

Supplementary Questions and Answers

City of Edinburgh Council

10.05 am Thursday, 28th September, 2023

Main Council Chamber - City Chambers

Supplementary Questions and Answers

Contacts

Email: gavin.king@edinburgh.gov.uk

Tel: 0131 529 4239

Nick Smith

Service Director, Legal and Assurance

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Item no 10.6

QUESTION NO 6

By Councillor Dijkstra- Downie for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 28 September 2023

How many, and which, roads that were treated with substandard micro-asphalt during the 2022/23 programme have since been re-treated?

Question (1) There were 7 schemes streets that have been re-treated in 2023/24 as a result of failures in 2022/23:

- Lady Road (excluding service road)
- Pleasance
- St Leonard's Street
- Woodhall Road
- Redford Drive
- Blackford Avenue
- South Gyle Broadway

Answer (1) How many, and which, roads that were treated with substandard micro-asphalt during the 2022/23 programme were not re-treated?

Question (2) There are 12 streets that have not been re-treated in 2023/24 that were treated with Micro-Asphalt in 2022/23:

- Craigmount Avenue
- Craigmount Terrace
- Craigmount Gardens
- Craigmount View
- Saughtonhall Drive
- Cluny Gardens
- Hawkhill Avenue
- Dumbryden Road
- Lady Nairn Grove
- Drumsheugh Gardens
- West Shore Road
- Dalkeith Road

Answer (2) Which, if any, defects are still outstanding as a result of the use of the defective material?

Question (3) There are minor defects that remain outstanding in the 12 streets, as detailed in Q2. I have been assured that these minor defects will be repaired in 2023/24 by a squad laying material by hand.

Answer (3) How many, and which, roads that were treated with substandard micro-asphalt during the 2022/23 programme have since been re-treated?

Supplementary Question It had been my understanding that both Waterfront Avenue and Craighall Road were part of the 2022 faulty micro-asphalt programme and that Waterfront Avenue was in fact re-treated. Could you please clarify the position regarding both of these roads which do not appear in the answer to the question?

Supplementary Answer Both Craighall Road and Waterfront Avenue were Surface Dressing sites (i.e. not micropasphalt). The remedial works (machine laying) on Waterfront Avenue were carried out in June. Minor issues have been identified on Craighall Road and discussions are ongoing with the contractor to agree a suitable date to undertake the remedial works (hand laying).

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 28 September 2023

Question (1) How many, and which, school crossing patrol locations are currently unstaffed because of vacancies?

Answer (1) There are currently 45 locations which are not staffed because of vacancies within the School Crossing Patrol team. The table below shows all of the crossings which are not currently staffed.

Question (2) How many, and which, school crossing patrol locations are currently unstaffed because of reasons other than vacancies? If any, please detail the reasons.

Answer (2) On 22 September 2023, there were 13 locations which are unstaffed due to other reasons (8 due to sickness absence; and 5 due to unpaid leave). It is not possible to provide a list of locations which are not currently staffed for other reasons as this will change daily.

Question (3) What steps are undertaken to ensure these crossings will be restaffed?

Answer (3) There can be difficulties in recruiting School Crossing Patrol Guides. The Council advertises vacancies throughout the year (approximately 5 – 6 times per year). Vacancies are also promoted through local school communication channels (including social media) and existing Guides are encouraged to promote vacancies to family, friends and neighbours to consider applying.

An advert will shortly go live on the MyJobScotland website for the latest recruitment, I have asked that this is shared with Elected Members.

Supplementary Question In order to understand what proportion of the school crossing patrol locations are currently unstaffed because of vacancies, how many school patrol locations are there in total?

**Supplementary
Answer**

173

School Crossings with current vacancies

Abbeyhill/Beggs Building
Merchiston Avenue/Granville Terrace
Drumbrae North/Barntongate Ave (pel)
Craigentiny Road/Loaning Road (pel)
Ashley Terrace/Cowan Road
Shandon Place (pel)
Pennywell Rd/Muirhouse Ave (zebra)
Queensferry Road at school (pel)
Ravelston Terrace/Queensferry Terrace ATS
Queensferry Terrace at blister point (pel)
Willowbrae Rd/Duddingston Rd ATS
Duddingston Road/Duddingston Avenue at school
Drumbrae N/Duart Cresc (pel)
Comely Bank Rd/Comely Bank Ave ATS
Queensferry Rd/Orchard Brae (pel)
Colinton Road/Ettrick Road (pel)
Colinton Road/Gillsland Road (pel)
Grays Loan/Colinton Road ATS
Gilmerton Road/Moredun Dykes Road (pel)
Howdenhall Road/North of Balmwell Terrace (pel)
Lasswade Road at Liberton Hospital PEL
Station Road at school
Ferry Rd/Craighall Rd (pel)
Whitehouse Loan/Warrender Park Road
Academy Street/Laurie Street
Gilmerton Road/Glenallan Drive
Colinton Mains Drive at school (pel)
The Loan at rear entrance to school
Murrayfield Ave/Murrayfield Gdns
Roseburn Street/Roseburn Terrace ats
Canongate at school (zebra)
Holyrood Road/Dumbiedykes Road pel
Captains Road/Lasswade Road ATS
Garscube Terrace at school
Baileyfield Road/Duddingston Park ATS
East Hermitage Place/Links Gardens (ats)
Restalrig Road/Gladstone Place @ (ats)
Morningside Road/Falcon Avenue (pel)
Morningside Drive/Comiston Road
Brandon St/Eyre PI ATS
West Tollcross / Ponton Street
Fountainbridge at school (pel)
Bath Street ATS
Ferry Rd/Newhaven Rd ATS
Craighall Rd/Starbank Rd

