

## COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 16 October 2024

### AGENDA ITEM 15 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

1	<p><b>Question from Councillor Taylor to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport - Councillor Crook</b></p> <p>“When was the relevant Cabinet Member (at the time) first informed of the losses being incurred by the District Heating Scheme and what action did THEY take to ensure that the matter was rectified?”</p> <p><b><i>Cabinet Member Response</i></b></p> <p>The current Cabinet Member was presented with a full briefing with recommendations at the Portfolio Briefing on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2024. As soon he was fully briefed the Cabinet Member instructed officers to implement the changes needed to the tariffs to reflect the <i>actual cost</i> of gas consumption.</p> <p>Previous Cabinet Members were not briefed as a result of the Internal Audit report of 2019, however, the findings of the audit were presented to the KNH (former ALMO) Board.</p>
2	<p><b>Question from Councillor Taylor to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison</b></p> <p>“When was the Leader of the Council and other Cabinet members advised of the losses being incurred by the District Heating scheme and what actions did they take to check that the matter was being tackled?”</p> <p><b><i>Cabinet Member Response</i></b></p> <p>The then Leader of the Council, Councillor Scott, was informed in July with following the publishing of the Internal Audit report in June 2024. A full briefing was presented at the Portfolio Briefing with recommendations on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2024. As soon he was fully briefed the cabinet member instructed officers to implement the changes needed to the tariffs to reflect the <i>actual cost</i> of gas consumption.</p> <p>Previous Cabinet Members were not briefed as a result of the Internal Audit report of 2019, however, the findings of the audit were presented to the KNH (former ALMO) Board.</p>
3	<p><b>Question from Councillor Taylor to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner</b></p> <p>“How were the £1m losses in 2022/23 in District Housing accounted for in the subsequent budget planning for following years and when was this first recorded on the Corporate Risk register?”</p> <p><b><i>Cabinet Member Response</i></b></p>

	<p>The 2022/23 losses were dealt with in-year through underspends on other budget areas in the Housing Revenue Account. The expenditure budget provision for 2023/24 was increased to £1.075m and for 2024/25 an increased budget of £1.263m has been allocated.</p> <p>It was not listed on the corporate risk register.</p>
4	<p><b>Question from Councillor Khan to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison (referred to Councillor Turner)</b></p> <p>“Why have future changes to the criteria and decision-making process for Cllrs ward budgets been delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for Public Health and Corporate Resources in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder? Does this not undermine democracy and make the Cabinet more officer led thus undermining democracy?”</p> <p><b><i>Cabinet Member Response</i></b></p> <p>The consultation with the Cabinet Member is the key issue here. If any changes to criteria were proposed, it is those of a minor and more operational nature that would be implemented in this way. If significant changes were proposed the Cabinet Member would be within their rights to ensure the matter is referred to Cabinet for decision.</p>
5	<p><b>Question from Councillor Khan to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“When can the residents of Rawthorpe, Town Estate and Springbank Estates expect to hear from the Council in relation to the considered proposals for permit parking in their area?”</p> <p><b><i>Cabinet Member Response</i></b></p> <p>The team are currently working to understand what flexibility the law allows in relation to the provision of the parking permit scheme that is in place within Kirklees. There is also further investigation required into the operational implications for the Council in relation to making changes to the permit scheme for localised areas, which will be investigated once there is a steer regarding the legal stance.</p> <p>The service will be reviewing options with Highways and Legal colleagues over the next month and will be in a position to discuss options with Cabinet and Officers when all information is available.</p>
6	<p><b>Question from Councillor Khan to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care – Councillor Addy</b></p> <p>“Once the dementia homes are privatised what powers will the Council have to control costs of care for those who do not exceed the upper capital limit for care?”</p> <p><b><i>Cabinet Member Response</i></b></p>

The vast majority of people living with dementia who need residential care already receive this through the independent sector and the fact that the Council runs 2 care homes does not affect the price of residential care.

Under the Care Act 2014 the Council has a specific set of duties and responsibilities to ensure that people receive the right care and support set against a charging framework which is fair and transparent. This includes:

- 1. Means Testing:** the Council conducts a financial assessment to determine how much an individual can afford to contribute towards their care costs. Existing service users are paying a contribution based on their financial assessment, and in most cases the charge to them is capped in line with their ability to pay through a means test.
- 2. Setting Fee Rates:** the Council sets a standard fee structure for services which helps manage costs by ensuring that providers charge within these limits. Rates are subject to annual reviews and can change based on inflation and other factors (such as national living wage, the cost of utilities etc.). More information can be found on the published Schedule of Fees on the Council's website <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/social-care/pdf/paying-for-socialcare/adult-social-care-fees.pdf>
- 3. Negotiating Contracts:** the Council regularly engages with the wider provider market to negotiate contracts with a view to securing a fair price for services which can help manage the overall costs to service users

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**Question from Councillor J D Lawson to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration – Councillor Turner Cllr**

“Residents in Netherton were promised an extension to the Greenway from Netherton Fold to join with Meltham greenway many years ago.

Can you update me on what progress has been made to date and when spades will go into the ground to start this work?

