

Questions and Answers

City of Edinburgh Council

10.00 am Thursday, 9th February, 2023

City Chambers

Questions and Answers

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Agenda Annex

Item no 10.1

QUESTION NO 1

**By Councillor McFarlane for answer
by the Leader of the Council at a
meeting of the Council on 9 February
2023**

Question (1) Has he continued to meet with BT to discuss the removal of redundant phone boxes from Edinburgh's streets?

Answer (1) Yes, a final meeting with BT is arranged for later in the month.

If members would like to get in touch with BT directly, they can do so at customer.serv.payphones@bt.com

Question (2) Can the Council Leader update us on progress towards the removal of redundant phone boxes?

Answer (2) Council officers continue to discuss phone boxes in the city with BT. As noted in my response to a similar question in October 2022, the Council has limited powers to instruct BT to undertake any work or removals.

Where phone boxes that are in a dilapidated condition or are considered dangerous are identified or reported to the Council, these are reported to BT Defective Apparatus.

Council officers are organising to meet with BT to discuss the ongoing repair and/or removal of redundant phone boxes around the city. These discussions will also cover the process for removal of phone boxes and BT's programme of works for this.

Question (3) Has the Council made any requests itself to date for the removal of phone boxes that are no longer required since the relaxation of Ofcoms legislation?

Answer (3) In certain circumstances where a phone box is deemed to be a hazard or danger to the public, the Council will make a request for removal. Council officers have requested that the phone box on Hanover Street that has been damaged be removed and BT are making arrangements for this now.

Item no 10.2

QUESTION NO 2

**By Councillor McFarlane for answer
by the Transport and Environment
Committee at a meeting of the
Council on 9 February 2023**

Question

To ask the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee for an update on the appointment of a Cleansing Improvement Programme Manager agreed at Committee on October 6 and to ask whether any Street Litter Control Notices have been served since Committee approved their use.

Answer

Following an internal recruitment process, an appointment is expected to be made shortly for a cleansing Service Improvement Team Leader (this is the post referred to in the October report as a Cleansing Improvement Programme Manager).

In addition, the service is expected to begin an organisational review in March 2023 which will propose creating a dedicated Graffiti Officer and 2 Technical Officers to focus on service improvements.

Officers are in the process of developing a robust approach to evidencing and issuing Street Litter Control Notices prior to commencing enforcement.

To date, there have been no Street Litter Control notices issued. If there is a particular situation which you feel is not being dealt with appropriately, I would be happy to discuss it with you.

Item no 10.3

QUESTION NO 3

By Councillor McVey for answer by the Leader of the Council at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

In 2022, Labour, Conservative and LibDem Councillors voted to support the Forth Green Freeport bid, which subsequently was selected and will now progress.

Question (1) What guarantees were provided by the UK Government that aspects of the additional “Green” and “fair work” aspects unique to the Scottish bids would be enforced and controlled by the UK Government, where they fall under UK authority?

Answer (1) The Green Freeport bidding prospectus clearly states that this is a joint initiative between the UK and Scottish Government. All policy commitments were agreed between both Governments.

Question (2) What analysis has been done on loss of overall tax take to the public purse by officers in Edinburgh or anywhere else on the impact of the Forth bid?

Answer (2) The full tax benefits for investors have been agreed between the UK and Scottish Governments. The assessment of the loss in tax revenue (due to the incentives offered) versus the wider benefits achieved has been agreed at Government level prior to the publication of the prospectus.

The Forth Green Freeport (FGFP) bid contained an initial analysis of likely impact on Non Domestic Rates, which will be further reviewed as part of the development of the FGFP business case.

Question (3) What analysis has been done with colleagues in regulatory services on any impact of any loss of controls on goods entering through the green freeport?

Answer (3) This analysis, and associated mitigations, will form part of the development of the FGFP business case.

Question (4) What guarantees have been provided to the Council and other Forth local authorities on the need to register companies locally to improve controls?

Answer (4) This will form part of the development of the FGFP business case. The registered location of any companies involved will be publicly available.

Question (5) What guarantees have been secured from the UK Government that private pensions of those working for companies registered overseas will be paid and there are adequate controls, checks and enforcement to make sure this is the case?

Answer (5) Green Freeport status does not negate the UK's employment law requirements. Any company, including those registered overseas, who employ staff in the UK have a minimum legal obligation to provide a number of key benefits, including the legal requirement of pension auto-enrolment.

Item no 10.4

QUESTION NO 4

By Councillor Aston for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

Action 9 of the Parking Action Plan is to develop a commercially sustainable model for delivering publicly available EV charging hubs at strategic locations in the city. As part of the scoping for this the council will assess what infrastructure is required in Edinburgh up to 2026.

Question (1) Can the convener confirm if that will include an assessment of the demand for provision of 150 kW and 350 kW EV chargers within the city?

Answer (1) The forecast demand for EV chargers in the city is based on the need to meet the expected growth of plug in vehicles by 2026. To satisfy demand and a range of different EV users, the Council's approach considers the need for a mix of different charge points, including ultra-rapid 150kW and 350kW. The approach will also include installing charge points that serve areas where the majority of households lack off street parking and where the private sector is unable or unwilling to meet this demand.

