

Questions and Answers

City of Edinburgh Council

10.00 am Thursday, 1st June, 2023

City Chambers

Questions and Answers

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Agenda Annex

Item no 10.1

QUESTION NO 1

By Councillor Doggart for answer by the Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Swift IT System - this question in its entirety was continued from the meeting on 4 May 2023.

- Question** (1) When did officers become aware that social work information was held outside the Swift system?
- Answer** (1) Information has always been stored outside the Swift system, because it was designed and implemented without a supporting document management system. While it is possible to store documents within the system, this is known to cause system performance issues and therefore not standard practice.
- Question** (2) When did officers become aware that storing social work information outside the Swift IT system was not compliant with GDPR?
- Answer** (2) GDPR came into force in 2018 and it was then that issues with the non-compliance were raised. Issues with the likely non-compliance of Swift were raised in June 2018.
- Question** (3) On discovering Swift was not GDPR compliant, what actions did officers take to mitigate the data security risks?
- Answer** (3) An initial case for change was considered in June 2018. This led to a full business case for the replacement of Swift, which was brought forward in October 2019. This would have mitigated both the risks associated with Swift and eliminated the need to store information outside of the new system. Risks associated with the status quo were recorded.
- Question** (4) When did officers report the non-compliance with GDPR to the Information Commissioner?

- Answer** (4) The Information Commissioner recognised at the time of GDPR implementation that not all issues, especially those relating to legacy IT systems, would be resolved before May 2018. As the council was due to replace the system which would have resolved the issues with non-compliance, it was therefore not reported to the ICO.
- Question** (5) Does the current Swift usage remain non-compliant with GDPR and do the data security risks remain live?
- Answer** (5) Yes, the risks are well understood and mitigation has taken place where possible.
- Question** (6) Did individuals referenced in the Tanner report have unrestricted access to sensitive personal data held outside Swift?
- Answer** (6) Yes. However, it would be normal for staff at that level to have access to all information.

Item no 10.2

QUESTION NO 2

By Councillor Aston for answer by the Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question (1) Given a number of recent instances where Council properties have been removed from the disposals list despite neighbours of those properties having been told that they would be disposed of, has there been any change to the policy in relation to acquisitions and disposals programme which has not been agreed either by the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee or by Council in the last twelve months?

Answer (1) There have been no changes made to the Acquisitions and Disposals policy for Council housing that have not been approved by the Council or a Council Committee.

The overarching objective remains to increase supply of Council homes and reduce ongoing management and maintenance costs by consolidating HRA assets.

Since the implementation of the policy, 259 homes have been purchased and 137 homes have been sold. This has led to 67 blocks becoming fully Council owned, 105 blocks where the Council has divested its interest and 179 blocks where the Council has further consolidated its majority ownership. Securing majority ownership in mixed tenure blocks supports the delivery of common repairs and improvements.

Homes that are identified for disposal often require minor works to be carried out prior to marketing. This helps to ensure best value for the HRA. It has taken longer than anticipated to complete minor works to a minority of homes earmarked for disposal due to available resources and the need to prioritise work to tenanted homes and repairs to void properties that will be re-let.

With regards to the disposals criteria, no changes have been made. If a home becomes vacant and meets the criteria, it is earmarked for disposal. However, there have been short to medium term management actions taken to postpone the sale of homes to respond to wider challenges. This has included 29 homes that have been earmarked for disposal being let out as Temporary Accommodation and nine homes which have been made available to support the Council's response to the Ukrainian situation. The intention remains that these homes will be sold.

Before 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.

Question (2) Can the Convener please state the current policy for the acquisitions and disposals programme?

Answer (2) The overarching policy is as follows:

- Increase the number of affordable homes in the city by purchasing homes in blocks where the Council has over 50% ownership, funded by the disposal of homes in blocks where the Council is a minority owner.
- No net loss of social rented homes in any neighbourhood, over five years.
- Receipts ring fenced for affordable housing.
- Retain wheel chair accessible homes, unless inefficient to maintain.
- Buy homes from owners and offer a sitting tenancy, where it supports the mixed tenure investment programme.

Item no 10.3

QUESTION NO 3

By Councillor Nicolson for answer by the Chair of the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question

After the previous chief officer's sudden departure from the partnership, can you confirm that the person appointed was appointed to the whole role of Chief Officer of EIJB?

Answer

No. The role of Interim Director of Adult Social Care will primarily focus on the delivery and leadership of the adult social care portfolio of the Health and Social Care Partnership and drive forward the Improvement Plan.

It has been agreed to take legal and HR advice to transition this to an interim Chief Officer role.

This specific role is for an interim period to allow the wider permanent appointment of the Chief Officer of Edinburgh HSCP to be undertaken by the IJB in liaison with the City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian, whilst ensuring continued focus on this aspect of the portfolio.

Item no 10.4

QUESTION NO 4

By Councillor McVey for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question (1) How many car parking spaces (based on average use on available bays) have been reduced through the rollout of the CPZ in June 2023?

Answer (1) No marked car parking spaces have been removed due to the rollout of Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ).

The layout of all parking places and yellow lines reflects the Council's legal obligations, and the need for the layout of parking places to avoid negative impacts on vehicle movement or access to property, including private or off-street parking places. Parking places have been located, following consultation, where it is considered safe and appropriate for vehicles to park.

Question (2) How many of these reductions were due to:

- a) improving connectivity by reducing double parking on narrow streets blocking general vehicle and service vehicle access?
- b) improving access to local bin hubs and other serviced amenities?
- c) improving visibility at junctions?
- d) another reason?