***Cabinet Member Response***

The extension of the Meltham Greenway to Netherton Fold remains part of the Council's Active Travel ambition.

Critical to the delivery of the overall scheme ambitions for the Meltham Greenway are the discussions with landowners on the use of land. This makes it challenging to commit to a construction start date at this time, but the Council remains committed in maintaining an open dialogue with the landowners.

The Council has secured WYCA funding in 2024 to start the initial development of the greenway link to Netherton Fold. The link is in design now with ecological and bridge assessment surveys now procured.

Further funding will be needed to complete the project. The development work currently being undertaken will help to secure these monies when the opportunity arises.

8	<p><b>Question from Councillor J D Lawson to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“At Cabinet on 8th October you eluded to Kirklees having a zero tolerance on fly tipping, could you inform us what this looks like?”</p> <p><b><i>Cabinet Member Response</i></b></p> <p>All Flytipping is checked for evidence and where evidence is found this is passed on to our enforcement officers to investigate, this can result in issuing fixed penalties, seizing vehicles and prosecution files being put together. This can result in fines of up to £1000, however the GAT team use a scaling framework when deciding on the amount for the fixed penalty notice or a decision is made to go straight to prosecution based on the size and type of waste fly tipped. Overt and covert cameras are used where possible in notorious hot spot areas. Footage is then reviewed by our Enforcement team and where evidence can be found, FPN’s are issued or a prosecution follows.</p> <p>We also make use of Council social media pages to try to educate residents on not using rogue removal companies and instead ensuring that they ask for proof of waste carriers licence and receive copies as proof of disposal.</p>
9	<p><b>Question from Councillor J D Lawson to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways – Councillor Ahmed</b></p> <p>“The residents of Crosland Moor are blighted by anti social parking around the post office and other shops on Dryclough Road and Blackmoorfoot Road. Will there be further recruitment of parking enforcement officers to stop these drivers parking on double yellow lines and the zig zag lines of the zebra crossing. I'm sure this problem is not just specific to Crosland Moor and other wards suffer this problem around shopping areas and schools as well?”</p> <p><b><i>Cabinet Member Response</i></b></p> <p>I can confirm I have asked an officer to review these issues. Recently we have recruited 6.5 Parking Officers who are currently undertaking their induction, which allows us to review how we operate to enable a more mobile response to enforcement across the district. These posts have been vacant since January, so we are confident the new officers will allow the service to take further action across the district.</p>
10	<p><b>Question from Councillor Safdar to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services – Councillor Hawkins</b></p> <p>“The Council announced potential redundancies in August 2023 to date the unions have yet to receive a copy of the redundancy policy, when are they likely to receive this?”</p> <p><b><i>Cabinet Member Response</i></b></p> <p>As outlined in the Council Employee Handbook and in the Council’s “Guidance on Leaving Employment”, the redundancy policy of this Council is clearly defined. This is available to all staff and Trade Unions (including Councillors) through the Council’s Intranet. I will also provide Councillor Safdar with a copy of these documents.</p>

11	<p><b>Question from Councillor Safdar to the Leader of the Council – Councillor Pattison</b></p> <p>“As Leader of a minority administration how do you intend to work better and more constructively with the other groups and independents who out number your group significantly?”</p> <p><b><i>Cabinet Member Response</i></b></p> <p>Working as a minority administration has not been uncommon in Kirklees over the years. This Labour administration recognises the importance of working constructively with all Groups and Independent Members. Early consultation and engagement on the budget has started through the Budget Working Group which includes representation from all Groups. Positions are allocated proportionately to a number of committees that ensures representation from across all Groups. We also recognise the value and input into decisions and policy development from our Scrutiny Panels, which again includes representation from across all Groups and Independent Members.</p>
12	<p><b>Question from Councillor Arshad to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport – Councillor Crook</b></p> <p>“With regards to the long-standing Ringway project, which has been in the pipeline for implementation by our Council for several decades. This project aligns with our policies for active travel, healthy living, reducing road congestion, and enabling access to safe outdoor exercise for minority communities.</p> <p>Despite its importance, there has been no progress made on this project in decades. I would like to understand the council's plans for allocating resources to purchase the "ransomed" strip of land held by Thomas Crompton, which is crucial for finalising the project.</p> <p>In the interest of the residents of Heckmondwike, Dewsbury Moor, Liversedge, and beyond, can you supply me with information on the Council's willingness to work collaboratively with local groups to promote and progress the Ringway project and could you tell me if the Council is actively seeking and accessing all available funding sources to ensure the successful completion of this project?”</p> <p><b><i>Cabinet Member Response</i></b></p> <p>We remain committed to improving connectivity to local town centres and the Spenn Valley Greenway to encourage more walking and cycling. The greenways perform a vital role within our aspirations for active travel and are an asset for Kirklees.</p> <p>I am aware of the long standing challenges with land ownership you refer to and there is no easy answer at present. We are however always working to develop the pipeline of future active travel schemes so that we are on the front foot and able to bid for external funding opportunities whenever they arise.</p> <p>I would be very happy to work collaboratively with any local group to try and move this project forward.</p>