritus from road and pavement surfaces alongside people and communities weeding themselves, reducing the need for glyphosate to be applied. Viable alternatives and other developing products and methods will continue to be explored.

It must be noted, however, that many of the alternative approaches are more expensive. So whilst Edinburgh's administration has a desire to reduce glyphosate use to zero, we recognise that cuts the SNP/Green Gov are inflicting on our capital are a barrier to this. Nonetheless, I would welcome discussions on this issue ahead of the 2023/24 budget.

Item no 10.4

QUESTION NO 4

**By Councillor Staniforth for answer
by the Convener of the Education,
Children and Families Committee at a
meeting of the Council on 22
September 2022**

Question (1) Why was Abbeyhill Primary School shut down for two days on the 12th and 13th of September, creating severe disruption for some parents, despite access to the school being possible and the school being nowhere near the likely crowds created by the Queen's funeral procession?

Answer (1) The closures were included within the **City Wide Operation Unicorn Plan** which stated:

- *Schools Closures. Following extensive consultation, it has been agreed that only those schools inside the restricted areas will need to close for the duration of the Operation. The schools that will close from D+1 will be The Royal Mile Primary School, Abbeyhill Primary School and The Cowgate Nursery*
- *Education and Children's Services will be notified via the Council notification and activation plan. Once notified, colleagues within the Department will notify the Headteachers of the 3 schools affected to activate the closure plan*

Question (2) Why was it not possible to have provision for vulnerable children, at least, in Abbeyhill rather than located at Leith Walk given some vulnerable children react badly to change?

Answer (2) We were instructed that the school could not open due to the absence of critical FM staff who were deployed for Operation Unicorn.

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 22 September 2022

Question (1) What progress has been made on plans to upgrade the junction of Queensferry Road with Clermiston Road North?

Answer (1) A contract has been awarded for this project. However, the start date has been revised to address a conflict with utility works and other road improvement works in the area and elsewhere along the Queensferry Road corridor.

Question (2) When he expects work will begin on implementing these plans?

Answer (2) It is now proposed to undertake the work in early 2023, with specific dates being subject to contractor availability, school holiday dates, and road works registration and co-ordination requirements.

Question (3) Given this junction lies on the walking route for many pupils attending the Royal High, what discussions have been had with local residents to inform the plans?

Answer (3) The consultation for this scheme included discussions with the Parent Council at Royal High School. All of the issues raised have been considered as part of the design process, including in particular, crossing at this junction.

During the works a safe walking route will be maintained at all times. Temporary traffic lights including a pedestrian crossing phase will be in operation at times when the permanent signals are switched off. Following your question, I will ensure Ward Councillors and local residents are notified approximately two weeks before work commences.

Item no 10.6

QUESTION NO 6

By Councillor Caldwell for answer by the Convener of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

In 2018, the Housing and Economy Committee approved the Mixed Tenure Strategy which included Acquisitions & Disposals.

In September 2021, the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee approved the expansion of the Acquisitions and Disposals purchase criteria to include the purchase of homes in blocks where the Council owns 50% or more to increase the pool of homes that could be purchased to help address homelessness pressures.

This is reported on annually and most recently in July 2022.

- Question** (1) Of the total number of Disposals since the scheme began, how many Disposed flats are ground floor accessible properties and as such, are of high importance to ensure the Council's housing stock is accessible to people with physical disabilities?
- Answer** (1) Since the scheme began the Council has sold 20 ground floor properties in blocks where the Council was a minority owner. However, all ground floor properties are not necessarily fully accessible and may have steps leading into the property.
- Question** (2) How many Disposed flats were in stairwells or high-rise blocks with lifts?
- Answer** (2) The Council has disposed of five flats with lift access in blocks where the Council was a minority owner.
- Question** (3) How many Acquisitions since the scheme begun are ground floor flats, or otherwise accessible without the need for a lift or stairs?
- Answer** (3) Since the scheme began the Council has purchased 24 ground floor homes in blocks where it already owns at least 50% of the homes. The Council has also purchased 13 main door houses.

Question (4) Does the Convener agree with me that ground floor Council flats are of strategic importance in communities of high tenement density, such as Leith, Southside, Dalry and Stockbridge, where the stock of semi-detached properties is severely limited?