Question (2) Does the convener believe it is necessary to provide rapid charger provision if we are to encourage more people to switch to electric vehicles?

Answer (2) I am considering the issue of charging rate and duration as part of the drafting to the EV Charging Plan which I hope to table at the next TEC.

The provision of charging infrastructure is paramount to encouraging people to switch to electric vehicles. Currently, the approach being progressed is to provide suitable charging infrastructure for the location:

- Home charging – which favours a greater number of 7kW charge points as vehicles are parked for long periods;

- Destination charging - with a greater number of fast 22kW and rapid chargers, depending on the vehicle dwell time at each location; and
- On-route charging – which relies on rapid and ultra-rapid chargers as speed is all important for those recharging mid-journey.

QUESTION NO 5

By Councillor Osler for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

On 21 November 2019, I asked the following question of the then Convener of Transport and Environment Committee:

“Considering the volume of rainfall and subsequent flooding experienced in Edinburgh this year when is the next trial of the demountable barrier at Falshaw Bridge due to be carried out as there has not been one since 2013?”.

The following answer was provided:

“It is intended to carry out a flood trial exercise across the city in April/May 2020. The proposed trial will take account of the constructed flood defences on the Water of Leith, including closure of some flood gates and demountable defences. During preparation of the exercise, consideration will be given to including Falshaw Bridge barriers as part of the trial.”

Appreciating that much has happened that was not anticipated since the answer was provided, not least COVID-19, and recognising also that more flooding sadly has occurred since then, most recently on 30 December 2022, can the Convener please confirm:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Question | (1) When is the next flood trial exercise for the Water-of-Leith due to be carried out? |
| Answer | (1) There are no immediate plans for a widescale flood trial, and any future trial would be dependent on resources (as it is an extensive exercise requiring input from numerous teams and external agencies). |

Regular checks are undertaken on individual components of the flood protection scheme, including 3-monthly checks of most flood gates. Less frequent checks are undertaken on components with much higher flow triggers (such as the gates on Warriston Road and the lifting bridge at Bell Place).

It has been identified that, as Phase 1 of the Water of Leith flood protection scheme around Stockbridge approaches 10 years old, a renewed focus on maintenance is required and this is being incorporated into a current organisational review of some areas of transport.

Question (2) Will operating the Falshaw Bridge barriers be part of that trial?

Answer (2) The last full test of the Falshaw barriers was carried out in 2013, with a smaller scale trial in 2015. The barriers are securely stored on designated trailers and inspected every 3-months.

The importance of erecting the Falshaw Bridge barrier is acknowledged, however, that there are no immediate plans for trialling its operation. Erection of the barrier is only required in the most extreme flood events (a long duration storm in excess of a 1:200 return period). For comparison, the event on 30 December 2022 was less than 1:100.

Question (3) In addition, a recent communication with CEC Flood Officers indicated that work is underway to provide more information on the Council website regarding how and when the flood defences for the Water of Leith are activated. In that regard, can the Convenor please confirm when will this be made available?:

Answer (3) This content has been drafted and is expected to be published on the Council website by the end of February 2023.

Item no 10.6

QUESTION NO 6

By Councillor Lang for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

Question

When will be the 10 school travel plans which have been signed off for delivery be published on the 'Streets Ahead' website and provided directly to ward councillors, as agreed by the Convener at the 30 June 2022 and 27 October 2022 meetings of the Council and the 8 December 2022 meeting of the Transport and Environment Committee?

Answer

These School Travel Plans will be published by the time the schools return from mid-term break (20 February 2023). Officers will also contact Ward Councillors directly.

Item no 10.7

QUESTION NO 7

**By Councillor Dijkstra-Downie for
answer by the Convener of the
Transport and Environment
Committee at a meeting of the
Council on 9 February 2023**

Question (1) How often are the paths scheduled to be cleared of fallen leaves each autumn/winter season, given that a build up of wet leaves can cause a serious hazard to cyclists in particular?

Answer (1) The paths are inspected weekly and cleared when required during the leaf fall season. This is priority work during the leaf fall season, with resources directed to the paths most in need of clearance due to the health and safety implications.

Question (2) Which method or machinery is used to complete this work?

Answer (2) The paths are swept by a mixture of large and small mechanical sweepers (dependant of access and path widths). Some larger wind-blown debris is cleared by manual brushing.

Question (3) On which occasions have the paths been cleared of leaves this past season, using which method?

Answer (3) These paths are prioritised based on volumes of leaves and health and safety assessments following inspections. They are generally cleared early on Saturday and Sunday mornings to avoid conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists.

Question (4) Are any further clean ups scheduled for this season?

Answer (4) The paths continue to be inspected and where there is a requirement for sweeping (following high winds for example), this will be prioritised to ensure these are kept in an acceptable condition.

Item no 10.8

QUESTION NO 8

By Councillor Lang for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

Question

Following the 16 November decision of the Scottish Parliament to approve the regulations which set out the Exemption Order Procedures on the planned pavement parking ban, can the Convener confirm if there are any outstanding barriers to officers commencing the work associated with motion 8.6 as approved by Council on 25 August 2022?

Answer

The Exemption Orders Procedures came into force on 9 December 2022. These allow local authorities to start putting any formal exemption orders in place. Transport Scotland are allowing local authorities 12 months to assess and put these in place before the prohibitions go live.