Answer (2) See answer 1.

Question (3) For remaining space that has been lost for local residents' priority bay parking that don't meet the rationale for a, b and c, what is the explanation for each location?

Answer (3) See answer 1.

Question (4) When will the new restrictions be reviewed and when is the earliest that residents can expect to see modifications from the plans being implemented?

Answer (4) All parking and waiting restrictions are under continuous review. Any proposed modifications will be subject to the statutory Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process which can take 12 to 18 months to complete.

Question (5) When did officers make contact with local essential service providers, such as GP practices, police station to explore solutions to any potential local impacts?

Answer (5) Leaflets were delivered to all residents and businesses as part of the initial consultation in 2019, for the statutory TRO consultation in 2022 and again prior to the on-street work starting in 2023.

Question (6) Can the Convenor commit to ensuring officers make urgent contact with those lifeline service providers to ensure any issues are quickly overcome to protect local access to services?

Answer (6) The Council is in regular contact with the Emergency services and works closely with them to minimise any issues of access to services.

Essential User Permits are available to qualifying healthcare professionals within the new zones and all residents and businesses in the respective areas have been encouraged to contact the Council should they have any concerns - controlledparkingzone@edinburgh.gov.uk.

If Councillors become aware of any issues with local access to services, please contact the Parking Team (controlledparkingzone@edinburgh.gov.uk) or pass on the team's details to local service providers.

Item no 10.5

QUESTION NO 5

By Councillor Key for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question (1) Given that Council policy on EV charging equipment is to site it on the road and not the pavement, can he tell me how many EV charging installations are sited on public realm pavements in Edinburgh?

Answer (1) Zero. There have been no chargers placed on the footway since the Council began on street installation in October 2021.

However, almost all feeder power cabinets (the green metal boxes normally) have been placed on footways throughout the city where footway widths have allowed this and 1.5m of footway has been retained.

Whilst this practice was deemed acceptable in 2021, the current Transport and Environment Committee in April 2023 agreed that neither chargers nor feeder cabinets should be placed on footpath and that the Edinburgh Street Design Guidance should be updated to reflect this.

Question (2) What is the timescale to have these, incorrectly positioned, pavement-mounted EV installations moved into the roadway, where they should be?

Answer (2) See answer 1. Officers are undertaking a review of cabinet placement and assessing all locations. If there are any locations where footway width has been reduced to less than 1.5M, they will be prioritised for transfer to the carriageway. This work will be funded by charger income.

Item no 10.6

QUESTION NO 6

**By Councillor McFarlane for answer
by the Convener of the Culture and
Communities Committee at a
meeting of the Council on 1 June
2023**

Question

Following completion of the review of Lifelong Learning can the Convenor confirm if any staff have already been put on the redeployment list instead of supporting the vital work across Edinburgh's community centres?

Answer

Four individuals have been unsuccessful in securing positions within the new service teams. Of these, three individuals are now in the redeployment pool and are being supported to secure alternative employment within the Council. One individual has decided to accept an offer of Voluntary Redundancy.

Item no 10.7

QUESTION NO 7

**By Councillor Campbell for answer
by the Convener of the Culture and
Communities Committee at a
meeting of the Council on 1 June
2023**

Question (1) Following completion of the review of Lifelong Learning can the convener confirm the overall budget saving that is being delivered?

Answer (1) The staffing budget for the posts in-scope of the Lifelong Learning Review was £4.40m, with an approved saving of £0.170m being delivered. The staffing budget for the service moving forward is £4.23m.

Question (2) Can the convener confirm the full budget that was allocated to this service prior to the review, and the new budget allocated to the services that have come out of the review?

Answer (2) See answer 1 above.

Some services in Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning rely on external and earned income to meet the service cost. There has been no change to this in 2023/24 but may be subject to future changes if there is a change in the income/funding received by the Council.

In addition, in 2023/24 Sportscotland has increased its funding to the Council and Shared Prosperity Funding has been allocated to the Council for Community Empowerment and Engagement activities (this funding is in place until the end of financial year 2024/25).

Question (3) Can the convener ensure this includes staffing costs and any other ad-hoc funding or funding provided to support delivery of lifelong learning services both before and after the review?

Answer (3) See answers 1 and 2 above.

Item no 10.8

QUESTION NO 8

By Councillor Nicolson for answer by the Chair of the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question

Recruitment of frontline staff in the Health and Social Care Partnership is still an issue impacting all service delivery across Health and Social Care. It is positive that the H&SCP have enlisted the Capital City Partnership to manage the recruitment of more staff into the workforce. What is the additional cost of this and when will the findings brought back for councillors to analyse the impact of this approach.

Answer

The Scottish Government's Edinburgh Assistance Programme (EAP) team supported a proposal to use Capital City Partnership (CCP) to support the Edinburgh Health and Social care Partnership (EHSCP) recruitment of front-line staff. Two CCP HR staff were recruited in October 2022 for 48 months at a total fixed cost of £253K. KPIs are included on the contract.

The CCP programme has a locality and neighbourhood focus and is flexible to respond to the wide-ranging nature of recruitment challenges, linking into wider local and national opportunities, and increasing employment opportunities and 'good work'.

The main drive is at entry level for social care services and since November 2022 local and targeted recruitment fairs have taken place monthly. CCP has also secured support of Community Renewal for additional staff support, established a short Health and Social Care training course programme using CCP Vocational Training Framework (VTF) funding and have established strong links to DWP and MyJobScotland.