Answer (4) Ensuring Edinburgh has an adequate supply of affordable and accessible housing is very important. Before any homes are disposed of on the open market, ownership checks are carried out in the stair to determine whether any Registered Social Landlords currently have a presence and whether they would be interested in purchasing the home directly. If this is unsuccessful, the home is offered to the Council's Private Sector Leasing (PSL) delivery partner, Link Housing Association, prior to being sold on the open market. This is to ensure, wherever possible, homes can remain in the affordable sector.

Item no 10.7

QUESTION NO 7

By Councillor Caldwell for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

On Thursday 1st September 2022, the Transport and Environment Committee approved the TRO and the report outlining an expansion of Controlled Parking Zones into the areas of Pilrig, Leith Walk, Abbeyhill, Craigentiny and Shandon, among others.

These new Controlled Parking Zones contain Statutory Conservation Areas such as Leith Walk and Pilrig, which are intended to preserve and enhance the character of the areas.

Can the Transport and Environment Convener please confirm;

Question (1) Will the Parking Review department maintain a strong working relationship with the Planning department to ensure that the character of these two Conservation Areas are not negatively impacted by the introduction of furniture, including ticket machines and new signage?

Answer (1) Yes. Although with parking signage there is often a legal requirement to identify parking restrictions, every effort will be made to minimise the introduction of any new signs and poles. Existing street furniture, such as lamp columns, will be used to accommodate any necessary signs where it is possible to do so. Officers will also be seeking permission from residents and businesses to erect signage on their property, such as on walls and railings, wherever possible. There will be significantly fewer ticket machines in comparison to existing parking zones as these are only being proposed for areas where there is likely to be a high demand for paid public parking.

Question (2) What considerations are being given to minimise new street furniture on pavements and make use of existing infrastructure, to ensure the Council continues our dedication to the 'Cut the Pavement Clutter project', alongside Living Streets UK and Paths for All?

Answer

(2) Please see answer 1 above.

QUESTION NO 8

By Councillor Caldwell for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

The Scottish Government have announced a proposed £150m of funding for Active Travel across the country, including proposals to double the funding of the National Cycle Network in 2023.

The semi-abandoned railway line between Saint Mark's Park and Abbeyhill could provide a vital path linking the areas to Pilrig, Leith Walk, Allanfield and Easter Road and signal a major expansion of the North Edinburgh Path Network to the east of the City and facilitate easier walking, wheeling and cycling.

The Council's Active Travel team are currently conducting a feasibility study which is due later this year.

Can the Transport and Environment Convener please confirm;

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Question | (1) What additional resource have the Active Travel team been allocated to conduct the feasibility study? |
| Answer | (1) A dedicated project manager has been allocated to this study as part of the Council's Active Travel Investment Programme. |
| Question | (2) What representations have been made so far to national bodies, such as Transport Scotland, to deliver funding for the proposed project? |
| Answer | (2) To date, no direct representations have been made to Transport Scotland or any other national body about this project. |
| Question | (3) What representations have been made so far to charities and third sector organisations, such as Sustrans, to deliver funding for the proposed project? |

Answer (3) The Council has been allocated funding from Sustrans' Places for Everyone programme for the Active Travel Investment Programme, which includes the feasibility study for the Powderhall Railway active travel route.

No representations have been made to any other charities/ third sector organisations as the only realistic source of this nature is Transport Scotland funding via Sustrans.

Question (4) Now the 'Spaces for People' and the 'Travelling Safely ETRO' consultations have concluded, can the Convener assure me that appropriate Officer time will be dedicated to the Powderhall Active Travel Project, which was first discussed by the North East Locality back in 2018?

Answer (4) Yes, as noted in question 1, a project manager is now dedicated to this important project.

Item no 10.9

QUESTION NO 9

**By Councillor Neil Ross for answer
by the Convener of the Finance and
Resources Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 22 September 2022**

The Council is currently facing soaring energy costs while working on its transition to net-zero.

Question (1) What action is the Council taking, in addition to previously announced plans, to further reduce its carbon footprint and its energy bill by implementing energy saving measures in its workplaces and public buildings?

Answer (1) A review of control schedules is already underway with the aim of trimming run hours of plant where possible, whilst meeting service requirements. To support this, core hours have been agreed with Education and Catering, and processes are in place to accommodate heating requirements for lets. Whilst this is standard energy management, increases in gas prices bring focus, and it is expected that there will be deliverable savings with minimal impact to services.

