

## **Councillor Questions for Council 20<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

(NOTE: The following questions and answers will be published on the Council's website as soon as possible after the meeting and linked to the published draft minutes of this meeting.)

### **1. Question from Councillor Paul Crossley**

Will the Cabinet Member agree to take the final Single Member Decision on Culverhay School at an open public meeting at which members of the public will be able to address him directly, given the controversial nature of the decision and the interest from a wide section of the public?

### **Answer from Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

The final decision on the closure of Culverhay School will follow a long and comprehensive process which has been fully and openly scrutinised at every stage including:

- March/May 2010 - six week public consultation on the future of Secondary Education in Bath. Four public meetings in Bath as part of this consultation.
- 21st July 2010 - Cabinet meeting to decide the result of the consultation.
- 10<sup>th</sup> August – Overview and Scrutiny panel meeting to review the Cabinet decision to consult on closure of Culverhay.
- 18<sup>th</sup> August – Cabinet meeting to review decision.
- 24th September to 29th October 2010. Five week public consultation on the possible closure of Culverhay. Approximately 13,000 copies of consultation document distributed. Two public meetings.
- 25th November 2010 Cabinet meeting to decide the result of the consultation.
- 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010 Call-in of decision of 25th November to Overview and Scrutiny panel at a public meeting, call-in dismissed by the panel.
- December/January 2010/11 statutory notice and public consultation period.

There has already been much public scrutiny of this process and decision. Therefore in line with statutory processes and existing practice it is not anticipated that the final decision will be taken in a public meeting.

### **2. Question from Councillor Nigel Roberts**

Would Cllr Watt like to join me in congratulating Culverhay School on being named the school with the highest value added in Bath and North East Somerset?

## **Answer from Cabinet Member for Children`s Services**

Councillor Roberts is probably referring to Contextual Value Added in his question, which is a particular measure of performance that has been much criticised. Based on a range of socio-economic factors such as whether children have free school meals the measure can have the effect of expecting lower levels of progress from different groups of pupils.

The recently published Education White Paper 'The importance of Teaching' was very clear on this point

*"We will put an end to the current 'contextual value added' (CVA) measure"*

*"It is wrong to have an attainment measure which entrenches low aspirations for children because of their background. For example, we do not think it is right to expect pupils eligible for free school meals to make less progress from the same starting point as pupils who are not eligible for free school meals."*

*"We should expect every child to succeed and measure schools on how much value they add for all pupils., not rank them on the make-up of their intake."*

On this measure Culverhay is not the highest performing school in Bath and North East Somerset, it is the second highest.

In terms of Actual Value Added Culverhay is the lowest performing school in the Local Authority.

This measure takes the Standard Attainment Test (SAT) score achieved by children at age 11 and compares this with their performance at GCSE. All children are expected to make good progress with this measure. For example those who achieved a Level 3 at aged 11 would be expected to gain a GCSE grade D or above; all those who achieved Level 4 at aged 11 would be expected to gain a GCSE grade C or above etc.

This measure shows that Culverhay was the lowest performing school in Bath and North East Somerset in 2010, with only 47% of pupils making the expected progress in English and only 35% making the expected progress in Maths. In the majority of Bath and North East Somerset secondary schools over 70% of pupils make the expected level of progress.

Using the most commonly accepted measure of attainment (5 GCSE at A\* to C at GCSE) Culverhay is again the lowest performing school with 31% of pupils achieving this standard. The Local Authority average is 61%.

The Authority has higher expectations of our schools and higher ambitions for local children's outcomes and as such is working towards 80% achieving 5 A-C including English and Maths.

### **3. Question from Councillor Nicholas Coombes**

1. Residents of my block of flats were informed by letter that we would not be able to use the kitchen waste collection service and a container was not provided. How many households have been excluded from the kitchen waste collection service in Bath and North East Somerset?
2. Some residents have been provided with kitchen waste containers which they did not require, either as they already composted or did not intend to use the service. How

many containers have been returned and how many households have requested them removed?

#### **Answer from Cabinet Member for Service Delivery**

1. The first main rollout of food waste recycling collections last autumn covered approx 73,000 households across the district. We are unable to offer the standard kerbside food waste collection to 4,237 properties in total. This breaks down to blocks of flats with a Mini Recycling Centre (3,260), city centre properties (890) which receive a green sack kerbside recycling service and a few other locations assessed as not suitable (87). We are in the process of starting to plan a second phase rollout of food waste collections which will look at the options we can offer to all these properties.
2. There have been 80 requests to date logged and actioned via Council Connect for food waste containers to be collected. During September when the delivery of the start-up packs was going on, 1,098 sets were not delivered by the crews at the request of residents.