Since October, when CCP employed specialists to work directly with EHSCP, we have had 22 confirmed job offers. We expect this figure to be underreported due to the delay

in self-managing candidates informing CCP of outcomes of applications and interviews. Footfall to CCP run events is high, with 300 attending the recent NHS event in Leith. We are working closely with CCP to improve historic reporting and establish a process to verify the number of new starts going forwards. Data on performance is being captured monthly and is fed back into the EAP reporting framework. Performance will also be scrutinised by the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) Performance and Delivery Committee.

Item no 10.9

QUESTION NO 9

**By Councillor Macinnes for answer
by the Convener of the Finance and
Resources Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 1 June 2023**

Question

Can the convener confirm how much funding was given to Edinburgh Council for 2023/24 financial year by the Scottish Government, ringfenced to mitigate the impacts of UK government policy decisions, including but not limited to the bedroom tax, the two-child family cap and the rape clause and any funding supplied for the Scottish Welfare Fund and crisis grants?

Answer

Although the final amount of funding received will be aligned to the actual level of payments made, the Council's 2023/24 grant funding settlement from the Scottish Government assumes receipt of £4.962m of Discretionary Housing Payments funding in respect of full bedroom tax/underoccupancy regulations mitigation and £0.991m for full benefit cap mitigation.

While the Council's grant funding settlement includes a number of other sums to support families and individuals during the cost-of-living crisis, these do not explicitly offset the impacts of UK government policy decisions.

Item no 10.10

QUESTION NO 10

**By Councillor McFarlane for answer
by the Convener of the Transport and
Environment Committee at a meeting
of the Council on 1 June 2023**

Question

To ask the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee for an update on prospective plans to relocate the statue *Body and Soul* from Hunter Square.

Answer

Officers are investigating the feasibility of relocating the statue to the Museum of Edinburgh Courtyard. Researching the infrastructure and arrangements for doing so and will provide an update through Culture and Communities Committee Business Bulletin and to local ward members when plans are in place.

Item no 10.11

QUESTION NO 11

By Councillor Dobbin for answer by the Leader of the Council at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question (1) What new initiatives, ideas or technologies have been brought back from the Smart Cities Summit for review by the Council's Smart Cities Team?

Answer (1) New links are being developed with a wealth of opportunity and potential partnerships with the council, industry and universities in Taiwan.

Question (2) Given the visit to Taiwan was approved at Full Council, when will the Council Leader be providing a report back to Council on the learnings from the visit and the value derived for our City.

Answer (2) There was a Business Bulletin provided at last weeks P & S Committee, as a report was not required at full council. I propose to provide a report at the August (2023) Policy & Sustainability Committee.

Item no 10.12

QUESTION NO 12

By Councillor Dijkstra-Downie for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question (1) Which streets will see the installation of signage for contraflow cycling on one-way streets (as per Council policy) between now and the end of the 2023?

Answer (1) Contraflow cycling on the following one-way streets is being delivered as part of the Leith Connections project:

- Burgess Street;
- Maritime Lane;
- Tolbooth Wynd; and
- Water Street

In addition, three further streets have just had contraflow cycling permitted as part of traffic management associated with the Kings Theatre redevelopment.

- Leven Terrace;
- Valleyfield Street; and
- Glengyle Terrace.

Officers are aware of the concerns that have been raised by various parties with respect to the changes on Glengyle Terrace. In order to allow us to better understand the operation of the new road layout and priority changes, officers have commissioned a video survey that will take place this week. The survey will help to inform the development of any adjustments (if needed) to the current layouts.

Design work is underway on over 50 streets which are proposed to have contraflow cycling installed from August 2024. Information will be provided to Committee and local ward Councillors at the appropriate time.

Question (2) What metrics are used to determine which streets are suitable for the implementation of contraflow cycling signage?

Answer (2) Criteria considered include traffic flow and speed, road width and clear road width; cycle flows and parking and loading.

Question (3) Is Cockburn Street part of the implementation plan? If not, why not?

Answer (3) Contraflow cycling is not currently permitted on Cockburn Street. This will be considered as part of the current design work ongoing on Old Town Streets through the City Centre Transformation project.

Item no 10.13

QUESTION NO 13

By Councillor Caldwell for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

- Question** (1) Several CBR sites in Phase 1, 2 and A (such as South Sloan Street and Easter Road) remain incomplete due to on-the-ground challenges completing the initial TRO, which has left some residents having to use the carriageway to use bins. How many outstanding CBR TROs are there to advertise in Phases 1, 2 and A?
- Answer** (1) One Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is anticipated to be progressed later on the year to correct all minor discrepancies on the original TROs with regards to bin hubs in Phases 1, 2, A and 3.
- Question** (2) What steps are being taken to ensure binhubs are completed for residents at these locations as soon as the outstanding CPZ Phase 1 TROs are executed?
- Answer** (2) The Parking and Communal Bin Review (CBR) teams are liaising regularly on progress with the respective TROs, their implementation and subsequent changes that will address any issues with bin hubs.
- Question** (3) Since the initial first stage consultation of CPZ Phase 1 to present, how many applications (of both new bays and removals) have the 'Disabled Persons Parking', 'Controlled Parking Zones' and 'Parking' teams received respectively which could not be progressed due to the open CPZ Phase 1 TRO?
- Answer** (3) It should be noted that Blue Badge holders in the new CPZs are entitled to free residents' parking permits. Blue Badge holders are also permitted to park free of charge and without time limit within pay and display and shared use bays, and on yellow line restrictions providing there is no loading prohibition in force.