Further opportunities to deliver immediate savings on energy spend in operational buildings are also under consideration. This includes proposals to limit building temperatures (except in residential units and special schools).

Question (2) Will officers report on these actions to the Finance and Resources Committee?

Answer (2) These operational decisions do not require formal political approval, but an update will be included in a future Business Bulletin for Finance and Resources Committee.

The Energy Management Policy for Operational Buildings report will be taken to Policy and Sustainability Committee in January 2023 and wider activities in relation to the Council's net zero strategy will be covered in the Carbon Emissions Reduction Report going to Policy and Sustainability Committee in November 2022.

Question (3) If so, when is a report likely to be presented?

Answer **(3)** See above.

Item no 10.10

QUESTION NO 10

**By Councillor Neil Ross for answer
by the Convener of the Finance and
Resources Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 22 September 2022**

So much electricity is expended by keeping stair lights on in blocks of flats in the middle of the night when very few people are coming and going. I understand that, where the Council pays for the provision and maintenance of stair lighting, consideration is being given by officers to the installation of movement sensors so that lighting would be on only when people are moving in the stair.

Question (1) How many stairwells is the Council responsible for lighting?

Answer (1) The Council currently pays for the energy costs for common stair lighting in blocks of flats across the city. There is no data held on how many blocks this relates to.

The Council carries out repairs and maintenance of stair lighting in blocks where it has ownership of a property or properties. This means that the Council could carry out repairs and maintenance in around 4,500 blocks. The Council owns 100% of properties in 724 blocks.

Question (2) Would this be a suitable project to finance from the Council's Spend to Save fund?

Answer (2) I will look into this with officers and will report back to Councillors as soon as possible.

Question (3) If so, when is a proposal likely to be presented to the Finance & Resources Committee for consideration?

Answer (3) See response to Question 2 above.

Item no 10.11

QUESTION NO 11

By Councillor Booth for answer by the Leader of the Council at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

Question

Further to his supplementary answer to my question at full council of 25 August 2022, the council leader has again failed to answer the question. Can I give him another opportunity to answer the question: what were the reasons behind his proposal to reduce the size of the licensing board while also creating a new position of vice-convener?

Answer

The appointments of members to Committees, Boards and Joint Boards, including the Licensing Board were agreed at the Council meeting on 26 May 2022 (adjourned from 19 May 2022).

Item no 10.12

QUESTION NO 12

By Councillor Booth for answer by the Leader of the Council at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

Further to his answer to my question at full council of 25 August 2022, can the council leader outline:

- Question** (1) when he met with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and what were the outcomes of that discussion?
- Answer** (1) Councillor Day will meet Shona Niclinnein from Bòrd na Gàidhlig on 29/09/2022 at 4pm
- Question** (2) whether he has any plans to meet with members of the Gaelic community in Edinburgh?
- Answer** (2) Future meetings will be considered following the above meeting

Item no 10.13

QUESTION NO 13

By Councillor Booth for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

- Question** (1) What are the council's next steps in identifying a site for a GME High School?
- Answer** (1) There are currently no proposals for any further work to be carried out in relation to identifying a site for a GME secondary school. A statutory consultation proposal to establish a dedicated secondary school was submitted to Committee for consideration but it was not approved to progress. There are no sites available in the city centre for a GME secondary school therefore no more work is planned to develop that option.
- Question** (2) Will the council undertake a full options appraisal, including engagement with the Gaelic community, on the options identified so far as potential sites for a GME High School?
- Answer** (2) As there are no sites available in the city centre for a GME secondary school, there are currently no plans for any further work to be carried out on the options identified so far as potential sites for a GME secondary school.
- Question** (3) What are the council's plans to open a second GME primary school?
- Answer** (3) As there are no sites available in the city centre for a GME secondary school this means that a second primary school cannot be developed as there will be insufficient capacity in secondary provision. The decision to not go forward with statutory consultation means that the option of Liberton and the second primary was not able to be taken forward..
- Question** (4) What is the pupil capacity of the Darroch annex?

