

Public Document Pack

Questions Submitted For Council

Date: Wednesday, 28 July 2021

3. **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

This is an opportunity for Members of Council to ask the Mayor, Members of the Executive or the Chairs of any Committee or Sub-Committee a question on notice under Procedure Rule 10.2.

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Question 1 - Submitted by Councillor Miss Blackburn

“Could I ask the Executive Member when the damaged and graffitied play equipment in Broomwood Park will be repaired and repainted?”

Response from Councillor Patel, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure

The basket swing at Broomwood Park was damaged by youths setting fire to the swing. It was subsequently removed for health and safety reasons. We will be looking to replace the swing within this year’s greenspace capital programme.

Any offensive graffiti is removed as a priority, but there are no immediate plans to re-paint the play equipment. This will have to be considered alongside other parks’ equipment that also requires painting as part of a future capital bid. We have however supported volunteers with re-painting play equipment in other parks.

Question 2 - Submitted by Councillor Miss Blackburn

“Could I ask the Executive Member when the damaged play area in Kingsway Park, that has been chained up since before the First Covid lockdown, will be repaired?”

Response from Councillor Patel, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure

Unfortunately Kingsway Park play area has been the focus of antisocial behaviour for a number of months. The multi play area was set on fire, causing damage beyond repair. The basket swing was set on fire, not only damaging the swing but also the surface area. The zip wire safety carpet was burned and seats continue to be chewed by dogs after a number of replacements.

The site itself is challenging, and whilst we would not recommend replacing the equipment on site at this stage, we are happy to work with local residents in finding a more sustainable solution to this challenge.

Question 3 - Submitted by Councillor Miss Blackburn

“Could I ask the Executive Member why Travellers were allowed to remain on Kingsway Park for so long?”

Response from Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Environmental and Regulatory Services

The Environmental Health Team within Regulatory Services are delegated the enforcement powers on behalf of the Council to evict illegal encampments on Council land. The legal action that can be taken is under Section 77 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. There is a strict protocol that must be followed to avoid legal challenge to the process.

Officers first must visit the site and establish land ownership, before revisiting, accompanied by the Police, to carry out a joint assessment of the site and undertake welfare enquiries of the travellers. Once this has been completed, a discussion takes place between the Council and Police to decide if the Police can use their powers

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under Section 66 of the Act. This would allow for a quicker eviction process, but can only be taken under certain circumstances, such as evidence of anti-social behaviour.

In this case, the Police confirmed they could not use their powers, so our Officers sought approval from our Corporate Director to initiate the legal procedures. Once this has been granted, the necessary paperwork is prepared and officer return to site with the Police to serve the legal documents. This gives 24 hours' notice to vacate the land. A further revisit is made after the 24 hours have expired and if the land is still occupied our colleagues in legal services are contacted to make arrangements for a Court Order to be obtained from Manchester Magistrates Court. A further visit is made to site to issue notice of the court dates and time. The Officer appear before the Magistrates to request the order, and once granted, a further revisit is made to site to serve the order. This gives a further 24 hours' notice to vacate the site. It is after this 24 hour period that we are able to forcibly remove any illegal encampments on the land.

Travellers are well aware of the legislation and processes that the Council must go through to evict them, so they usually only leave the land once the court order is served. We are finding that the courts are extremely busy and often slows down the process due to availability of court time. The Officer from the Council must also be accompanied on site by the Police on each occasion, to protect their safety and ensure there is no breach of the Police. On each occasion the Officers have to make a request to the Police for assistance, and wait for when an Officer is available. Again, this often leads to delays in the process as the Police have to prioritise other higher risk matters above our request.

Please be assured that officers progress with the eviction process as quickly as they can within the legal framework.

Question 4 – Submitted by Councillor Miss Blackburn

“Bin wagon have had issues accessing some cul-de-sacs to empty bins due to inconsiderate parking at junctions by some residents. Can the Executive Member comment as to why double yellow lines cannot be placed at these junctions?”

Response from Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Environmental and Regulatory Services

Installation of yellow lines at junctions is a consideration that the council can look at in an effort to tackle inconsiderate parking at junctions causing assess issues for larger vehicles including bin wagons. Prior to the pandemic access issues in roads was not a major issue and has only become a problem as a result of change in behaviours with increased number of residents having to stay at home. Introducing yellow lines at junctions requires consultation and a legal advertising process and can be a costly exercise and would also require ongoing enforcement to ensure they are adhered to. It is envisaged that as we return to a new normal this problem will reduce. Successful ways of tackling this has been to contact residents directly with letter drops and this is the process that is being used presently.