Nonetheless, 19 Disabled Person Parking Permit (DPPPs) applications could not be progressed due to the Phase 1 TRO, comprising of 13 requests for new DPPPs and six requests to have bays removed.

Question (4) What steps are being taken to ensure these requests are completed for residents at these locations as soon as the outstanding CPZ Phase 1 TROs are executed?

Answer (4) Parking patterns are expected to change once the new CPZ controls come into effect, so all locations will be reviewed, using the assessment criteria for CPZ DPPP applications, once the new controls have bedded in.

Item no 10.14

QUESTION NO 14

By Councillor Lang for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question (1) When is it expected that Builyeon Road in Queensferry will be diverted through the new housing development?

Answer (1) This forms part of the developer's programme of works and officers are not aware of the timetable for this.

Question (2) What is the current timetable for turning the existing Builyeon Road into an active travel route?

Answer (2) An initial community and stakeholder engagement exercise was undertaken in 2022 on proposals for a new active travel route across the south of Queensferry, between the major development sites at Builyeon Road and South Scotstoun. This includes the development of the existing Builyeon Road as an active travel route and linear park (as per the action within the Local Development Plan Action Programme). A Final Concept Design was published on the [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#) in December 2022.

The Council has now received funding from Transport Scotland through the Sustrans Places for Everyone fund to continue the design development of this route. A design contract will be awarded in the next few months.

The Local Development Plan Action Programme 2023 update (which was approved at the Planning Committee on [19 April 2023](#)) shows an estimated delivery date of the relevant action of 2027.

QUESTION NO 15

By Councillor Flannery for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

The decision to progress to legislative TRO for B1 potential CPZ in Southside Newington is complex and divisive, particularly for residents who live on its Eastern side. Can the Convener -

Question (1) Confirm that progress to Phase 2 of the city-wide CPZ scheme has been paused to assess impact of Phase 1 first?

If this is the case, can the Convener explain why Phase 3, which includes the B1 CPZ, will still progress before the findings of Phase 2?

Answer (1) Phase 2 is paused for two primary reasons:

- a) To allow for further engagement on the need for controls and the detail of the proposed designs; and
- b) To allow for an assessment of the impact of Phase 1 on neighbouring areas.

As a significant part of Phase 2 lies adjacent to Phase 1 (Bonnington, Easter Road, Lochend and Willowbrae North), any proposed changes in these areas have been paused.

However, as reported to Transport and Environment Committee in [December 2022](#), Phase 3 has been assessed on the basis of whether elements are linked or adjacent to other Phases and whether the parking pressures in Phase 3 areas are separate to pressures identified in Phase 1. Where there is evidence to support proceeding with elements of Phase 3 (not linked or adjacent to other Phases, with the parking pressures in those areas separate to pressures elsewhere) these will now proceed to legal process.

Question

- (2) Can the Convener confirm that the process, starting from July 2023, will include a residents' consultation on implementation and design?

And confirm or rule out the possibility of the Eastern side of B1, Waverley Park, to be considered as part of the B7 area, which includes Prestonfield to the South of the Ward?

Answer

- (2) The original designs, as presented in the informal consultation, are being revisited in light of the comments and suggestions received, and the revised designs will be available to view during the formal advertising stage of the legal process.

The legal process allows a period during which objections can be made. Residents will have the opportunity at that stage to submit any further representations at that stage. If more than six objections are received, a report on the representations made will be presented to Licensing Sub-Committee for consideration.

In respect of the B1 and B7 areas, the Strategic Review of Parking considers these to be entirely separate entities. The proposals for these areas, and the reasoning behind the proposed approach, was set out in the [December 2022](#) report.

Councillor Pogson has arranged a meeting between myself and Waverley Park residents on the 5th of June where I hope to listen to any concerns they may have.

Item no 10.16

QUESTION NO 16

By Councillor Dijkstra-Downie for answer by the Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

- Question** (1) a) What information does the Council hold on the type and volume of food waste from school meals in primary schools in relation to meals or food items cooked but not served?
- b) What measures are in place to reduce this type of food waste?

- Answer** (1) a) The council utilise the ParentPay system to ensure only meals ordered by parents are produced – this has reduced kitchen waste by 22% since the system was introduced. Each kitchen has a clear food bin in the kitchen where the unit manager can review the items being wasted and record, they then feed into the central team at locality meetings on any items proving high waste for product re-engineering.
- b) The biggest waste comes from plate waste (i.e. waste from meals served but not eaten) Schools on a local level are responsible for managing this process with guidance provided centrally.

- Question** (2) a) What information does the Council hold on the type and volume of food waste from school meals in primary schools in relation to meals or food items served but not eaten?
- b) What measures are in place to reduce this type of food waste?

- Answer** (2) As above

- Question** (3) How does the Council assess the popularity of menu options?

- Answer** (3) The council carry out several product trials prior to any new menu being launches, this includes transporting items and discussions with pupils. The council work with national bodies such as ASSIST FM who use a national menu bank of recipes tried and tested on pupils across Scotland. School meals are heavily regulated and so the SG food regs govern a vast majority of the products sold in schools
- Question** (4) How does the Council act on any information gathered under 1, 2 or 3 when it comes to set its menus?
- Answer** (4) The menu development team meet 4 times annually to review products, discuss supply chain pressures, market trends and innovations and the results of any parental engagement. The team then use this information to shape the following years menu.
- Question** (5) How are pupils currently educated about food waste?
- Answer** (5) We have food and health education frameworks for each level to guide progressive delivery of the curriculum. Food waste features at each level through the journey of food, identifying how to prevent food related waste and food safety to reduce spoilage.