Transport Scotland are currently working through the new enforcement powers. They expect that these will be in place by December 2023 so that local authorities have all the powers they require to issue penalties for the new prohibitions (pavement parking, parking at drop kerbs and double parking).

The Council is well-prepared for the introduction of the new parking prohibitions and the start of enforcement, having already assessed all of our roads. We are currently considering the final results of that assessment, any possible impacts that may arise from the introduction of the new legislation and any mitigation measures that may be required.

Item no 10.9

QUESTION NO 9

By Councillor Lang for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

Question (1) When is work expected to commence on the extension to the Royal High School following planning approval 22/03164/FUL?

Answer (1) The current estimated construction programme is that site mobilisation and enabling works will begin before the end of February 2023. However, there are ongoing archaeology works and this has the potential to delay the works if anything of significance is found.

Question (2) When is this extension expected to be available for use?

Answer (2) Subject to no delays to the construction programme the new block would be available for use by the school in August 2023. However, all capital projects continue to experience issues once on site due to the current economic circumstances and in particular labour and material supply difficulties. Regular updates will be provided to the school community as the project progresses.

Item no 10.10

QUESTION NO 10

By Councillor Caldwell for answer by the Convener of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

The National Records of Scotland estimated 44 people experiencing homelessness died in Edinburgh in 2021, a shocking 100% increase since records began in 2017.

At Leader's Questions on 15th December 2022, the Housing, Homeless and Fair Work Convener confirmed that the Council are investigating circumstances around every single one of the estimated 44 individuals who passed away while experiencing homelessness in 2021.

Can the Housing, Homeless and Fair Work Convener please confirm;

- Question** (1) When are the investigations targeted for completion?
- Answer** (1) In every case where a death is notified to the Council's Homelessness team, the circumstances are reviewed to understand if there are any lessons which can be learned for future. However, it is important to note that the cause of death is not always provided to the Council and that, in over 40% of deaths, the people had underlying health conditions (including cancer).
- Question** (2) What, if any, third sector organisations or agencies are the Council working with to complete the investigations?
- Answer** (2) The Council is in regular contact with third sector partners.
- Question** (3) Will the investigations include a recommendations report to be presented to the Housing, Homeless and Fair Work Committee?
- Answer** (3) There is no plan to present a recommendations report. As reported in answer 1, officers review the circumstances of every death which is reported to the Council. The findings of these reviews are used to identify if there are any lessons which the Council can learn.

Question (4) What steps are being taken to ensure the privacy and dignity of these passed-away Edinburgh residents are retained in the investigation, when published?

Answer (4) As noted above, the information provided to the Council is for internal use only and will not be published.

Item no 10.11

QUESTION NO 11

**By Councillor Davidson for answer
by the Convener of the Education,
Children and Families Committee at a
meeting of the Council on 9 February
2023**

Question (1) How many schools have experienced unplanned closures since the start of December?

Answer (1) Six schools and one early years setting.

Question (2) How many of these closures were due to buildings issues related to severe weather?

Answer (2) All, please see details below:

- Liberton High School – no heating
- St Crispin's Special School – no heating
- Corstorphine Primary School – no heating
- St John's RC Primary School – no heating
- Brunstane Primary School – fractured pipe, no water
- Sighthill Early Years Centre – frozen pipes

Question (3) What steps is the Administration taking to reduce the frequency of these closures?

Answer (3) The administration is working closely with colleagues in Corporate Property to ensure schools remain open wherever possible when impacted over the winter period.

Corporate Property are currently looking at how the supply of temporary heaters to schools can be increased where needed.

Where it is required (and possible) temporary boilers can be put into schools (if the boiler issue is long term).

All schools have a fully embedded risk assessment process in place where the headteacher completes a closure risk

assessment if the school is at threat of closure due to for example boiler issues. The objective of the process is wherever it is safe to do so to be able to keep the school open. Any closure needs to be managed between the Headteacher and Senior Education Manager including the advice of Corporate Property colleagues. The Senior Education Manager makes the closure decision with the Headteacher.

Where there is no option other than closure schools switch to remote learning using contingency learning grids.

Annually all Headteachers and Business Managers attend "Ready for Winter" training (in October). This training briefs colleagues on the closure risk assessment process as well as the support available for colleagues with guidance on how to manage a potential or actual closure. We ask that school colleagues rehearse their own winter scenario plans as part of this briefing and guidance to agree, embed and understand response roles and responsibilities and ensure the service Severe Weather Contingency Arrangements are shared and understood.

School closures decisions are only ever a last case scenario resort where there is risk to life and limb. The balance of risk means the objective is to keep schools open wherever this is safely possible.

Item no 10.12

QUESTION NO 12

By Councillor Osler for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

On 9 January 2023 Ward Councillors from a number of Wards were advised by Officers that footway surface treatments works were to be carried out on a number of streets within their respective Wards (Ref TCD/000082/02/fm) over a 20-week period starting 16th January 2023.,

For each street listed in that communication please can the Convenor confirm:

Question (1) a) Whether or not existing drop kerbs will be upgraded as part of those works?
b) If “yes”, when will such upgrades take place?