Item no 10.11

QUESTION NO 11

By Councillor Aston for answer by the Convener of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee at a meeting of the Council on 28 September 2023

Question (1) Why is it that almost half of the huge number of empty Council houses are located in North East Edinburgh (638 out of 1456 in total) despite the North East only constituting one quarter of the city?

Answer (1) There have been particular resourcing challenges in the North East locality housing team in recent years (due to turnover and long term absence due to ill health) which have impacted on voids performance.

There is also a higher rate of refusals of tenancy offers in North East, when compared to the rest of the city. Refusals can be for a variety of reasons but can lead to delays in letting times and impacts on officer capacity. Further analysis is being carried out by officers to examine the reasons why and to identify ways in which the refusal rate can be reduced.

Question (2) What actions are being taken by the Housing Convener to address the problem of void Council houses specifically in North East Edinburgh?

Answer (2) I have stressed the absolute priority of reducing the number of void properties across the city and am working closely with the Service Director for Housing and Homelessness and the Head of Housing Operations to monitor progress.

Specifically, in the North East:

- Additional officers have been engaged to support both the repairs and the lettings process. This includes dedicating two Housing Assistants to deal solely with the significant and time-consuming challenge of resolving utility meter debt and meter replacement installations.

- Recent recruitment for an additional Team Leader to support the repairs for void homes in North East was unsuccessful but the role has been re-advertised and interviews are scheduled to take place shortly.
- Overtime has also been approved for Housing Officers to ensure that homes are allocated to new tenants as soon as possible once repairs and safety checks are completed.

There are also a number of Housing Officer vacancies across the city due to turnover. While recruitment takes place regularly, it can sometimes be challenging to fill all vacancies. Further recruitment is due to commence imminently

**Supplementary
Question**

Can the Convener please provide an approximate timescale by which these voids will have been returned to use as much needed homes?

**Supplementary
Answer**

A report will be presented to the HHFW committee in December outlining a specific pathway for the reduction in void numbers and will include an approximate timescale in which we will see void numbers return to a manageable level.

Item no 10.12

QUESTION NO 12

By Councillor Aston for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment at a meeting of the Council on 28 September 2023

Question (1) What meetings or correspondence has the Transport and Environment Convener had since the February 2023 meeting of the Transport and Environment Committee regarding a proposed hovercraft service between Leith and Kirkcaldy?

Answer (1) This information was contained in response to Freedom of Information request 41852, which is [published](#) on the Council website.

Supplementary Question I thank the Transport and Environment Convener for his answer but he has uncharacteristically misread my question, which refers to the period AFTER the February TEC. The Freedom of Information response to which he directed me (41852) appears to detail the correspondence he had had approximately UP TO that date. Could he please answer for the period from the February TEC until present day?

Supplementary Answer Apologies, I have had no correspondence since the FOI inquiry. Informal face-to-face updates have, however, taken place.

Item no 10.13

QUESTION NO 13

**By Councillor McFarlane for answer
by the Convener of the Culture and
Communities Committee at a
meeting of the Council on 28
September 2023**

Could the convener confirm:

Question (1) Were they present at the Labour Campaign Event on 7th September 2023?

Answer (1) These questions are not relevant to the Convener's portfolio.

As this matter has been referred to the Ethical Standards Commissioner, it would be inappropriate to provide a response.

Question (2) Have they referred themselves to the Commissioner for Ethical Standards?

Answer (2) See above Answer 1.

Question (3) On what date did they do so?

Answer (3) See above Answer 1.

Supplementary Question Taking account of the cross-party comments made at Council condemning the lack of transparency in these answers and the importance of scrutiny of conduct of those in office, will the Convener answer the questions above? These are important for the public record and in no way prejudice the Ethical Standards Commissioner's investigation of the Convener's conduct.

Supplementary Answer As I have previously stated, this matter is not relevant to my remit as Convener of the Culture and Communities Committee.

I, along with all the members present at the event on 7th September, have referred ourselves to the Ethical Standards Commissioner. The Council Leader sought advice on this matter from the Head of Democracy, Governance and Resilience who confirmed it would be inappropriate to discuss staffing matters and details currently under consideration by an external party.

Item no 10.16

QUESTION NO 16

By Councillor Nicolson for answer by the Vice-Chair of the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board at a meeting of the Council on 28 September 2023

Could the Vice-Chair confirm:

Question (1) Were they present at the Labour Campaign Event on 7th September 2023?

Answer (1) These questions are not relevant to the Convener's portfolio.