QUESTION NO 17

By Councillor Thornley for answer by the Convener of the Culture and Communities Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Scottish Government Playpark Funding

Further to answers provided to question 10.10 at the 30 June 2022 of the Council:

- Question** (1) Can the Convener provide the final list of play parks which were upgraded from the 2022/23 allocation of Scottish Government funding?
- Answer** (1) Following the report to Culture and Communities Committee on [7 March 2023](#), the final list of playparks upgraded in 2022/23 was:
- Loganlea Avenue;
 - Dundas Park;
 - Figgate Park;
 - Glenvarloch Crescent;
 - Inch Park (equipment replacement only);
 - Morningside Public Park; and
 - Clovenstone Gardens. Upgrades to a further six play areas were tendered in 2022/23, and delivery is ongoing..
- Question** (2) How much money will the Council receive from the Scottish Government for 2023/24 for upgrading play parks?
- Answer** (2) As reported to Culture and Communities Committee in March 2023, the Council's allocation of funding from the Scottish Government's playpark investment fund is £811,000.
- Question** (3) Which play parks are to be upgraded with the 2023/24 funding?

Answer

(3) There are ongoing upgrades to:

- Montgomery Street Park, (part-funded in 2022/23);
- Victoria Park (Toddler);
- Dean Park Place;
- Dumbryden Grove;
- Hailesland Gardens; and
- Morvenside.

The programme for 2023/24 was also set out in report to Committee. Depending on the timetable for consultation and planning, some may fall into subsequent years. As requested by Culture and Communities Committee, an annual update on investment in 2023/24 and planned investment in 2024/25 will be reported to Committee in February 2024.

In addition to the investment programme set out above, Developer's Contributions will support improvements to the park infrastructure and play facilities within King George V Park, Eyre Place.

Item no 10.18

QUESTION NO 18

By Councillor Heap for answer by the Convener of the Culture and Communities Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question

What is the Council doing to reduce the number of empty shopfronts, in particular by facilitating community access and meantime use?

Answer

In the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, in the city centre, Council officers met with property agents and offered to provide a 'match making' service to put landlords in touch with community and third sector organisations who might be looking for shorter term leases.

It was hoped that this would be mutually beneficial to the respective parties however, to date, there have been no requests made for this support with feedback from property agents that their clients were either marketing for longer term tenants at market rates or were happy with vacant possession of units on the basis that redevelopment was planned.

There has not been an targeted approach in other parts of the city, although officers have assisted community and third sector organisations where they are looking to secure facilities by acquiring or leasing property.

The Council continues to promote Non Domestic Rates relief (including Fresh Start, discretionary and charitable reliefs and the Small Business Bonus scheme, all which could be relevant to community groups). Fresh Start Relief allows for 100% relief for up to 12 months for new occupation of a property that has been empty for six months preceding the new occupation. The rateable value of the eligible property must not exceed £100,000.

In terms of the Council's role as Planning Authority, a flexible approach is taken to meanwhile uses. The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997 was

also amended earlier this year to amalgamate shops with financial, professional and other services. This means that changing vacant shops to financial, professional and other services does not require planning permission giving landlords more flexibility.

Item no 10.19

QUESTION NO 19

By Councillor Heap for answer by the Convener of the Culture and Communities Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question (1) Will they be meeting artists from the Save Our Studios campaign?

Answer (1) The Convener has contacted the Save Our Studios campaign to arrange a convenient time to meet the artists.

Question (2) To provide a summary of this meeting

Answer (2) The Convener will update the Culture and Communities Committee on the outcome.

Item no 10.20

QUESTION NO 20

By Councillor Heap for answer by the Convener of the Culture and Communities Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question

Whether they will provide a report back from their meeting regarding the West Park Place studios held as a result of the recent Committee motion regarding the studios?

Answer

A meeting with West Park Place studios (WASPS) officials and representatives of the artists was provisionally organised for 23 May 2023. However, this has been rescheduled by their Chief Executive Officer to 6 June 2023. The Convener has also contacted the save our studios campaign and will update the Culture and Communities Committee on the outcome.

QUESTION NO 21

By Councillor Heap for answer by the Convener of the Culture and Communities Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

To provide information on:

Question (1) The number of meetings they or their officials have had with external bodies regarding the Filmhouse over the past three months

Answer (1) Officers have had 8 meetings with external bodies regarding the Filmhouse since 2 February 2023. One of those meetings (on 3 May 2023) included the Council Leader and Convener.

Question (2) A summary of the content of those meetings

Answer (2) The meetings have explored possible ways to support parties seeking to lease the property at 88 Lothian Road from the new owner and who wish to operate it as a cultural film venue.

QUESTION NO 22

By Councillor Cowdy for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2022-28, Action ID 26603 for the Water of Leith (Page 264), and ID 26803 for Niddrie Burn (Page 281) are indicated for delivery 2023-2025 and state:

“The volume of water that would overwhelm the sewer system and cause flooding from manholes or inside our homes is to be assessed, to support understanding of the performance of the urban drainage network.

“Scottish Water will carry out an assessment of sewer flood risk within the highest priority sewer catchments, which includes the Edinburgh sewer catchment in this target area. This will help to improve knowledge and understanding of potential surface water flood risk.

Action delivery lead is Scottish Water in coordination with the local authority.

Outputs of this modelling assessment will be shared with local authorities and SEPA.”

