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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR COUNCIL

Date: Wednesday, 24 March 2021

3. **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

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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 D. Western

“Please could the Leader of the Council advise what steps the Council are taking to support and engage with women to improve their safety following the murder of Sarah Everard and the series of shocking sexual assaults seen here in Trafford in recent weeks, including several in my own ward of Broadheath, and furthermore does the Leader consider it appropriate given these issues to continue with proposals to dim street lights overnight across the Borough?”

Question 2 - Submitted by Councillor Hartley

“Some residents will have read alarming posts and information that there might not be sufficient school places in Sale. Would the Lead Member for Education like to comment on this?”

Question 3 - Submitted by Councillor Jerrome

“The A56 from Sylvan Grove, Altrincham, down to Navigation Road has a number of potholes or defects. These cause vibrations, noise and tremors to houses that bring great aggravation to residents on a 24 hour basis. Would it not be possible for Trafford to prioritise these problems and spare affected householders considerable pain across 365 days a year?”

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

The A56 is part of the key route network that inspected by our highway safety inspectors on a monthly basis in accordance with the Councils code of practice on highway inspections.

A section of the northbound carriageway, from its junction with Sylvan Grove to just north of the petrol station, is being resurfaced in the next few months and work is ongoing with utilities to ascertain if any of their apparatus could potentially be the cause of some concerns near Sandiway Road / Rutland Road. As Councillor Jerrome is aware, more recently we have received concerns regarding a section of this road that runs parallel with Richmond Road near Townfield Road and officers are currently looking into this issue. Once inspected, if any actionable defects are observed, an order will be placed for repairs to be made.

Question 4 – Submitted by Councillor Butt

“The government recently announced a doubling of the Safer Streets fund to £45 million in order to provide better lighting and the greater use of CCTV in parks. Can the Executive Member for Environmental and Regulatory Services state if the council has received details of its allocation of its share of that funding?”

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

There is £45 million of Home Office funding that is not automatically allocated to Local Authorities (LA) to deal with crime prevention. Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) are allowed to submit 3 bids for funding based on set criteria mainly linked to crime figures. The community safety team is in conversations with GMCA who ultimately will decide on areas of priority across GM. It is unfortunately not an allocation where every LA gets a share to spend on street lighting or CCTV equipment at their discretion and crime stats play a significant part in the decision. As each PCC, or in our case the Deputy Mayor can submit only three bids to the Home Office, it is certainly possible although not certain that other GM boroughs bids may be looked upon more favourably due to other GM areas having higher rates of crime.

Question 5 – Submitted by Councillor Mrs. Haddad

“First may I offer, on behalf of the full Council, my deepest sympathies to Sarah Everard’s family as they mourn her tragic death. As the Council are aware there are current campaigns, with wide support, to make our streets safer for women. In view of this, will the Council reverse its recent budget decision to dim Trafford lights to save money?”

In addition, will the Council please inform me when the new WIFI operating system for CCTV Security cameras is expected to be installed and become operational? I ask this because my residents feel let down by recent failures in the CCTV system. This has given thieves the upper hand and hindered the police’s ability to investigate crime. The new operating system is also necessary for the expansion of the CCTV system?”

Response from Councillor Freeman, Executive Member for Covid-19 Recovery and Reform to the 2nd part of the question (Note: the 1st part will be covered in the response to Question 1)

The new operating system for the Council CCTV system is being implemented on a phased approach;

Phase 1 – Sale West – chosen because the area is under re-development

Phase 2 – Partington

Phase 3 - Altrincham Hale and Timperley

Phase 4 – The remainder of the Borough

All this work should be completed by mid-2022. What we are doing represents a huge logistical challenge. In the meantime our current system continues to function and is monitored 24/7.

Introducing our own WIFI system wholly owned by the Council will mean we are no longer reliant on other contractors and will enable us to add an additional 40 Cameras to our system at considerable reduced costs.

In terms of Hale up until 2 years ago there were no CCTV Cameras in that area.

Currently there are three and since they were installed they have only ever been out of commission for 5 days.

The work of the CCTV Team is vital to the safety of our Borough and they contribute through partnership working to the solving of crime and ASB across the Borough on a weekly basis.

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Question 6 – Submitted by Councillor Welton

“Residents in Altrincham tell us that the year round use of loud and polluting petrol-driven leaf blowers by commercial grounds maintenance companies is blighting their quiet enjoyment of their homes and gardens. Leaf blowers are also catastrophic for our populations of insects and small mammals, and the dust and pollen they produce add to the discomfort of allergy and asthma sufferers. Is it time to regulate their use in Trafford?”

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

The Council’s ability to control problems caused by noise and fumes from leaf blowers is primarily under the nuisance provisions of the Environmental Protection Act. However, usually the duration of the noise or pollution is intermittent and short term in nature and therefore it is very unlikely to constitute a statutory nuisance.