- Answer** (4) It is estimated that the notional capacity of James Gillespie's High School will be 1900 when the new annexe is open. The annexe provides about 450 places of this notional capacity. The capacity of any secondary school is only considered notional because the number of pupils a school can accommodate is not only determined by the size of a building but also by the number and type of spaces available, the way those spaces are timetabled, the courses offered, the number of staff and the way pupils are spread across year groups. Many schools regularly and consistently operate beyond their notional capacity.
- Question** (5) When will Darroch reach capacity, if Taobh na Pairce were to remain as the only GME primary school?
- Answer** (5) The current roll projections estimate that James Gillespie's High School notional capacity will be exceeded in 2025.
- Question** (6) What funding was received from the Scottish Government towards the Darroch refurbishment, and what conditions were attached to that funding?
- Answer** (6) £4m was received from the Scottish Government. The grant was made available to develop a Secondary Gaelic Annex at Darroch House in preparation for establishing a dedicated GME High School, establish a second GME Primary School and expand Early Years provision. A statutory consultation proposal to establish a dedicated secondary school and expand primary GME was submitted to Committee for consideration but it was not approved to progress. The Scottish Government have been fully informed that this is the current situation relating to the grant.
- Question** (7) What are the next steps in developing the council's strategy for Gaelic?
- Answer** (7) A report has been submitted to the Education, Children and Families Committee for consideration.

Item no 10.14

QUESTION NO 14

By Councillor Aston for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

Question (1) Has the Transport and Environment Convener had any discussions on the reliability and accuracy of the bus tracker app since the formation of the administration?

Answer (1) Discussions have taken place with Lothian Buses in respect of the Lothian Buses bus tracker app since an issue was highlighted at the Council meeting on 25 August 2022. Lothian Buses have provided the following update:

Our app shows the predicted real time arrival of any journey based on the timetable verses the location of the individual bus. The app can't predict congestion or other delays that may yet not have been encountered by the bus.

Additionally, if the bus has not moved for an extended time period, for example at a driver swap over where there is a knock-on effect of the relief driver having been delayed on their previous journey, the trip may revert to an estimated time until the bus is on the move again. Buses are occasionally removed from the app where the bus is no longer able to continue its journey for operational reasons

Question (2) What steps has he taken to progress improvements, in conjunction with Lothian Bus, to improve the reliability and accuracy of the bus tracker app?

Answer (2) Lothian bus and tram app is in constant development both in terms of customer functionality and accessibility to ensure that it reflects the needs of digital customers.

Council officers are not aware of any on-going issues with the Lothian Buses bus tracker app but there are a number of apps (20+) available, which although the source data is the same, will provide information in slightly different ways and so may experience issues. I've based the answer on the Lothian Buses app – which is that one I use and trust.

Although the App is incredibly important, Edinburgh's Administration continues to support and invest in on-street information screens as part of a renewed commitment to support and expand public transport. Our aim is to transform the on-street system within 12 months:

1. The first 30 new screens will be installed on Princes Street, Queensferry Street and Shandwick Place.
2. The new screens will be full colour, and capable of showing multi operator real time information, as well as disruption information and emergency information.
3. The screens will also be capable of displaying other information from the Council.
4. It is planned to finish installing all 429 signs by mid-2023, with the creation of around 80 new sites in Edinburgh

Technology moves quickly within the industry and the Administration is committed to taking advantage of it where possible. We are exploring new technologies all the time one of which is the use of a SIRI SX data feed, which will allow operators to update our signs with live disruption information i.e. congestion or road diversions. This is in its infancy and not being used anywhere else in the country, but we hope that it can be used on our system.

Item no 10.15

QUESTION NO 15

By Councillor Aston for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

Question

What engagement has the Transport and Environment Convener had with the UK Government regarding electric scooters?

Answer

None. I have also not engaged with the corporate entities lobbying myself and other Councillors on this issue.

I have little interest in these devices due to the many concerns regarding their use and storage raised by charities representing people with visual impairments.

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association - *“Guide Dogs research shows that nearly 75% of people with sight loss who have encountered an e-scooter have had a negative experience. Visually impaired people are already being forced to change their behaviour because of e-scooters, with some changing their regular routes and others not leaving home alone.”*

I note, however, that at least one manufacturer is engaging with RNIB to understand how the challenges e-scooters represent may be addressed.

E-scooters are currently banned on public roads and footpaths in Scotland, and I share the concerns of many people about how this is being enforced.