As this matter has been referred to the Ethical Standards Commissioner, it would be inappropriate to provide a response.

Question (2) Have they referred themselves to the Commissioner for Ethical Standards?

Answer (2) See above Answer 1.

Question (3) On what date did they do so?

Answer (3) See above Answer 1.

Supplementary Question Taking account of the cross-party comments made at Council condemning the lack of transparency in these answers and the importance of scrutiny of conduct of those in office, will the Vice -Chair answer the questions above? These are important for the public record and in no way prejudice the Ethical Standards Commissioner's investigation of the Convenor's conduct

Supplementary Answer As I have previously stated, this matter is not relevant to my remit as Vice-Chair of the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board.

I, along with all the members present at the event on 7th September, have referred ourselves to the Ethical Standards Commissioner. The Council Leader sought advice on this matter from the Head of Democracy, Governance and Resilience who confirmed it would be inappropriate to discuss staffing matters and details currently under consideration by an external party.

Item no 10.19

QUESTION NO 19

By Councillor Aston for answer by the Convener of the Planning Committee at a meeting of the Council on 28 September 2023

Could the convener confirm:

Question (1) Were they present at the Labour Campaign Event on 7th September 2023?

Answer (1) These questions are not relevant to the Convener's portfolio.

As this matter has been referred to the Ethical Standards Commissioner, it would be inappropriate to provide a response.

Question (2) Have they referred themselves to the Commissioner for Ethical Standards?

Answer (2) See above Answer 1.

Question (3) On what date did they do so?

Answer (3) See above Answer 1.

Supplementary Question Taking account of the cross-party comments made at Council condemning the lack of transparency in these answers and the importance of scrutiny of conduct of those in office, will the Convener answer the questions above? These are important for the public record and in no way prejudice the Ethical Standards Commissioner's investigation of the Convener's conduct.

Supplementary Answer As I have previously stated, this matter is not relevant to my remit as Vice-Chair of the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board.

I, along with all the members present at the event on 7th September, have referred ourselves to the Ethical Standards Commissioner. The Council Leader sought advice on this matter from the Head of Democracy, Governance and Resilience who confirmed it would be inappropriate to discuss staffing matters and details currently under consideration by an external party.

Item no 10.20

QUESTION NO 20

By Councillor Aston for answer by the Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee at a meeting of the Council on 28 September 2023

Could the convener confirm:

Question (1) Were they present at the Labour Campaign Event on 7th September 2023?

Answer (1) These questions are not relevant to the Convener's portfolio.

As this matter has been referred to the Ethical Standards Commissioner, it would be inappropriate to provide a response.

Question (2) Have they referred themselves to the Commissioner for Ethical Standards?

Answer (2) See above Answer 1.

Question (3) On what date did they do so?

Answer (3) See above Answer 1.

Supplementary Question Taking account of the cross-party comments made at Council condemning the lack of transparency in these answers and the importance of scrutiny of conduct of those in office, will the Convenor answer the questions above? These are important for the public record and in no way prejudice the Ethical Standards Commissioner's investigation of the Convenor's conduct.

Supplementary Answer As I have previously stated, this matter is not relevant to my remit as Convener of the Transport and Environment Committee.

I, along with all the members present at the event on 7th September, have referred ourselves to the Ethical Standards Commissioner. The Council Leader sought advice on this matter from the Head of Democracy, Governance and Resilience who confirmed it would be inappropriate to discuss details currently under consideration by an external party.

Item no 10.21

QUESTION NO 21

By Councillor Dobbin for answer by the Leader of the Council at a meeting of the Council on 28 September 2023

It has been widely reported that a Labour Party campaign event was held in the Labour group room on the 7th September. Can the Leader confirm:

Question (1) Who booked the room? Was it Council staff, Labour Councillors, other Labour Party members or someone else?

Answer (1) These questions are not relevant to the Convener's portfolio.

As this matter has been referred to the Ethical Standards Commissioner, it would be inappropriate to provide a response.

Question (2) Who sent the email invite? Was it Council staff, Labour Councillors, other Labour Party members or someone else?

Answer (2) See above answer 1.

Question (3) Who liaised with the caterers? Was it Council staff, Labour Councillors, other Labour Party members or someone else?

Answer (3) See above answer 1.

Question (4) Who arranged for the sponsorship? Was it Council staff, Labour Councillors, other Labour Party members or someone else?

Answer (4) See above answer 1.

Supplementary Question Taking account of the cross-party comments made at Council condemning the lack of transparency in these answers and the importance of scrutiny of conduct of those in office, will the Convener answer the questions above? These are important for the public record and in no way prejudice the Ethical Standards Commissioner's investigation of the Convener's conduct

**Supplementary
Answer**

As I have previously stated, this matter is not relevant to my remit as Convener of the Policy and Sustainability Committee, or as Council Leader.

I, along with all the members present at the event on 7th September, have referred ourselves to the Ethical Standards Commissioner. I sought advice on this matter from the Head of Democracy, Governance and Resilience who confirmed it would be inappropriate to discuss staffing matters and details currently under consideration by an external party.