Answer (1) a) I am afraid that dropped kerbs will not be upgraded as part of the works.
b) N/A

Question (2) a) Whether or not new drop kerbs will be installed as part of those works?
b) If “yes” when will such installations take place?

Answer (2) a) I am afraid that dropped kerbs will not be installed as part of the works.
b) N/A

Question (3) And, for each of those streets in respect of which the answer was “no” to either question 1 or question 2 above, why not?

Answer (3) Footway slurry sealing forms part of the Council’s preventative maintenance regime. It is applied to footways that are in a fair condition and is used to extend the life of an existing asphalt surface in a cost effective and sustainable manner. It involves the application of a thin layer of bituminous slurry material which will seal the surface to

delay further deterioration and provide a uniform walking surface. There may be some patching work undertaken in advance of the slurry sealing.

Kerbing works are generally undertaken when the work requires the excavation and replacement of the footway when it has reached the end of its design life and has deteriorated to an extent that slurry sealing would not be appropriate.

I would be happy to discuss reviewing this policy with you within the context of our proposal to drop at least 400 kerbs per year as part of the Active Travel Action Plan.

Item no 10.13

QUESTION NO 13

By Councillor Caldwell for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

Can the Convener please confirm;

- Question** (1) How many mainstream state secondary schools in Edinburgh are providing Breakfast Clubs for pupils?
- Answer** (1) 21
- Question** (2) How many special state secondary schools in Edinburgh are providing Breakfast Clubs for pupils?
- Answer** (2) 4
- Question** (3) How many mainstream state secondary schools in Edinburgh are providing other structured free food distribution for pupils?
- Answer** (3) 11
- Question** (4) How many special state secondary schools in Edinburgh are providing other structured free food distribution for pupils?
- Answer** (4) 4
- Question** (5) Does the Convener agree with me that the rising evidence of hunger across Edinburgh is detrimental to young people's wellbeing, education and opportunities?
- Answer** (5) Yes, I am concerned that any young person should go hungry and by providing breakfast clubs and free food goes some way to ensure that pupils get a good start to the school day.

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 9 February 2023

Question (1) Was the winter maintenance plan followed adequately during the cold snap of 15-16 January?

Answer (1) Yes, I have been informed winter maintenance plan was adequately followed on 15 and 16 January 2023. The action taken was as follows:

- There was a treatment decision for full Priority 1 treatment for the whole city on the mornings of 15 and 16 January;
- Priority 2 routes were issued on 16 January; and
- Priority 1 pre-grit was issued on the evening of 16 January.

Question (2) Were there any instances of injury reported to the Council during this time or subsequently, relating to icy conditions for pedestrians in mid-January?

Answer (2) There have been no injuries reported to the Winter Weather mailbox in respect of these dates (15 and 16 January).

At the time of writing, Insurance Services are not aware of any injury claims for 15 or 16 January 2023. However, there may be some actively in progress as there is often a time lag in receiving these.

There were two reports of falls/injuries received by the mailbox in the preceding week, but they do not specify the date the accidents occurred, and on the limited information provided these were not on footpaths prioritised for treatment. In addition, in line with policy, the Council cannot treat every road and footpath and so operate a prioritisation system.

I am sure you will appreciate that staff work very hard to spread a limited budget as far as possible. Indeed, I am certain all Councillors would prefer this service to be better funded.

Item no 10.15

QUESTION NO 15

By Councillor Mattos Coelho for answer by the Convener of the Culture and Communities Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

It has been claimed Liberton Rugby Club can no longer accommodate the “additional needs” of a women’s rugby team, resulting on the extremely sad decision of the women’s rugby team to disband.

Question (1) What engagement has the Convener had with the club committee and relevant Council officers on this decision which will have a negative impact on women’s access to sport?

Answer (1) I engaged with Council officers who confirmed that there has been no formal contact with the Liberton Rugby Club (RFC) about their decision.

Double Hedges, which Liberton RFC use as their home matches, is managed by Edinburgh Leisure on behalf of the Council. The Council does not, at present, work with the club on the delivery of projects or services in the city.

Question (2) Will the convener write to the Liberton Rugby Club Committee, making clear the need for clubs to accommodate the women’s game? And seeking a full explanation for the community on the factors that led the Women’s team feeling they had no option but to disband?

Answer (2) Council officers have been in touch with Edinburgh Leisure, who have not had any contact with Liberton RFC. It is understood that the additional needs which have been reported relate to coaching and administration rather than facility provision.

We understand that Leith Rugby Club have offered an opportunity for the women’s team to play under their club colours. They are still working through governance arrangements etc but the team have trained at Leith Academy and the club have provided coaching support.

I’m happy to follow up and keep Councillor Mattos Coelho informed.

Item no 10.16

QUESTION NO 16

By Councillor Thornley for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

On 19th January, traffic lights at the pedestrian crossing at St Thomas' Church on Glasgow Road were removed as part of the upgrade programme. As of 29th January, these had still not been replaced, despite promises otherwise.

