

Questions Received for Council 29 January 2020

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 Myers

“In 2019, Trafford Council spent £50.8 million on acquisitions and made loans of £102.6 million as part of its property investment strategy. How confident is the Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration that the anticipated returns on investments will be achieved?”

Question 2 - Submitted by Councillor Dr. Barclay

“Labour's disastrous re-organisation of the bin service has led to the Council completely failing to meet its contractual and moral obligation to assist many of our senior residents and disabled residents with the collection and emptying of their bins. These groups of residents are often totally reliant on an assisted service. My casework is full of vulnerable residents who have not had their bins emptied for weeks. In every case I have been struck by the distress it has caused. Please can the Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Climate Change tell me what action is being taken to ensure that a reliable assisted bin collection service will be restored without delay?”

Response from the Executive Member in advance of the meeting:

The Council has been monitoring performance with Amey on a daily basis and identified the provision of assisted bins collection as a key failing of the service. The Council has asked Amey for their solution to the issue. The issue has been caused by unfamiliarity with individual collection points for the assisted collection and entry methods which need to be embedded in the crews. Other issues have been centred around crew behaviour.

Amey have stated that they recognise that assisted and repeated missed collections can affect the most vulnerable residents of Trafford. The procedure for handling of missed bins, particularly repeat and/or assisted collections has been reviewed and the following steps implemented;

- 1. First failure – Supervisory intervention and investigation to understand the root cause. This can include access, vehicle breakdowns, roadworks and crew behaviour. The outcome is that the team fully understand the measures to be implemented to avoid repetition.*
- 2. The next collection checked off by the responsible supervisor.*
- 3. Second, or further failure – full investigation and disciplinary action, if crew behaviour is an issue, will be taken as appropriate.*

This will be further supplemented by the reintroduction of the incab system now that the complete rounds have been balanced. This roll out commenced on the 20 January.

The Council has in recent days seen an uplift in performance due to the procedure being implemented but will continue to monitor it closely to ensure it returns to normal for the residents affected.

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Question 3 - Submitted by Councillor Evans

“A report in the Manchester Evening News from last year reported how Bev Hughes, the Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester with responsibility for policing, has repeatedly failed to meet with councillors from Manchester to discuss policing and crime in the city.

With additional funding from central government been released to recruit the first phase of additional officers for Greater Manchester Police, it is vital that Trafford receives its fair share of policing resources.”

Can the Executive Member for Public Safety, Governance and Reform, therefore, invite the Deputy Mayor to give a briefing before a Council meeting to update Members on her plans to keep Trafford as the safest district in Greater Manchester?”

Response from the Executive Member in advance of the meeting:

Thank you for your question regarding Trafford receiving its fair share of policing resources from the additional Police Officers GMP will be allowed to recruit as a result of additional funding being provided by the Government. I am happy to confirm that I will write to the Deputy Mayor for Police, Crime and Fire, inviting her to attend a briefing session to update Councillors in Trafford on her plans to keep Trafford as the safest district in Greater Manchester and will provide you with a copy of that invitation.

Question 4 - Councillor Submitted by Butt

“Can the Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Climate Change tell me what Trafford’s Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting was in the financial year 2018/19?”

Response from the Executive Member in advance of the meeting:

Trafford’s percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting in 2018/19 was 57.3%. When broken down this was made up of 24.06% of arisings sent for recycling and 33.23% sent for composting.

Question 5 - Councillor Submitted by Anstee

“Under the previous Conservative administration, there were 7 Executive Member roles plus the Leader who received £125,202.01 in Special Responsibility Allowances. Last year, under Labour there were 9 Executive roles plus the Leader who received £149,294.84 in Special Responsibility Allowances.

Can the Executive Member explain why the administration felt it necessary to spend an extra £25,000 of Trafford taxpayers’ money on Labour Councillors?”

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Question 6 - Submitted by Councillor Anstee

“Members across the Chamber have been inundated with complaints from residents since the changes to domestic waste collection rounds in October. Some residents have complained that they are receiving no collections at all for 6 weeks at a time. The situation appears to be worst in the Hale, Bowdon and Timperley areas, with Conservative Councillors from those area’s inboxes overwhelmed with resident complaints.

Recently we had the strange spectacle of the Council writing to its own contractor to admit it cannot manage them following collection round changes it itself was party too and shouldn’t have allowed to happen. Can the Executive Member explain what steps are being taken to restore the service back to the levels that residents rightly expect?”

Response from the Executive Member in advance of the meeting:

The Council has written to Amey to express its dissatisfaction with the issues with the service throughout the route optimisation programme. A number of targets have been set to decrease complaints in several areas by the 31 January.

