

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR COUNCIL

Date: Wednesday, 27 January 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 Welton

“The 1/3 mile section of the Trans-Pennine Trail (TPT) that runs along busy Sinderland Lane (from Dairyhouse Lane to the turning for the recycling centre at Woodcote Lane) reverts to a 60 mph national speed limit, and has no pavement. It can be terrifying, as my 9 year old daughter and I experienced when we were close passed by the driver of a fast moving car, while riding our bikes there last year. Does the Executive Member for Environmental and Regulatory Services agree that these conditions are unsafe and off-putting for pedestrians and cyclists using the TPT, and contrary to the council’s efforts to get more people walking and cycling?”

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

The route on Sinderland Lane is an older cycle route that doesn’t currently comply with current design standards. This section of road would need significant expenditure to bring it up to current standards, which are the subject of constant review due to the focus currently on cycling and walking schemes. We will consider this scheme in the future for further tranches of funding, subject to external sources being made available through TfGMs cycling and walking directorate.

We are currently working on a cycling and walking strategy for Trafford that will link with Greater Manchester’s broader strategy to try to join up previously unserved or unsatisfactorily served areas of Trafford and promote alternative methods of transport to the car all around the borough, of which this is an example.

We will look separately at the issue of the Speed limit as the residential area has spread further down Sinderland Lane.

Question 2 - Submitted by Councillor Chilton

“One of the many businesses badly affected by the current crisis are kennels and catteries, who now find themselves largely superfluous due to the fact nobody is travelling away from home. Can the Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Cllr Ross, advise whether, in line with other Councils, grant funding will be made available to them, as such businesses in Trafford (of which there are comparatively few) have so far received nothing?”

Response from Councillor Ross, Executive Member for Finance and Governance

As the Pandemic continues we are becoming increasingly aware of several types of businesses that have not been eligible thus far for grant support – despite suffering a significant loss of trade over the past ten months. Catteries and Kennels are one of a number of businesses sectors affected – and I’m grateful for Cllr Chilton highlighting their plight.

Whilst I can never guarantee any single business will receive support, earlier this month I asked officers to explore ways of expanding the scheme, which would include looking at the case of catteries and kennels. This work is currently underway and I would expect to be able to confirm changes to the scheme imminently. At present most companies within that sector should be eligible for support under Round 2 of the Grant - being defined as within the supply chain of the leisure/ hospitality/accommodation sector.

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We've paid out £396,000 so far under this scheme, but know there are others that need help. We are currently finalising plans for a third round under Additional Restrictions (Discretionary) Grant Scheme which particularly aims to reach those who have not benefitted from other national funds.

Question 3 – Submitted by Councillor Evans (subject to Executive Meeting on 25 January 2021)

“The report to the Public Executive on Monday last, quite rightly, highlighted the uncertainty of the future for the council’s finances, and the leisure economy in Trafford as we emerge from the pandemic (see para 5.7 in the public report). Given this uncertainty is it not therefore premature to have decided that new builds of the leisure centres at Altrincham and Stretford will now not proceed?”

Response from Councillor Patel, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure

The report which was approved by the Executive on Monday set out clearly the work that has been undertaken to review the leisure strategy and to develop the options for both Altrincham and Stretford. This work has highlighted difficulties including site location, practical construction issues and logistical concerns. Alongside the delivery challenges Trafford Leisure CIC have financial challenges which have been exacerbated by Covid, and there is increased budget pressure on the Council which means a different approach is required.

The Executive report provided extensive detail on the current leisure market, whilst recognising the broader challenges faced by the sector. Whilst we can't be certain of the shape of the private sector market post lockdown, we can be sure of the importance of encouraging all our communities to be more active, more often. The early experience from moveUrmston is that a refurbishment model can provide a cost effective solution that provides a great facility for residents and encourages increased participation.

Question 4 – Submitted by Councillor Butt

“Leaving aside the dereliction of responsibility by the GM Mayor Andy Burnham and his deputy Mayor Beverley Hughes to hold the GMP leadership to account on its systemic failure in recording 80,000 crimes including other crimes closed without investigation; 70% of all domestic abuse cases closed prematurely by the GMP; Will Cllr Whitham offer an apology to the residents of Trafford for his part in the failure as the appointed scrutiny member on the Greater Manchester Police, Fire and Crime Panel to adequately question and scrutinise committee reports that he will have received and on meetings held, particularly since the HMICFRS watchdog had reported concerns since 2016 and should have been a focus of attention?”

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Question 5 – Submitted by Councillor Brophy

"In the wake of Storm Christoph many residents in Timperley were left to fend for themselves as emergency services and AMEY were overwhelmed. Given the likelihood that the Climate Emergency will lead to increasing occurrences of severe flooding, what strategic changes are the Council planning to make to ensure that comprehensive flood prevention measures are implemented with input from affected residents?"