To ask the Convener:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Question | (1) What notification was undertaken to inform members of impending work? |
| Answer | (1) As these works were expected to be minor in nature and were taking place as part of planned maintenance on existing infrastructure, there was no prior notification to Elected Members. |
| Question | (2) What temporary measures or alternatives were put in place to cover the crossing for the period that there were no lights? |
| Answer | (2) As the planned duration of the works was expected to be short (usually a maximum of 5 days) and additional traffic management would have impacted on local residents and access to driveways, when the works commenced pedestrians were diverted to other crossings that are in the proximity of the crossing that was being worked on. However, unforeseen difficulties were experienced on site which resulted in the duration of the works being extended. On 30 January 2023, a temporary crossing was put in place and remained in place until the crossing was brought into operation on 1 February 2023. |
| Question | (3) Which other pedestrian crossings are planned for upgrade, by ward, over the next three months? |

Answer

(3) Over the next 3 months we will renew the following pedestrian crossings to make them safer and more accessible:

- Holyrood Road/St John's Street
- Holyrood Road/Hammermen's Entry
- Causewayside at Sciennes House
- Captains Road at Gracemount Drive
- Howdenhall Road at Balmwell Terrace
- Buccleuch Street at Gifford Park
- West Coates at Wester Coates Road
- West Coates at Devon Place
- Roseburn Terrace at Roseburn Gardens

Item no 10.17

QUESTION NO 17

By Councillor Thornley for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

Question (1) With new and planned development increasing traffic at the Maybury junction, what plans are in place to manage traffic flow from those developments?

Answer (1) As part of the preparation of the 2016 Local Development Plan, the proposed allocated development sites were considered, and proportionate improvements identified for the three junctions. These works are outlined within the Local Development Plan Action Programme 2021. The range of actions proposed focus not just on capacity at the key junctions on Maybury Road but also improved active travel connections and public transport permeability along Craigs Road/ Turnhouse Road.

Question (2) Were there Section 75 contributions from developers, and what have they been used for?

Answer (2) There are a range of contributions (£4.038M) provided on a cumulative basis to mitigate the transport implications from the development on the three principle junctions on Maybury Road.

In addition, there are on site works that have taken place for provision of active travel connections, footpaths and a new active travel bridge over the railway is proposed.

Overall, these actions are being taken forward across a range of Council projects and improvements. Some works have already been carried out directly by the developers

Question (3) Do these include plans to maintain access to Maybury junction for the existing housing in West Craigs?

Answer (3) As part of the proposals, it was considered that a bus gate may be necessary on Turnhouse Road to support the promotion of public transport through the site. This matter is being investigated and will consider both the bus gate and hours of operation.

Question (4) Will these plans be circulated to affected ward members?

Answer (4) Absolutely, the details of these improvements will be circulated to Ward Members.

Item no 10.18

QUESTION NO 18

By Councillor Parker for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023

Question (1) Why was the tender for the permanent works to introduce a pedestrian and cycle crossing at Hermitage Drive / Braid Road / Braidburn Terrace (incorporating works along Braidburn Terrace, Comiston Road / Greenbank Place and Braidburn Crescent) delayed from 6th January to 30th January?

Answer (1) The tender took longer to issue than was originally anticipated as a new Framework contract became available which could be utilised for this work. In addition, to ensure that all aspects of the work had been appropriately incorporated, additional resources were secured to support the development of the design and tender documentation together with managing the contract process and providing daily on-site supervision.

The tender documents were published on Public Contracts Scotland on 23 December 2022, with a return date of 23 January 2023.

The Braidburn scheme tender requires specific materials which will be supplied externally and therefore an extended period (to 30 January 2023) was agreed for the return of tenders for this element of the works.

However, as a number of questions have been received in response to the tender publication, a further extension was agreed to 3 February 2023.

Question (2) Has the tender now been agreed? If it has not, why not and when will it be?

Answer (2) See answer 1 above. It is anticipated that the tenders will be awarded by mid-late February 2023.

Question (3) Are the final drawings for the works publicly available and where can these be found?

Answer (3) The final drawings are not yet publicly available, but officers have confirmed that they will be available shortly, and I have asked for them to be shared publicly ASAP.

Question (4) Since May 2022:

- a) What communications have happened with residents to explain about the permanent works programme detailed in 1)?
- b) What communications have happened with residents to explain about delays to the permanent works programme as detailed in 1)?

Additionally, in relation to both a) and b):

- c) What form(s) have those communications taken (notices, letters, social media etc)?
- d) Where relevant, which addresses have been included in those communications (if any)?

Answer (4) The communications with residents have been via email, with a message sent in August 2022 which explained progress, delays to date and set out the proposed timeline as expected at that time.

The emails were sent to the residents in Braidburn Terrace.

Question (5) From February 2023 onwards:

- a) What plans are there in place for communications with residents about the permanent works programme detailed in 1)?
- b) What form(s) will those communications take (notices, letters, social media etc)?
- c) Where relevant, which addresses will be included in those communications (if any)?

Answer

- (5)** a) A simplified drawing of the general layout is currently being prepared and will be uploaded to the Council's website (Active Travel pages) so that it can be easily accessed by residents.

Once published, the link will be provided to the Ward Members and residents.

In addition, an e-mail will be sent to residents who have previously been in contact with the Council with an update on the contract award, with details of the programmed start date and contact information for the contractor and site staff.

An e-mail will also be sent to the Church with details of the programmed start date and contact information for the contractor and site staff.

- b) & c) In addition to the email, a letter drop will be arranged to residents of the streets within the scope of the works.