Wider controls on Leaf Blowers would therefore need to await further legislation or regulation. In the meantime, to reduce the risk of nuisance, we would advise that work should be undertaken between 8am and 6pm Monday-Friday, 9-1pm on Saturday and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Question 7 – Submitted by Councillor Evans

“Residents are being told that expected service levels for some services cannot be met because of an ongoing ‘Ransomware’ incident. They have also been told that certain documentation and drawings can no longer be accessed because of the same issue. Given that the ‘Ransomware’ incident was reported in the press some 3 months ago can the council tell us when they expect service levels to return to normal?”

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

In mid-December, Amey became aware of a complex IT security incident and based on our investigations to date, a portion of data was compromised. The incident has been reported to the Information Commissioner’s Office, the National Cyber Security Centre and the National Crime Agency. The incident was addressed promptly, and Amey have been working with world leading cyber-security experts throughout this incident and continue to work with clients, to keep any disruption to a minimum.

In response, the One Trafford Partnership has put in place several manual workarounds, which means that service requests and complaints can continue to be raised through the Council’s website, and addressed promptly. Customers are being encouraged to report issues on-line via the Council’s C360 CRM system, but the contact centre is also operating, and processing service requests, in the situation where the customer cannot log an enquiry on-line.

On-line enquiries are sent to Amey on a daily basis, and while this creates some additional steps in the process, most work is being completed within usual timescales. Some urgent work may take slightly longer than usual to address, but Amey have increased resource levels through this period to maintain the missed bin service. All missed bins have been collected within two days of the day they are reported.

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The Council continues to monitor key performance indicators for responding to service requests and complaints, reported monthly through these temporary systems.

Regarding timescales for the resumption of services, the nature and extent of the cyber-attack are now understood. Systems are being rigorously tested and are being brought back on-line. This process commenced last week and is expected to be complete within 5 weeks. We will keep members and residents updated as the situation progresses.

Question 8 – Submitted by Councillor Brophy

“A study by the Research Institute for Disabled Commuters in 2019 concluded that little effort had been made to make existing electric charging points as accessible as possible for disabled users. The report highlighted practical steps that can be taken including the dropping of curbs, user experience testing with disabled motorists as well as improvements to design and location choices for charging sites. The report also rightly highlights local authorities as a vital stakeholder in driving change.

So can the Executive Member tell me what this Council is doing to ensure that electric vehicle charging points are made accessible for all?”

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

The Council is at an early stage of its procurement of EV charge points that will assist with the rollout of EV charge points across Trafford in the next few years and beyond. As part of this exercise all potential users’ needs and requirements will be reviewed including those of disabled motorists. Also potential locations of on street charge points will be looked at to ensure that they are accessible for all potential users. TfGM are also looking at wider rollout of EV charge points in transport hubs. It is anticipated Trafford Council’s procurement exercise will be undertaken during 2021 for rollout of charge points later on in 2021/22 following contract approvals by the council.

Question 9 – Submitted by Councillor Evans

“Yesterday Trafford committed to support The GM Mayor to franchise the buses within Greater Manchester the immediate cost to our council is £1.5 million. Given the current budgetary pressures could the executive member for finance explain where this £1.5 million will be found?”

Question 10 – Submitted by Councillor Miss Blackburn

“Residents on Lostock Road, Davyhulme have been awaiting a response from the Council since the bollards were installed late last year. Can the Executive Member clarify what the legal status is regarding the whole northern side of the highway of Lostock Road and when can residents expect an answer?”

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

Residents of the north side of Lostock Road have indicated that the area on that side is a service road and not a cycle track with reference to press reports and extracts from council reports which suggest that the status of the north side lane was to be reviewed. An extract from a committee report from May 1996 shows a recommendation for the cycle track to be removed from the north side of the carriageway. It is clear that the Council therefore supported the potential removal of part of the cycle track from the north side of the carriageway however, we have extensively searched through Council Records and adverts in the London Gazette which is the process that would evidence that changes legally would have taken place. Unfortunately there is no evidence to show that the recommendation of the May 1996 committee report was ever actioned or followed through by officers at the time and legally formalised. The 1996 committee approved amendment refers to a short section of route located between Davyhulme Circle and Dover Place.

In summary the Council has thoroughly investigated the resident's claim that a service road now exists on the north side of Lostock Road and which is also available for use as a parking area. We have not found any legal evidence that would support this change albeit it is accepted that the council supported this change of use at the time. Therefore, the cycle track on the North side of Lostock Road is considered an advisory cycle track.

To reassure residents, there are no plans at the moment to formalise the cycle track or change the use to a service road at this present time, due to the restrictions surrounding the funding set out by the Department of Transport's Emergency Active Travel Fund. Any potential future changes to this would be subject to a full consultation with the residents and local ward councillors.

This will be communicated to the residents via letter in the next week.

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