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

Storm Christoph was predominantly a fluvial event meaning the watercourses across the North West rose significantly due to sustained rainfall following a period of prolonged wet weather in addition to snow melt. This event was different to our most recent flood events in Trafford which were periods of intense rainfall that led to surface water flooding across the borough.

At Trafford and like many other areas across the country we do not promote flood prevention as this leads to a misunderstanding on what the Council and its partners can deliver. Flood prevention can be interpreted as flooding never happening again and we know this is not possible therefore the only terms we can use are 'reducing flood risk' and 'improving resilience'.

In terms of the Council's strategic approach, our number one priority is to protect residential and commercial properties from being flooded. Our approach is in three parts:

Preparedness

- *Over the past 12 months we have been mapping our highway drainage network and cross referencing them with flooding hotspots. This has helped us to form routes which are undertaken when we receive heavy rainfall warnings and are in addition to our day to day network maintenance.*
- *Working with the Civil Contingencies Resilience Unit we have a multi-agency flood plan which we follow during flood events. Using this plan we are able to identify our areas at risk and critical infrastructure.*

During an event

- *During Storm Christoph, we triaged our enquiries to ensure we attended to those residents and businesses most at risk. Examples include the evacuation and regular contact with residents of Bollington Mill where there was a potential risk to life. Likewise around the River Mersey we door knocked 200+ houses to raise awareness of potential flooding to the area.*
- *With respect to Timperley it should be noted that several members of staff attended site at Heyes Lane and Fairbourne Drive and provided a pump to help reduce water levels. It is Council policy to not provide sandbags to residents as is the case across many authorities in England and is clearly stated on the Council's website.*

After an event

- *Due to the number of properties affected we will be undertaking a Section 19 flood investigation which is required under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.*

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- *We will continue to monitor and assess and improve our drainage infrastructure to increase our preparedness.*
- *Following our investigations, we will look to bid for government funding to help reduce flooding and we will work with communities affected to improve resilience were funding might be difficult to obtain.*
- *We also plan to revamp the Council's webpages on flooding, therefore providing easy access to key contacts and useful information before and after a flood event.*

We are always looking to improve as an authority and will look at lessons learnt following events of this nature. We welcome member support and will involve respective councillors as and when we undertake work in their wards.

Question 6 – Submitted by Councillor Brophy

"Pictor Academy has been hit by flooding affecting their ability to provide outdoor space for their students as part of their agreed COVID-19 procedures. Colleagues will appreciate the difficulty that any change in routine presents when working with SEN children. The staff at Pictor have gone above and beyond, sourcing their own pump from a private firm and clearing the water from their yards and playing field. What can the council do to ensure that Pictor Academy is reimbursed for this unexpected cost and are supported in the event of any future flooding?"

Question 7 – Submitted by Councillor Newgrosh

"I have been contacted by residents regarding the modal filter "planters" in the Longford Park area on Cromwell road, Norwood road and Hillingdon road. A consultation closed on 19th December for residents to give their views on whether these should either stay as they are, be moved or removed completely. I am aware a FOI request for the results has been submitted but no information or data is yet forthcoming. Can the Executive clarify when this data will be made public and the results be actioned if appropriate?"

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

The data for the Longford Planters scheme will be made public this week after an executive decision and consultation with the local councillors on the findings.

Question 8 – Submitted by Councillor Miss Blackburn

Would the Executive Member, Cllr Stephen Adshead, answer this question about the south side of Lostock Road, Davyhulme, regarding the designated cycle track where bollards were erected before the end of the consultation period with residents in December 2020. Can he state whether the (circa 70-80) bollards will be reduced in number in order to facilitate a safer entry and exit for residents onto the busy bus route to and from the M60 motorway? The current placement of bollards causes a hazardous angle for re-entry onto the road affecting its residents and other road users.

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

The bollards for this particular scheme were part of Tranche 1 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund these were part of a separate earlier exercise than the Urmston Active Neighbourhood consultation which as you mentioned ended in December 2020.

Some work has already been completed to remove some of the bollards on the south side and to adjust the positioning of others to make access and egress easier for residents. A review of the bollards will be made on a case by case basis for individuals still unhappy about the positioning of a particular bollard that affects their property. The vast majority of the bollards have now been adjusted and are now in the appropriate place to prevent parking on the cycleway and enforce the TRO in place.

Question 9 – Submitted by Councillor Minnis

"Trafford all age transport policy was up for consultation over the holidays. I was disappointed to find the consultation comprised only of two questions. Could I gain a commitment from the Executive that future consultations are both complete and meaningful?"

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