The letter drop will include residents in

- Braidburn Terrace
- Affected sections of Braid Road
- Affected sections of Hermitage Drive
- Affected sections of Greenbank Crescent
- Affected section of Greenbank Terrace (Comiston Road)
- Braid Crescent
- Greenbank Place
- Braidburn Crescent

Item no 10.19

QUESTION NO 19

By Councillor Lewis Younie for answer by the Council Leader at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023.

Question (1) What statutory responsibility exists to report community participation requests to Council?

Answer (1) Section 32 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires that each public service authority must publish a report each year setting out:

- the number of requests received
- the number of requests agreed and refused
- the number of requests which resulted in changes to a public service provided by, or on behalf of, the public service authority
- any action taken by the public service authority to promote and support the use of participation requests

Annual reports cover each year from 1 April to 31 March and must be published by 30 June.

Question (2) How many such reports have been made to Council in each of the last five years?

Answer (2) One report has been published each year since 2017 when the legislation was enacted. The reports can be found here:

[Council participation requests reports – The City of Edinburgh Council](#)

QUESTION NO 20

By Councillor Chas Booth for answer by the Council Leader at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023.

Further to his answer to my question at full council on 15 December 2022, the council leader will recall that his changes to the licensing board reduced the membership of the board from 10 members to 9, while also appointing a new position of vice-convener, and that 6 of the 9 current members are new members of the board.

Question

Please can the council leader therefore outline how the reduction in the size of the board, coupled with the appointment of a new vice-convener, delivers on the public health agenda, and what the reasons were for these changes?

Answer

I would expect all members of the Licensing Board, regardless of their number, experience or position to uphold the Licensing Objectives set out in the 2005 act, namely:

- Preventing crime and disorder;
- Securing public safety;
- Preventing public nuisance;
- Protecting and improving public health; and
- Protecting children and young people from harm.

QUESTION NO 21

By Councillor Booth for answer by the Convener of the Planning Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023.

Question (1) Please can the Convener set out the action the council is taking to ensure that applications for short term lets and enforcement action against potential breaches of planning control of short term lets are sufficiently resourced, following the introduction of the short term let control area last year?

Answer (1) The Planning Service has put in place a team to progress short-term let planning applications, certificates of lawfulness and enforcement. Recruitment is underway to ensure this team has adequate resources. Workload is monitored and information is provided to Planning Committee on performance via business bulletins.

Question (2) In particular, please can the Convener set out whether the council will consider working with the Lothian Valuation Joint Board and other relevant organisations to proactively identify potential breaches of the short term let control area, and take appropriate proactive enforcement action in such cases?

Answer (2) In accordance with the [Planning Enforcement Charter](#), the Council does not actively monitor the implementation of consents or search for breaches of planning control and relies on members of the public to report potential breaches. This approach allows the Council to focus its resources on those cases that the public are most concerned about. It also means that it is less likely that time will be spent investigating situations which are not breaches of planning control or where there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that it is in the public interest to take enforcement action.

Question (3) In addition, what plans does the council have to publicise the short term let control area, and the mechanisms by which members of the public may report potential breaches?

Answer

- (3) The short-term let control area was publicised in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations at prior to its introduction on 5 September 2022. Information on this is on the Council's website.

Suspected breaches of planning control can be reported via the Council's webpage:

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/reportworkwithoutplanningpermission>

QUESTION NO 22

By Councillor Mitchell for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023.

Goldenacre Steps

Please could the Convener confirm:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Question | (1) The date of the last inspection of the steps. |
| Answer | (1) 1 February 2023. |
| Question | (2) Any defects and/or repairs logged for action. |
| Answer | (2) There were no defects logged. |
| Question | (3) Any upcoming scheduled improvements. |
| Answer | (3) There are no improvements scheduled. |

QUESTION NO 23

By Councillor Mowat for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023.

Project Centre Contract

To ask the Convener:

- Question** (1) When Project Centre were contracted by the Council to carry out work for the Council?
- Answer** (1) Project Centre services are provided through the parking enforcement contract, which commenced in October 2014.
- Question** (2) What work they have been contracted to carry out?
- Answer** (2) Project Centre are contracted to provide project support and transport consultancy services.
- Question** (3) What the value of the Contract is?
- Answer** (3) The parking contract has an overall annual value of over £7m.
- Question** (4) Whether this is a rolling contract or if each new piece of work is contracted separately?
- Answer** (4) Each piece of work is priced separately.
- Question** (5) What is the value of contracts with Project Centre in each of the last 5 fiscal years?
- Answer** (5) As summary of the Council's spend with Project Centre is provided in the table below.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 (to date)
Parking Team - Revenue Spend (e.g. TRO support and consultation / engagement services)	£47,140.00	£50,347.39	£89,252.00	£125,434.40	£137,544.51
Parking Team - Strategic Review of Parking Spend	£104,571.00	£375,241.14	£386,718.00	£224,062.13	£25,825.26
Parking Team - Grant Funded Spend (e.g. Footway parking surveys and EV related work)	£12,130.00	£0.00	£2,950.00	£100,486.00	£174,188.00
Other Council Teams / Project Spend (e.g. Travelling Safely, CBR, Active Travel)	£0.00	£13,415.74	£112,653.00	£335,367.31	£161,531.05
Total Spend	£163,841.00	£439,004.27	£591,573.00	£785,349.84	£499,088.82

Question (6) Who approved and is paying the £15 participation fee for a focus group on City Car Club and what is the total being paid for this?