Based on recent trials, more information is expected from the Department of Transport. This was expected in May 2022, but has not yet come forward. I support calls from The Guide Dogs for the Bind Association for the UK Government to publish their data ASAP:

<https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/blog/guide-dogs-responds-to-government-decision-to-extend-e-scooter-trials> .

Item no 10.16

QUESTION NO 16

**By Councillor Campbell for answer
by the Convener of the Transport and
Environment Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 22 September 2022**

Following the strike action the administration has put in place plans for a clean-up. Constituents in Portobello Craigmillar have been in touch to say that their bins were missed during this period and some collections have not taken place for four or five weeks. To ask the convener:

Question (1) Why the administration's plan for the clean-up did not prioritise all grey bins being collected, at least once, ahead of second collections or other types of waste collections?

Answer (1) Council staff did an incredible job to get the collection system back on its feet following strike action which could have been avoided if the SNP/Green Government had entered constructive discussions earlier. Staff had to simultaneously restart and maintain existing collection schedules whilst also clearing a huge backlog during a short period of time between the end of the first strike action and the proposed second one starting.

Residents were advised that they could present excess waste alongside general and mixed recycling kerbside bins. Within the recovery plan, glass and garden collections remained suspended, to prioritise resources to both kerbside, communal general waste and mixed recycling bins.

However, given the late notice of the suspended strike action (confirmation that the second period of strike action was not going ahead on 6 September was received late on 2 September) there was not sufficient time to change plans, to inform staff and communicate to residents.

Question (2) Why the administration's plan has resulted in some bins not being collected for over a month?

Answer (2) Individual bins are collected on a fortnightly schedule – general waste one week and mixed recycling the next – therefore there is normally 14 days between collections. This meant that approximately 25% of kerbside properties would have waited 28 days for a collection.

Question (3) To ask, from the last collection prior to strike action;

- a) How many kerbside grey bins did not have an uplift for 28 days or more?
- b) How many communal general waste bins did not have an uplift for 28 days or more?

Answer (3) a) Approximately 23% of households would have waited 28 days – this includes my own household and many others in my Ward. Their last collection of general waste would have been on 4 and 5 August. Collections restarted on 30 August, with double collections of general waste and mixed recycling for affected properties. This was planned to take account of the second strike period planned to begin on 6 September.

b) Thanks to the hard work of staff, there was no communal collection that went more than 28 days between collections.

Item no 10.17

QUESTION NO 17

**By Councillor Campbell for answer
by the Convener of the Culture and
Communities Committee at a
meeting of the Council on 22
September 2022**

The review of Lifelong Learning was launched on 8 June and the formal consultation process has now concluded. Councillors were not briefed ahead of the review and there was no report to committee. Can the convener confirm:

- Question** (1) Was she briefed ahead of the review?
- Answer** (1) Following my appointment as Convener of Culture and Communities I was verbally briefed by officers on the Lifelong Learning Review on June 16th.
- Question** (2) Did she agree that it was not politically sensitive and so councillors did not need to be informed?
- Answer** (2) Organisational Reviews are always taken forward at officer level.
- Question** (3) Who made the decision that it was not politically sensitive?
- Answer** (3) The preparation for this organisational review began in 2019 and, in recognition of the political interest in the services affected by the review, the proposed realignment of responsibilities was reported to the Policy and Sustainability Committee on 25 February 2020 (B Agenda). The organisational review consultation commenced shortly after this date but was paused due to the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19). The review consultation restarted in early June 2022 and followed the Council's policy for Managing Change.
- Question** (4) Have any management committees yet had discussions on future arrangements?
- Answer** (4) All Community Centre Management Committees were informed about the review.
- Question** (5) If not, when does she expect these discussions to commence?

- Answer** (5) While the formal consultation with staff has now closed, the structure and associated changes of responsibilities have not yet been finalised. Once this has been completed, staff will go through a period of matching and assignment to appoint them into roles within the new structure. Conversations with stakeholders, including management committees, will commence once the future service structures are in place.
- Question** (6) When will a report come in front of councillors to set out any changes to the relationship between management committees and CEC lifelong learning staff based in community centres?
- Answer** (6) I have asked officers to bring a report to Culture and Communities Committee as early as possible, updating members on how the Council will work with Community Centres going forward.