These include a range of triggers to

- reduce the amount of stage 1 complaints to pre-route optimisation levels by the end of January;*
- maintain stage 1 complaints at that level from February onwards;*
- stop escalations to stage 2 by thoroughly investigating and communicating findings of stage 1 complaints;*
- reduce the number of service requests to baseline levels;*
- improve the Assisted Collections by putting in a performance procedure as answered in Question 2;*
- implement further performance enhancements from 1 February to decrease the number of service requests to show real improvement in the service going forward.*

Amey have committed to supply the resource needed to bring the service back on track included support to back office staff and in excess of twenty waste collections operatives, with six extra vehicles. They have acknowledged that the service was disrupted during the Christmas period, and have confirmed their commitment that resource will continue to be maintained at the required level to deliver the transition.

Recognising that challenges were encountered in some key areas, particularly in the Hale Barns and Flixton wards, the provision of the incab systems is key to improving performance. The rounds were initially designed using existing data, computer modelling and input from crews, however, these needed to be refined before inputting into the system. This exercise has now been completed with the final re-balanced rounds formatted for the in-cab system. The upload of these rounds to the system has started, with the in-cab roll out schedule to commence on Monday 20 January with the full roll out being achieved within ten working days. The in-cab system provides live feedback on street (zone) completions and the reporting of collections that could not be undertaken e.g. missed bins, contaminated bins or ones not presented.

Following the roll-out of the in-cab system, Amey shall provide a fortnightly Councillor update from February. This shall include a considered reflection of service delivery alongside a forward look at forthcoming actions and areas of focus.

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Question 7 - Submitted by Councillor Morgan

“Can the Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration provide an update on procuring a joint venture partner to redevelop Altrincham’s Grafton Centre?”

Question 8 - Submitted by Councillor Holden

“In the light of recent and on-going representations concerning residential and infrastructure developments across Carrington Moss, could the Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration confirm that the Council is still minded to allow and encourage the possible development of the area?”

Question 9 - Submitted by Councillor Jerome

“30 new 1-and-2 bed social rent homes were approved by the planning committee on Carrfield Avenue in Timperley on 16 January 2020 which is good news. Are these homes now owned by Trafford Housing Trust and are they subject to Right to Acquire? Does this Council have the means or power to stop affordable and social homes being sold off to private ownership and not kept in perpetuity?”

Question 10 - Submitted by Councillor Newgrosh

“We can all acknowledge the bin route optimisation has not gone nearly as well as we had hoped. I, as I am sure many other Councillors here, are inundated with reports of missed bins, and piecemeal collections. In light of Trafford Council’s recent threat to take back control of this statutory service from Amey One Trafford, what marker has the Council set that would trigger this contract break?”

Response from the Executive Member in advance of the meeting:

The Council is continuing to review the contractual remedies available to it, including the imposition of penalties in order to enable it to take positive action against Amey should the poor performance on waste continue. A number of strong targets have been set to secure a decrease in complaints in several areas by the 31 January.

These include a range of triggers to

- reduce the amount of stage 1 complaints to pre –route optimisation levels by the end of January;*
- maintain stage 1 complaints at that level from February onwards;*
- stop escalations to stage 2 by thoroughly investigating and communicating findings of stage 1 complaints;*
- reduce the number of service requests to baseline levels;*
- improve the Assisted Collections by putting in a performance procedure as answered in Question 2;*
- implement further performance enhancements from 1 February to decrease the number of service requests to show real improvement in the service going forward.*

The council will review performance up to the 31 January against these measures and will re-assess what powers to use under the contract at that point should performance not have reached the target set.

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Question 11 - Submitted by Councillor Coggins

“14 months on from our climate emergency declaration, what actions has the Council taken to implement the recommendations of the task and finish group, given to the Executive meeting in September last year?”

Response from the Executive Member in advance of the meeting:

Actions taken by the Council following the climate change emergency declaration in 2018 and the submission of the report and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group submitted to Executive on 26 September 2019 have included the following:

- *The Leader of Trafford Council becoming Green City Region lead for GMCA and Chair to the Green City Region Board.*
- *Appointment of consultants to lead on the development of a ‘Carbon Neutral Trafford’ framework, programme of stakeholder engagement and development of a carbon budget linked to the GM carbon neutrality target date of 2038. This work reports to the Council’s Corporate Director of Place.*
- *Establishing a cross-service working group to look at decarbonising the Council’s estate in terms of land and buildings, with support from consultants working on the GMCA ‘Decarbonising the Public Estate’ work stream, linked to Friends of The Earth/Ashden produced ‘31 Climate Actions for Councils’. This work focuses on identifying the top consumers of energy, whilst identifying potential projects that might reduce energy the Council’s consumption and carbon footprint.*
- *Participation in a Government-funded pilot to develop specific carbon literacy training for staff and elected members to identify and commit to actions that will contribute to reducing our carbon footprint.*
- *The Leader of the Council contacting the Greater Manchester Pension Fund to request a position statement on the potential impact that divesting from carbon intensive assets will have on this fund and to recommend working towards divestment alongside a proactive approach to utilising the funds for local green growth.*

Over the Coming months we will continue to pursue this agenda and embed it within our projects and services at every opportunity.

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