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Question 5 – Submitted by Councillor Butt

Residents have been telling me that they are seeing Electric Scooters being used more and more often on Trafford's footways and highways, despite the law stating that they can only be used on private land and not on public highways, cycle lanes or footways. In addition, E-Scooters are subject to all the same legal requirements as other motor vehicles and require an MOT, tax, licensing and specific construction. Can the Executive Member for Communities and Partnerships tell me what discussions have taken place through the Safer Trafford Partnership on E-Scooters?

Response from Councillor Whitham, Executive Member for Communities and Partnerships

The Community Safety Team rarely receive any complaints about the use of e-scooters however if this is a problem then I would encourage members of the public to report it directly to GMP via their online form at <https://www.gmp.police.uk/> or to Safer Trafford on safer.communities@trafford.gov.uk

It has not been discussed at our partner agency meetings as it is not a priority that has been highlighted through the crime data or Safer Trafford statistics.

As Councillor Butt correctly points out, E-Scooters are classed as motor vehicles and if on the public highway are subject to the same legal requirements. Therefore, if the police have reasonable grounds that an offence is being committed, they would be able to address this.

I will highlight with the Chief Inspector, however it would be helpful if residents could report issues so that information on the extent of the problem can be understood.

Question 6 – Submitted by Councillor Welton

"We have heard from schools that the Bikeability programme is not fit for purpose. One Trafford's Road Safety team are slow responding to contacts from schools, and the number of instructors on their books has been slashed. Is it acceptable that the vast majority of Year 6 pupils have missed out on Bikeability training for two consecutive school years?"

Response from Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Environmental and Regulatory Services

The funding for Bikeability is received through a DFT grant and in recent years there hasn't been enough funding to train all of the children with increased pupil numbers. We are looking to try and address this through Mayors Challenge Fund and bids to Transport for Greater Manchester Active Travel Fund.

The Covid situation has impacted on the ability to deliver the full programme of Bikeability training in the last 2 academic years as it has been very difficult to arrange training due to a combination of problems including school closures and school bubbles and also due to training staff having to isolate.

A holiday course has been offered to one school and are trying to arrange additional training in the parks through the events team this summer.

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All schools were written to and contacted in June apologising for the lack of training and we have asked them to show interest in training for the next academic year. We have had 21 response although it is expected that we will get more now that the school bubble system is now longer needed.

A program of training will be available in the 1st week in September for the next academic year.

We are doing everything possible to ensure we reach as many pupils as we can including looking at further funding opportunities for training within a high school setting for pupils who have missed out during Covid. Any child above the age of 12 is signposted to TFGM as they do offer a training in a family setting.

Question 7 – Submitted by Councillor Morgan

“All members will be the issues the bin service is having due to the recent spike in Covid-19 cases. However, the Executive Member for Environment and Regulatory Services will be aware of the importance of the delivery of both consistency and fairness of bin services. What is he doing to ensure even with a reduced service available to the council, that residents can have both a consistency and fairness of delivery?”

Response from Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Environmental and Regulatory Services

It has been unfortunate that there has been more impacts on the waste service as a result of increased Covid-19 absence in recent weeks. The increase in Covid cases is not just a local issue for Trafford's waste service but is having regional and national effects on waste services and other key services requiring HGV drivers and work bubbles to minimise impacts on key services. Other Greater Manchester districts are having similar reductions and alterations in service delivery.

In order to manage the impact in Trafford only green rounds have been reduced to ensure all other waste collections in particular the domestic service remained consistent for residents.

The service has looked to predict which green rounds would potentially be dropped on any given day depending on levels of absence and have a rota of rounds that are unfortunately having to be considered depending on absence levels that day. Given Covid-19 absence happens at short notice it is very hard to predict which staff / crew and hence which route this may affect.

The rota does however, allow the service to ensure it shares the impact of a reduced service in a fair and consistent way by not dropping the same rounds every week should there be a need to drop any rounds. This also ensures that residents never go more than 2 weeks without a green collection.

Several loaders have been recruited on a temporary basis to increase resource and backfill absence were possible however, due to the national shortage of HGV drivers there are still resource issues both in terms of recruitment and temporary backfilling of roles that can be a challenge to manage. Where rounds are being redistributed to different crews who need to remain in safe working bubbles this can be challenging for the crew who are less familiar to the round however, follow up on any missed bins is

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being undertaken in these circumstances to ensure any missed green bin that should have been emptied is attended to.

The current rotation of green rounds that is in place to manage the reduction in service has managed to ensure that there is a fair and consistent approach to the delivery of a reduced service however, this can change with very little notice depending on the infection rate that day/week.

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