Item no 10.18

QUESTION NO 18

By Councillor Dobbin for answer by the Convener of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

- Question** (1) Why was the Agenda Planning Meeting for the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee rearranged three times?
- Answer** (1) The APM was rearranged due to leave in exceptional circumstances and when Monday 19th was declared as a bank holiday following the death of HM the Queen.
- Question** (2) Does the convener recognise that with many members working part time, rearranging with short notice could be a barrier to participation?
- Answer** (2) Every attempt will be made to retain scheduled APM dates.

QUESTION NO 19

**By Councillor Kumar for answer by
the Convener of the Education,
Children and Families Committee at a
meeting of the Council on 22
September 2022**

It is well known that both James Gillespie's and
Boroughmuir are over-subscribed but this is also the case
for residents living within the catchment area. The knock on
effect of this means that 'new' residents within the
catchment area are not able to get a place.

To ask the convener:

Question (1) How many schools are oversubscribed across the city?

Answer (1) A total number of seven primary schools were
oversubscribed when the waiting lists were passed to
schools at the start of session and had catchment children
on waiting lists.

A total number of two secondary schools were
oversubscribed when the waiting lists were passed to
schools at the start of session and had catchment children
on waiting lists.

Question (2) How many placing requests are refused for residents within
catchment areas (this is to include new residents)?

Answer (2) Please note that children who are in the catchment are by
24 December of each year are guaranteed places.
Thereafter, children are placed on waiting lists.

Item no 10.20

QUESTION NO 20

**By Councillor Macinnes for answer
by the Convener of the Finance and
Resources Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 22 September 2022**

Question (1) How much has the council spent on contractors and agency staff since the start of the administration?

Answer (1) Recorded spend on agency staffing in the period between April and August 2022 was £8.2m, representing around 3% of the Council's overall paybill, inclusive of on-costs.

Question (2) Is the total spend expected to increase this financial year compared to the last year?

Answer (2) Expenditure in the year to date is higher than at the equivalent point in 2021/22. This increase needs to be seen, however, in the light of exceptional labour market pressures for permanent staffing and significant unforeseen and continuing external demands, such as support for the Council's response in the resettlement of Ukrainian refugees, alongside delivery of other key services.

The overall position for the year will reflect the impact of the remedial actions noted in the response to Question (3).

Question (3) What action is the convener taking to reduce the levels of contracted and agency staff?

Answer (3) Given external recruitment challenges, a targeted approach with additional promotional methods has been successful in filling cleaning vacancies thus reducing dependency on agency and overtime spend. A similar approach is being explored to target pressures in Waste and Cleansing. On-going implementation of organisational reviews should also contribute positively to avoiding any unplanned use of agency staffing.

Item no 10.21

QUESTION NO 21

**By Councillor Macinnes for answer
by the Leader of the Council at a
meeting of the Council on 22
September 2022**

Question

How many meetings has the Council Leader had which were also attended by Conservative Group Leader Councillor Iain Whyte since the formation of the administration in May 2022?

Answer

Councillor Whyte has been afforded the same opportunities to meet with me as all other group leaders including the questioners. I hope group leaders take the opportunity to work constructively with me.

QUESTION NO 22

**By Councillor Macinnes for answer
by the Leader of the Council at a
meeting of the Council on 22
September 2022**

Question

At the June Full Council it was unanimously agreed by Council, following my motion which was constructively amended by Green and Liberal Democrat contributions, that we would receive a report on the establishment of a Young Person's Assembly within two committee cycles. Can the Leader tell us what interventions he has made, before receiving this question, to ensure that this vital contribution to effective policymaking and implementation will be brought forward?

Answer

I am aware of numerous actions and interventions which ensure young people's voice contributes to policy-making. Some are past with current influence, some remain current, and some are new. They include:

- What Kind of Edinburgh, Youth Talk and Young Edinburgh Action
- the Rights Respecting Schools programme
- Scottish Youth Parliament - Eleven MSYPs attend City of Edinburgh Council schools, eight are young women and three are from a Black and Minority Ethnic background
- All schools have pupil councils, or equivalent, with a range of approaches in place to ensure pupil voice plays a key part in school life and in decision-making
- We hosted a Youth Climate Action Summit in February 2020 with more than 100 S1-S3 young people. 12 students from six high schools participated in an online session to gauge views on COP26 and climate change. Funded by YouthLink Scotland, Edinburgh schools have developed 1.5 Max - an international online and classroom-based climate education initiative

- All schools have a Pupil Equalities Co-ordinator and in June 2022, young people in pupil-led equalities groups met to share ideas and explore what support they need.
- In November 2020, 21 senior phase students from 14 high schools took part in an online consultation about COVID.