Question

Can the Convener confirm what steps he has taken to ensure Scottish Water instigates this action in co-ordination with CEC?

Answer

When it comes to flooding and flood mitigation, there is a complex interaction between surface water and wastewater from property and watercourses. The Council and Scottish Water are working together through the Edinburgh and Lothians Strategic Drainage Partnership (which also encompasses SEPA and neighbouring local authorities) to address these issues together.

Scottish Water are developing their own studies to analyse impact from sewer flooding within the context of climate change. Their work considers sources of flooding and wider surface water management throughout the city.

Alongside this, the Council is working closely with Scottish Water to develop Surface Water Management Plans, which identify areas of the city at particular risk of flooding and develop mitigation measures for the effective management of surface water.

This collaborative approach to assessing the impact of surface water on sewer systems is being used to develop plans for the management of flood risk (considering both strategy/guidance and implementing enhanced sustainable drainage within projects). As an example of this collaborative approach, in the Craigleith Catchment Study Scottish Water is undertaking detailed “2Di” modelling to better understand flood risk and potential interventions, and the Council is progressing some of the potential interventions identified.

Item no 10.23

QUESTION NO 23

By Councillor Cowdy for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question

Can the Convener provide tonnage data for recycling volumes at Household Waste Recycling Centres for the 3 years up to March 2023.

Answer

Tonnage data for recycling volumes at Household Waste Recycling Centres is provided in the table below.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Tonnage Recycled	13,010.17	16,086.58	13,433.41
Tonnage to disposal	6,227.19	8,339.51	6,889.14
Total Waste Arisings (TWA)	19,237.36	24,426.09	20,322.55
Recycling Performance	67.6%	65.9%	66.1%

Item no 10.24

QUESTION NO 24

By Councillor Cowdy for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Local Flood Risk Management Plan, Action IDs 26605, 26705, and 26806 require ongoing work that:

“Community engagement is to continue to be carried out in the area by the responsible authorities to raise awareness of flood risk.

Awareness raising should be developed based on the outcomes of the surface water management plan and flood studies.

Action delivery lead is The City of Edinburgh Council in coordination with responsible authorities and the Scottish Flood Forum.”

Question

Can the Convener confirm how CEC is complying with its community engagement responsibilities and how it is co-ordinating with Scottish Flood Forum and responsible authorities?

Answer

The Council directly engages with community groups, individuals, elected members and Parliament officials where there are specific flooding issues. Recent examples of this include meetings and discussions with groups in Stockbridge and Murrayfield in relation to the Water of Leith.

Information relating to flood risk management, planning guidance, and emergency actions is available through the [Council website](#), which has recently been updated to include information on flood gate operations.

On a wider scale, The Scottish Flood Forum (SFF), SEPA and Scottish Water provide advice and guidance in relation to flood risk (including details of responsibilities of organisations and individuals). SEPA issue Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings through their Floodline service, to which the Council provides input in relation to local flood risk in Edinburgh.

Through the Edinburgh & Lothians Strategic Drainage Partnership, the Council has committed to investing up to £50,000 on communications in relation to projects which are progressed in partnership with Scottish Water. Scottish Water are matching that contribution.

This will be used to promote some of the projects identified for progression as a result of the capital investment agreed by the Council in February 2023.

The SFF work with local authorities across Scotland to provide community advice. The Council liaises with the SFF on individual flooding cases (as required) and provides advice on potential mitigation actions (where appropriate).

During Flood Alerts, the Council often issues communications advising on actions being taken and where the public can find information. Direct contact is also made with elected members in affected areas to advise on the actions being taken.

QUESTION NO 25

By Councillor Cowdy for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Murrayfield TTROs for concerts

Question (1) Has an IIA been carried out for the road closures for the Murrayfield concerts; whilst it would not be necessary to carry out an EIA for each individual closure has one been done to assess the impact of closures on adjacent residential communities which can only leave or access their properties via the A8?

Answer (1) The approach taken to preparing for events has been to carry out a detailed risk assessment, within which the potential impact on local communities is a key consideration. Therefore, closing roads and access routes is only considered when absolutely required to protect pedestrians in a road and/or if there are other public safety risks identified.

In preparing for events, Council officers are mindful of the impact on local residents and businesses, the environment and the local economy when implementing event management plans.

Officers will look into the possibility of preparing a generic Integrated Impact Assessment for events in the city later in the year.

Question (2) Does the Convener consider that the notification process of closures for residents is adequate?

Answer (2) I have asked what further reasonable steps can be taken to notify local residents, businesses and elected members.

Item no 10.26

QUESTION NO 26

By Councillor Mitchell for answer by the Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question (1) How many occurrences of Council Tax arrears have been caused because an incorrect or already occupied address has been used to open a new Council Tax account in each of the last five years?

Answer (1) We are unable to provide an answer to this question as our systems don't hold this level of data. I can however confirm the number of changes of address processes received for 2022/23 was 65k. We can confirm that occurrences of Council Tax arrears due to an incorrect or already occupied address has not been highlighted as an area of concern through our Quality and Complaints data.

Question (2) What is the total amount of Council Tax arrears accumulated for each of the last five years because of this?

Answer (2) N/A

Question (3) How much remains to be paid for each of the last five years?