Answer (6) This fee was agreed by Council officers as an incentive to encourage attendance at the focus group sessions. The total cost for the participation fees is projected to be c. £750.

QUESTION NO 24

By Councillor Whyte for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023.

Question

Why does the Council website information on the Low Emission Zone state:

“there are still areas where certain pollutants, including nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), are higher than the legal standard.”

[Low Emission Zone \(LEZ\) – The City of Edinburgh Council](#)

When all except one of the 185 monitoring stations were within the legal standard for NO₂ in 2020 and the results in Air Quality Management Areas show that pollution was well below the legal limit in 2022 for both PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀?

Answer

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was significant for air quality during 2020. Restrictions on travel resulted in a significant drop in nitrogen dioxide concentrations at almost all locations across the city with just one location within the Central Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) breaching the legal objective for nitrogen dioxide.

Monitoring data from 2020 is unlikely to be representative in terms of long-term trends. For the purpose of the Council's Draft Air Quality Action Plan and the development and implementation of the Low Emission Zone, consideration has rightly also been given to pre-pandemic pollution concentrations to account for more typical travel behaviour while emerging from the pandemic.

All political parties approved Draft Air Quality Action Plan, and it will soon be subject to a three month consultation.

Hence, information on the Council's website remains accurate insofar that there continues to be a breach of the nitrogen dioxide (annual mean) legal standard as determined through monitoring. Please note - monitoring is undertaken at a specific location and judgement must be applied to the extent of the area and problem.

The statutory Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Review and Assessment process must take account of all breaches and areas 'at risk' of being breached. Modelling undertaken by SEPA for the purpose of developing the Low Emission Zone also identified a number of areas where there are these risks. The Central AQMA was approved to be a priority for action.

The LAQM system will ensure a constant review of the AQMA designations is undertaken. To date, it has been agreed that the Inverleith Row AQMA will be revoked as the objectives have been met for an appropriate amount of time in this area.

QUESTION NO 25

By Councillor Whyte for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023.

Question (1) What information has been gleaned from the data gathered to date following the roll out of Smart Bin technology and what changes in practice have been, or are planned as a result?

Answer (1) As part of Phase 1 of the Smart Cities Operations Centre programme, smart waste sensors will be placed in litter and residential communal bins around Edinburgh. This will enable service teams to track bin fill levels, temperature and other variables, enabling more proactive management of waste across the city and support wider resilience plans.

To date, 2,800 sensors have been installed and are sending data to the smart cities test platform. From this, detailed platform dashboards are being created to enable efficient analysis of the data provided to identify trends/areas for investigation and to support effective service planning.

Question (2) Does the Convener consider that this has been a cost effective use of Council resources? If yes, why and what implications does it have for future service costs, street cleanliness and working practices?

Answer (2) The sensor installation is supported by a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) grant as part of the 'Scotland's 8th City – the Smart City' programme. City of Edinburgh Council will deliver three projects budgeted at £6.4m, of which £2.5m is part of the ERDF grant.

I feel that the scheme could contribute to street cleanliness, but any gain will not be sufficient to make good the underfunding of this service.

Item no 10.26

QUESTION NO 26

By Councillor Bruce for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023.

Question (1) Why has the Public Transport Action Plan failed to propose any specific measures to solve the problem of bus deserts, for example, in Ratho, Dumbiedykes and Meadowfield/Willowbrae?

Answer (1) The draft Public Transport Action Plan was approved by Transport and Environment Committee on 2 February 2023 for consultation. When finalised, it will be a strategic policy document that is focussed on measures that will improve public transport over a 10 year period.

Within the Public Transport Action Plan, proposed Action PG1 (Bus Network Review) will consider challenges and opportunities in the bus network, including areas where commercial services are currently unviable.

Question (2) What does the Convener propose is done to solve the problem?

Answer (2) The Council currently spends £1.549million per annum to support bus services.

£500,000 is allocated to the Service 20, that operates between Chesser and Ratho. I am aware of current dissatisfaction with the service in the Ratho community and have met and communicated with a representative of the community a number of times. In response to this, Council officers are currently investigating alternative and improved provision.

In respect of Dumbiedykes and Meadowfield/Lady Nairne/Willowbrae, as agreed by Transport and Environment Committee on 8 December 2022, a proposal to invest in supported bus services in these areas will be considered as part of the Council Budget process for 2023/24.

QUESTION NO 27

By Councillor Bruce for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023.

Currie Community High School Swimming Pool

- Question** (1) When did the pool close for pupils and swimming groups?
- Answer** (1) The swimming pool was closed in April 2022.
- Question** (2) How much has been spent so far on repairing the pool?
- Answer** (2) The cost of repairing the pool so far has been £60,000.
- Question** (3) What works are required to make the pool operational again for pupils and swimming groups?
- Answer** (3) An inspection of the ceiling is required to determine what further works are required.
- Question** (4) How much will these extra works cost?
- Answer** (4) The inspection will cost £22,000. Only after the inspection will an estimate of the cost for the works be able to be prepared.
- Question** (5) When do you expect the pool to re-open?
- Answer** (5) It is not possible to provide a timescale to reopen the swimming pool until the inspection of the ceiling is complete and an understanding of the scale of the works required is determined.

