

Council Question not put to the meeting – 30 November 2017

Name of Questioner	Addressed to:	Question	Response
Mr Johnullah Seraj	Cllr Alex Ganotis	<p>Could the council please explain the rationale behind the unilateral decision behind increasing parking charges, in particular at local rail stations, also why there was no consultation with Friends of Romiley Station, a stakeholder in Romiley Station that campaigns for better access to public transport and better infrastructure surrounding rail transport. Can the council also put forward proposals to combat the increased congestion that the increase in parking charges will incur, and whether this was a consideration with the proposal to increase and impose parking charges at Romiley station? Also, has the council considered support to local residents whose access to their own properties and interests will be greatly reduced as commuters avoid the parking charges by parking on nearby residential roads where there are currently no restrictions on parking or duration to commuters, and will the council be prepared to do this, and give firm assurances and guarantees that this will be at no cost to the residents of the locale in Romiley?</p>	<p>The Council has a savings requirement of approximately £60m over the next five years due to the balance of expected income and rising cost pressures. Savings can be found through a mixture of reductions in expenditure items and increases revenue streams. One of the proposals put forward has been to increase car park revenues across the borough. This is the first borough wide increase in over 10 years</p> <p>It is proposed to harmonise tariff structures to creating a clear and fair approach across the borough. Many car parks beside railway stations already levy a charge and have done for many years. Many customers already use and pay for parking at stations across Stockport, whilst there are a number that remain free.</p> <p>Around a quarter of the spaces at Romiley Station Car Park are currently chargeable, this charge is currently 20p an hour – and is proposed to increase to a minimum of 50p for two hours however the all day rate will remain unchanged at £2. These spaces are heavily used and we do not expect to see a reduction in the use of the car park.</p> <p>It is proposed to impose a charge on the remaining three quarters of spaces in this car park at the new rate.</p> <p>As previously noted we do not expect a significant change in customer behaviour as a result of imposing a charge, nevertheless in the event that access to drives</p>

			<p>are blocked the Council's civil enforcement team can be on called to take robust action to prevent illegal parking.</p> <p>Some local streets have previously opted to have Resident Parking Schemes (RPS) introduced. Residents benefiting from such a scheme are entitled to purchase permits at a cost of 60p per week (£31 per year) – should any area fulfil the criteria for such a scheme and providing there is a majority in favour new RPS can be considered.</p> <p>The statutory consultation has been open to everyone, including the Friends of Romiley Station.</p>
Mrs Sheila Oliver	Cllr Mark Weldon	Why was the Vale View School deliberately built too small?	<p>The simple answer is, it was not built too small either deliberately or by accident. The school was built to accommodate the expected cohort size in 2009/10. Despite demographic changes since that time it is still sufficient for the expected cohort now and for the future.</p> <p>To address your "supporting documents" I would point out that the minutes refer to a meeting over 11 1/2 years ago of officers in the design subgroup. I was not at the meeting. I was not invited to the meeting and I was not even aware of the meeting.</p> <p>As a politician it would have been inappropriate for me to attend this meeting as this was a technical officer group at a very early stage whose job it was to provide the Executive with technical advice. The minutes record one stage in the design process leading up to the commissioning of the new school. I hope this clears up the misunderstanding</p>

Mrs Sheila Oliver	Cllr Sheila Bailey	<p>Have you seen the Stage 1 and Stage 2 flood risk assessment and the geological survey for the M60 to A6 bypass? I have been illegally blocked from seeing these documents for many months, and they have still not arrived despite the option to send them to me at the touch of a computer key. I respect you as a councillor. Have you been able to read these documents?</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments regarding my role as Councillor. I have not been able to read the documents to which you refer, as I am informed these have not been commissioned yet. Stage one and Stage two flood risk assessments and full geological surveying are not legally required, and not undertaken as part of the initial 'strategic outline business case' which has been completed by the council. These forms of evidence are required as part of the final stage of evidence gathering, the 'Final' business case', which, subject to a further consideration by the Council cabinet, could follow the 'outline business case' currently under consideration. As you know I have been in vocal opposition to any such further work, all of which requires public money, to be commissioned in the name of this scheme. I hope this serves to answer your question fully.</p>
Mrs Wendy Hartley	Cllr Dean Fitzpatrick	<p>SPP-Stockport Preschool Provider Network</p> <p>In March 2017 the Council Executive issued a statement to Stockport Early Years Providers acknowledging the tremendous work of the sector and stating that they understood the difficult situation the sector faced with regard to funding cuts imposed from April. It went on to say that they believed that there was a looming crisis if appropriate funding was not made available.</p> <p>The council promised Early Years providers a detailed consultation would be undertaken later in the year. That consultation has just closed.</p> <p>1) How does the council justify, a survey proposing three options for further funding cuts, constitutes a detailed consultation?</p>	<p>In relation to the first part of your question, the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) model introduced in April 2017 determines the overall early years allocation provided to each Local Authority and Stockport is allocated £4.30 per hour (the national floor level). Therefore, to ensure budget sustainability, we cannot allocate more than that to providers via our own local Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) model. We have just concluded a consultation in relation to proposals for 2018/19. The Local Authority is required by statutory regulations to provide a minimum of 95% of early years funding to front line providers and thus retain no more than 5% for central spend. As Stockport already met four of the five statutory requirements of the Early Years National Funding Formula, the consultation focused on the requirement to move to one single base rate of funding by 2019/20; and how to accommodate £0.350m of central Early Years staffing costs.</p>

		<p>2) Settings in Stockport are already closing, those most affected serve our most disadvantaged families. Will the council commit to meeting with representatives from the private sector Preschools and nurseries to listen to sustainability concerns and explore possible ways of ensuring settings remain viable?</p>	<p>In relation to the second part of your question, the settings that closed recently in Stockport did so for reasons not directly related to funding and we have five new nurseries open in the last three year period in Stockport. In our areas of disadvantage, we predict that we have capacity in our nurseries to meet demand.</p> <p>Officers from the council extend an offer to meet with representatives from the private sector preschools and nurseries. We welcome further discussion about viability with settings.</p>
Mr David White	Cllr David Sedgwick	<p>A number of Councils have ended the practice of using bailiffs for the collection of outstanding Council Tax and the Money advice service have worked with other Councils to develop the alternative policies. Will the Council consider ending the practice of using bailiffs for the none payment of Council Tax?</p>	<p>Stockport has a published policy in relation to this matter, 'Corporate Debt Recovery Code Policy Statement'. This states 'a debt will only be referred to an Enforcement Agent as a last resort when alternatives have been exhausted' which is in line with the recommendations of the Money Advice Service.</p> <p>The council makes clear it considers the referral of debts for enforcement action to be a last resort and working procedures reflect this, and all alternative methods of recovery are actively sought before a debt is referred to an Enforcement Agency. A Council Tax debt would not be referred to an enforcement agent where the liable person or a member of their household was considered to be vulnerable.</p> <p>Safeguards are in place with the Enforcement Agents where-by they would send a debt would be sent back to the Council if they uncovered any issues of vulnerability. In addition Stockport Council has in place a Council Tax Support Scheme which means people on the lowest income can receive full Council Tax Support leaving</p>

			<p>nothing to pay, this is not the case in many other Local Authorities.</p> <p>The Council's agreement with the Enforcement Agency requires them to first make strenuous efforts to engage with the customer to avoid the need for an agent to visit the property. An enforcement agent will only visit the property as a last resort.</p>
--	--	--	---

This page is intentionally left blank