Answer (3) N/A

QUESTION NO 27

By Councillor Cowdy for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

- City Mobility Plan 2021-2030, Policy Measure MOVEMENT 2 - Bus Network Review states:
“Review the city’s bus network to better align with the Council’s strategic priorities including improving accessibility, integration and reducing congestion in the city centre.”
- Draft Public Transport Action Plan 2030 – Page 30, Item 8, Bus Network Review, states:
“As this plan (Circulation Plan) is implemented, we will agree an evolved integrated public transport system including stops, routes and public transport interchanges.”
Page 36, Item 11, Improve Governance and Co-ordination, states:
“We will therefore deliver new governance for Council owned public transport services with the new company set to be in place in 2023.”
- Transport & Environment Committee, Feb 2023, approved a delivery programme based on the draft Public Transport Action Plan (PTAP)
- Elected Member training – Lothian Buses, 16th May
 - i) Lothian Buses supported the principle that they need to remain a fully commercial operator to “remain competitive, offer best value, and deliver a cross-subsidised holistic network”.
 - ii) Several Councillors raised important issues about the lack of influence the Council has on Lothian Buses including changes to Routes and Timetables.

In light of the above:

- Question** **(1)** Does the Convener expect Improved Governance of a new Public Transport Company will provide CEC with more influence over bus Routes and Timetables?

- Answer** (1) One of the key aims of transport ALEO reform is to strengthen links between elected members and the reformed transport company through the creation of a Liaison Committee. The detail of this will be decided by Councillors, but I understand it cannot provide more direct influence over routes and timetables but I hope will create an effective space for such issues to be debated.
- Question** (2) When will the Convener be bringing ideas on how to Improve Governance to Transport & Environment Committee for debate?
- Answer** (2) As part of the ALEO reform process a new Liaison Committee, as noted above, is proposed. Officers are currently drafting terms of reference for this group which will be brought to Transport and Environment Committee for approval.
- Question** (3) Does the Convener still believe a new Public Transport Company will be in place in 2023?
- Answer** (3) The ALEO reform project is scheduled to complete in early 2024.
- Question** (4) When will the Bus Network Review be scheduled?
- Answer** (4) There is an update on delivery of the City Mobility Plan scheduled in late 2023. Work is ongoing with operators as part of the Public Transport Action Plan to look at the wider network for bus routes.

Feedback from residents, businesses and Community Councils (not least at the May Transport & Environment Committee) following changes to the 41 service (now notionally 47/B) highlight the necessity of maintaining good links to and through the city centre.

Item no 10.28

QUESTION NO 28

By Councillor Whyte for answer by the Convener of the Planning Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question (1) Please provide a copy of the report of the study the Council commissioned from MKA Economics entitled "Economic Value of Residential and Short Term Lets in Edinburgh".

Answer (1) The MKA Economics study will be reported to Planning Committee on 14 June 2023. The report will contain a copy of the study.

Question (2) Please also detail the costs involved in commissioning this report.

Answer (2) £7,800

QUESTION NO 29

By Councillor Parker for answer by the Convener of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

In the last 10 years:

Question (1) How many tenants in social housing found responsible for anti-social behaviour have been evicted from their home and re-housed

Answer (1) There have been 30 evictions within the last 10 years from Council Housing for Antisocial Behaviour. The Council does not hold this information in respect of other Social Landlords.

Question (2) How many tenants in social housing who were/are victims or targets of anti-social behaviour by other tenants, have been offered alternative tenancies

Answer (2) For Council housing, this information is not recorded in a format which allows it to be reported as requested. I have asked officers to investigate options to enable the recording of this information for reporting purposes in the future. For other social landlords, the Council does not hold this information.

Question (3) How many tenants in social housing who were/are victims or targets of anti-social behaviour by other tenants have been advised to declare themselves homeless and give up their tenancies

Answer (3) For Council housing, this information is not recorded in a format which allows it to be reported as requested. I have asked officers to investigate options to enable the recording of this information for reporting purposes in the future. However, while Council officers should not be advising tenants to give up their tenancies and declare themselves as homeless, there may be instances where officers will offer temporary accommodation to provide respite for

tenants from anti-social behaviour. If Elected Members are aware of any instances where tenants have been asked to give up their tenancy, please let me know or contact the Service Director for Housing and Homelessness

Item no 10.30

QUESTION NO 30

By Councillor Booth for answer by the Convener of the Development Management Sub-Committee at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question

Please will the convener provide the following statistics, in each quarter from 1 April 2018 to date, and including a column of running totals for each of these items to that date:

- a) the number of planning applications received by the City of Edinburgh Council for a change of use to short term let;
- b) the number of these applications that were refused;
- c) the number of these applications that were granted;
- d) the number of these applications that were withdrawn;
- e) the number of applications received by the City of Edinburgh Council for a certificate of lawful use for a retrospective change of use to a short term let;
- f) the number of these applications that were refused;
- g) the number of these applications that were granted;
- h) the number of these applications that were withdrawn;

Answer

The tables below provide the requested information.