QUESTION NO 28

By Councillor Cowdy for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023.

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) for each ETRO 202_ - TRO/21/30

IIAs for schemes installed as a temporary emergency response should be different from IIAs for schemes moving to permanency. In the original IIAs for various Spaces for People schemes, there is mention of intended benefits for people with disabilities. However, the reality was that after installation several disability groups emphasised there are many negative impacts for people with disabilities. Spaces for People was raised as an example of eco-ableism by Inclusion Scotland at COP26 and Council Officers graded around two thirds of schemes as having a negative impact for disabled people.

Can the Convener confirm that:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Question | (1) An IIA has been carried out for each of the proposed ETROs |
| Answer | (1) The IIA published for the installation of the Spaces for People Measures remains relevant. No material change has taken place as a function of the current Travelling Safely Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) trial. |
| Question | (2) These IIAs considered the impact of reductions in parking and lack of any kerbside parking, now that council officers claim kerbside blue badge spaces can no longer be installed on some streets? |
| Answer | (2) The current IIA makes reference to changes in parking arrangements, access for people with disabilities and those with impaired mobility. The draft document for scheme retention, subject to future committee approval, will also make further reference to accessibility for all road users. Current trial road layouts, with segregated cycle lanes, can accommodate disabled persons parking places within established parking bays. |

Question (3) The IIAs have been updated from those created under Spaces for People to reflect any differences in the ETRO schemes from those implemented under SfP?

Answer (3) The existing IIA is under revision to consider possible permanent retention, which is likely to be reviewed at committee in late 2023. There are no material differences between the Spaces for People and current Travelling Safely schemes.

QUESTION NO 29

By Councillor Cowdy for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023.

ETRO 202_ - TRO/21/30

The report (Item 7.7 Active Travel Measures – Travelling safely update) to Transport and Environment Committee in Aug 2022 stated:

6.3 “Sustrans funding was not available for removal of schemes and reinstatement of previous road layouts. Therefore any such costs will require re-prioritisation of spend from the Council’s transport capital programme, with potential to bring funding forward from future Financial Years. The estimated cost of removing and reinstating all current schemes is just over £1m.”

- Question** (1) Is implementing Experimental TROs lawful when there is no ring-fenced budget for removal suggesting they are already being treated as permanent?
- Answer** (1) There is no requirement in the relevant legislation for there to be a budget ring-fenced for removing experimental measures before they are introduced. Nevertheless, as the quote from the August 2022 Committee Report above implies, funding could (if necessary) be found from the Council’s transport capital programme
- Question** (2) Has approval been sought from the council’s own Internal Auditor and/or Audit Scotland that the practice is acceptable?
- Answer** (2) No, officers have not considered this necessary for the reasons outlined above. Individual Councillors, however, can choose to raise this issue.
- Question** (3) Can the Convener provide estimates for the cost of reinstating each individual scheme?
- Answer** (3) The table below contains estimates of the cost of removal and reinstatement of Travelling Safely projects.

Travelling Safely Programme - Scheme Removal and reinstatement estimate	
Project Name	Project Reinstatement Estimate
A1 (including London Road)	£50,000
Arboretum Place	£10,000
Braid Road pedestrian crossing, junction and modal filter	£25,000
Broughton Street	£25,000
Broughton Street Roundabout	£10,000
Buccleuch Street / Causewayside	£50,000
Cammo Walk	£1,000
Cockburn Street	£2,500
Comiston Road	£75,000
Craigmillar Park, Mayfield Gardens and Minto Street	£75,000
Craigs Road traffic calming	£1,000
Crewe Road South	£25,000
Drumbrae North	£25,000
Duddingston Road	£25,000
Duddingston Road West	£20,000
Ferry Road	£40,000
Fountainbridge / Dundee Street	£50,000
Gilmerton Road	£25,000
Inglis Green Road, Longstone Road and Murrayburn Road	£40,000
Kings Place	£5,000
Lanark Road	£100,000
Maybury Road	£5,000
Mayfield Road	£50,000
Meadowplace Road	£40,000
Meadows to Greenbank quiet connection	£10,000
Old Dalkeith Road	£20,000
Orchard Brae roundabout	£10,000
Pennywell Road, Muirhouse Parkway and Silverknowes Parkway	£75,000
Princes Street East End	£5,000
Queensferry Road	£40,000
Seaford Street	£1,500
Silverknowes Road (north section)	£50,000
Silverknowes Road (south section)	£25,000
Slateford Road	£40,000
Stanley Street / Hope Street	£1,000
Teviot Place / Potterow	£20,000
The Mound	£10,000
Victoria Street	£2,500
Waverley Bridge	£5,000
West Shore Road	£5,000
TOTAL	£1,094,500

Item no 10.30

QUESTION NO 30

By Councillor Booth for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 9 February 2023.

Question (1) Please can the convener outline progress towards the introduction of a school street at Stanwell Street to serve Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pairce?

Answer (1) Discussions are ongoing with the school around this as part of finalising their School Travel Plan. It is anticipated that the Plan will be signed off prior to the Easter Holidays. Once details are finalised, the Plan will be shared online and with ward councillors.