QUESTION NO 23

By Councillor Nicolson for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

Question

As a Council we have previously recognised the extreme difficulties caused for some residents as a result of flooding following major rainfall events, something we are seeing happen more frequently as a result of climate changes. One practical issue which has emerged is the supply of sandbags at appropriate times for some elderly or disabled residents who cannot collect them in person from fire service stations, as is the current practice.

What solutions to this would the Convener suggest that can be implemented effectively ahead of the winter season?

Answer

There can be no doubt that Climate Change is resulting in an increased frequency of short, intense rainfall events which often lead to surface water flooding in the city.

Recent years have shown these can happen during summer or winter seasons. During a flood event, Council Officers work hard to prioritise collective measures to reduce the risk of flooding to large numbers of homes, such as closing flood gates, clearing culvert grilles, and erecting barriers when required.

I have spoken to two groups of residents this month who are facing flood risk – one community is recognised as being at “high” risk of surface flooding by SEPA. For them, this really is a “Climate Emergency”. I can assure you they are not interested in free sandbags, they want the Council to take steps to reduce and manage runoff in partnership with Scottish Water. They recognise, however, that SNP/Green Government cuts to Edinburgh’s budget make this increasingly difficult. I would welcome discussions with all political groups on this issue ahead on the 2023/24 budget process.

Additionally, many other residents are concerned about the amount of sewage being discharged to Edinburgh’s rivers

from Scottish Water's overloaded network during rainfall events. Indeed, it has been reported that Portobello Beach was found to be contaminated by sewage in July & August: <https://theferret.scot/sewage-pollution-scottish-beaches/>

Nonetheless, I would encourage all residents to understand their own flood risk (check the SEPA flood map here: <https://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmaps>) and to prepare accordingly using the Council's advice: <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/flooding>

This may involve enlisting help from friends, family or neighbours where sandbags are required. These should be collected from fire stations in advance of heavy rain. However, whilst a lack of funding means it is not possible to commit to individual deliveries of sandbags to homes, if individual residents have no alternative support available to them, I will ask that Council officers endeavour to assist where sufficient notice is given, and consider the proactive issue of synthetic sandbags where people have mobility issues. Ahead of this winter season, I will ensure the Council will use various sources of communication to inform residents of the support available, being mindful that not everyone has access to the internet or social media.

QUESTION NO 24

**By Councillor McFarlane for answer
by the Leader of the Council at a
meeting of the Council on 22
September 2022**

Question (1) What assurances has the Leader had from BT about the removal of the unnecessary street clutter represented by redundant BT phone boxes?

Answer (1) I met with BT in July. BT confirmed they are removing the obsolete phone boxes. Others have been used to frequently make emergency calls and will remain while planning applications have been submitted to convert others to BT Plus points.

Question (2) By what deadline does he expect the work to have been undertaken?

Answer (2) Council officers have been in on-going discussions with BT on this issue and an agreement is being sought. BT have a legal duty to provide payphone coverage and their view is that phone boxes are not redundant and are required meet demand and to support household WIFI infrastructure.

Officers are investigating all channels that will allow partnership working with BT to improve the appearance of phone boxes and encourage rationalisation of assets on street.

I have contacted BT to provide me with an update including timescales.

QUESTION NO 25

By Councillor Aston for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 22 September 2022

Question (1) Given the impact of winter conditions on the city's transport, roads and infrastructure, what actions has the Transport and Environment Convener taken to ensure that the winter maintenance programme is being prepared effectively and what further actions does he plan to take between now and the beginning of the winter?

Answer (1) I recognise that residents are concerned that insufficient roads and footpaths are treated in response to cold weather, and this can result in increased hospital admissions.

Whilst the Edinburgh's Administration aspires to increase funding to this service as part of the 2023/24 budget, residents understand that this will be challenging given the scale of the cuts the SNP/Green Government are inflicting on Edinburgh.

In terms of winter 2022/23, the Roads Operations team are preparing a Winter Readiness Bulletin for Elected Members, and will issue this to coincide with October's Transport and Environment Committee.

If desired, a presentation for Elected Members on the winter maintenance plan can be arranged at Bankhead Roads Depot.

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