Applications for Planning Permission for Short-term Lets

		Received		Refused		Granted		Withdrawn	
		Total per quarter	Running total	Total per quarter	Running total	Total per quarter	Running total	Total per quarter	Running total
18/19	Q1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Q2	2	2	3	4	0	0	0	0
	Q3	0	2	1	5	0	0	0	0
	Q4	5	7	0	5	0	0	1	1
19/20	Q1	4	11	0	5	3	3	0	1
	Q2	0	11	2	7	1	4	0	1
	Q3	3	14	0	7	0	4	0	1
	Q4	2	16	1	8	4	8	0	1
20/21	Q1	4	20	0	8	1	9	0	1
	Q2	3	23	2	10	1	10	0	1
	Q3	3	26	2	12	0	10	1	2
	Q4	6	32	0	12	3	13	0	2
21/22	Q1	7	39	3	15	4	17	2	4
	Q2	7	46	3	18	4	21	0	4
	Q3	6	52	1	19	4	25	0	4
	Q4	103	155	2	21	5	30	1	5
22/23	Q1	66	221	14	35	1	31	1	6
	Q2	71	292	12	47	7	38	2	8
	Q3	88	380	37	84	84	122	43	51
	Q4	53	433	21	105	2	124	10	61
23/24	Q1	20	453	72	177	2	126	7	68

Applications for Certificates of Lawful Use for Short-term Lets

		Received		Refused		Granted		Withdrawn	
		Total per quarter	Running total	Total per quarter	Running total	Total per quarter	Running total	Total per quarter	Running total
18/19	Q1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Q2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Q3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Q4	3	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
19/20	Q1	1	5	2	3	0	0	0	0
	Q2	0	5	2	5	0	0	0	0
	Q3	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	0
	Q4	1	6	1	6	0	0	0	0
20/21	Q1	0	6	0	6	0	0	0	0
	Q2	0	6	0	6	0	0	0	0
	Q3	4	10	0	6	3	3	0	0
	Q4	2	12	0	6	1	4	0	0
21/22	Q1	2	14	1	7	3	7	0	0
	Q2	4	18	0	7	1	8	0	0
	Q3	1	19	0	7	3	11	0	0
	Q4	29	48	1	8	9	20	0	0
22/23	Q1	10	58	1	9	18	38	0	0
	Q2	20	78	6	15	6	44	0	0
	Q3	29	107	2	17	5	49	1	1
	Q4	33	140	2	19	17	66	1	2
23/24	Q1	11	151	1	20	36	102	3	5

Item no 10.31

QUESTION NO 31

By Councillor Nicolson for answer by the Chair of the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board at a meeting of the Council on 1 June 2023

Question (1) On May 23 at Policy and Sustainability Committee, Unison's social care Service Conditions Convenor quoted the EIJB Chair as 'having no knowledge of the change to the public consultation' which has changed from a consultation on the future of care homes to a consultation narrowing the scope to solely focus on decommissioning care homes?

Answer (1) N/A

Question (2) Did officers discuss the decision to narrow the consultation with the chair prior to the publication?

Answer (2) A conversation was had between officers and the Chair and Vice-Chair regarding focusing the consultation on the future of the four care homes.

Question (3) Did you, as chair, inform the unions you had no knowledge of the change prior to the consultation's publication?

Answer (3) The chair always welcomes engagement with all stakeholders and always seeks to be entirely honest and transparent.

QUESTION NO 32

**By Councillor Booth for answer by
the Convener of the Planning
Committee at a meeting of the
Council on 1 June 2023**

- Question** (1) Please will the convener provide the following statistics, in each quarter from 1 April 2018 to date, and including a column of running totals for each of these items to that date:
- a) the number of planning enforcement cases;
 - b) the number of planning enforcement cases involving an STL;
 - c) the number of planning enforcement cases where an enforcement notice has been served;
 - d) the number of planning enforcement cases involving an STL where an enforcement notice has been served;
 - e) the number of STL enforcement cases where an enforcement notice has been appealed;
 - f) the number of STL enforcement appeals where the appeal has been dismissed;
 - g) the number of STL enforcement appeals where the appeal has been upheld.
- Answer** (1) A table with this information is included on page 3 below. It has not been possible to provide monthly totals, but yearly totals are included
- Question** (2) Please will the convener identify the approximate number of staff hours spent in
- a) enforcement;
 - b) enforcement of a case involving an STL over each of the last 5 years.

Answer

- (2) a) The Planning service does not hold information on staff hours spent on particular tasks. In the past 5 years there has, at different times, been between 6 and 7 full time members of staff engaged in enforcement work , with administrative support and support from the Planning Appeals team.
- b) The time spent on the enforcement of an STL case will depend on the particular circumstances of the case. No two cases are the same. The time required to resolve a case depends on a number of variables including: the level and accuracy of information provided by the enquirer; the willingness of the owners to engage with the case officer and provide information relevant to the case; the scale of representations; the level of correspondence required with neighbours, Councillors and others; whether repeat site visits are needed to establish the planning position; whether a breach is identified and a notice is needed; whether the notice is appealed and the complexity of the defence of the appeal; and whether the notice is complied with and any further action is needed to secure compliance.

Answer to Question 1

	Enforcement cases		Enforcement cases involving an STL		Enforcement cases where an enforcement notice has been served		Enforcement cases involving an STL where an enforcement notice has been served	
	Total Per Year	Running total	Total Per Year	Running total	Total Per Year	Running total	Total Per Year	Running total
2018/19	698	698	114	114	73	73	16	16
2019/20	914	1,612	228	342	76	149	38	54
2020/21	711	2,323	83	425	3	152	3	57
2021/22	786	3,109	107	532	64	216	40	97
2022/23	807	3,916	190	722	87	303	45	142
2023/24	165	4,081	41	763	11	314	7	149

	Enforcement cases where an STL enforcement notice has been appealed		STL enforcement appeals where the appeal has been dismissed		STL enforcement appeals where the appeal has been upheld	
	Total Per Year	Running total	Total Per Year	Running total	Total Per Year	Running total
2018/19	11	11	8	8	1	1
2019/20	17	28	14	22	1	2
2020/21	13	41	12	34	1	3
2021/22	12	53	10	44	0	3
2022/23	16	69	8	52	3	6
2023/24	4	73	3	55	0	6