#### **4. Question from Councillor Will Sandry**

##### **1. Moorland Road / Livingstone Road / Herbert Road Junction**

Following this year's budget allocation for a study on improving this junction for pedestrians, does it remain your intention to allocate funds to improve the junction in this coming financial year? At the recent Oldfield PACT Meeting, this was again a top community priority for improvement.

##### **2. First, Second and Third Avenues**

During the construction of the new St John's School on Oldfield Lane, First, Second and Third Avenues were heavily used by HGV construction traffic which resulted in a deterioration of the road surface. Whilst major potholes have been filled, the overall condition of the road surface remains poor in the view of some members of the community. If not already undertaken, please could these roads be assessed to ensure that they have the correct priority for resurfacing?

##### **3. Street Light Repairs**

I reported Street Light No. 2 on St. Kilda's Road as defective via the new "Reportit" function on the Council's Website (<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/reportit/Default.aspx?category=StreetLighting>) on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

The light was not repaired and I had cause to re-issue my request, this time to Council Connect as a direct email on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2011 and I note that as of tonight (12<sup>th</sup> January 2011) the light is repaired. Thank you. I would note that it may have actually been repaired earlier this week (but not before or during the weekend).

I recognise that there was poor weather and three bank holidays during the time period; however, even considering this, the response falls well below the Council's published standards, so my question is twofold:

- a. Is there a problem with the new "reportit" function on the Council's website that Members should be aware of?
- b. Is there a problem with the relationship between the Council and our street lighting contractor that Members should be aware of?

### **Answer from Cabinet Member for Service Delivery**

1. A preliminary design has been developed for Moorland Rd/Livingstone Rd/Herbert Road Junction and is currently awaiting funding from the LTP capital programme.
2. Highway Inspections are carried out on a 6 monthly frequency on First, Second and Third Avenues and any safety defects identified are repaired to maintain highway safety.

The Highways maintenance team receives many requests for roads to be resurfaced and the roads selected for the programme are prioritised on the usage, safety and asset management needs. The Highway Inspector has inspected these roads inside the last three months and they will be considered for possible inclusion in a future resurfacing programme.

3. The defect was reported to Highway Electrical via the "Reportit" system on 13th December 2010. The contractor visited the site and installed a new lamp and the light was left in working order. A further fault report was received on 5th January 2011. The contractor attended the site again on 10th January and this time replaced the photocell (controller). The light has been in working order since this second repair.

The contractor will incur a financial penalty as a result of failing to effectively repair the light at the first attempt. Monthly performance indicators show that 99.5% of repairs are completed at the first visit. Officers monitor performance closely and have worked very successfully with the contractor over a number of years.

### **5. Question from Councillor Will Sandry**

Is there any truth in the rumour that the Police have recently withdrawn dedicated Beat Officers and PCSOs from the suburbs to cover the City Centre Beat on Friday and Saturday nights?

Night time antisocial behaviour (particularly on Friday and Saturday nights) was a PACT priority for Livingstone Road and the streets around. Oldfield residents and I would be concerned if the reallocation of Police Officers meant that this issue, raised by the community, could not be addressed.

### **Answer from Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services and Housing**

I have raised your question with the District Commander Chief Superintendent Gary Davies and the following is his response to me:

"The operational deployment of police officers and PCSO's who are part of the neighbourhood teams is based on them remaining on their area for 95% of their operational time. From time to time in support of specific initiatives we brigade resources from various areas to provide high visibility as part of a police operation in a specific area and this causes an abstraction which has always been the case and recognised in setting the abstraction commitment."

**6. Question from Councillor Brian Webber**

Is it hoped to reinstate the missing lamp at the west end of North Parade Bridge, Bath? If so, what would be the approximate cost of the works? What would be the approximate annual cost of the electricity to illuminate all four lamps?

**Answer from Cabinet Member for Service Delivery**

It is hoped to replace the missing lamp and reconnect the supply to enable all four lamps to work. However, the manufacturer has provided a quotation of £7,100 for supplying a new lamp. The electricity consumed by these four lights, in total, would cost approximately £80 a year.

This work is technically complex as the cables are contained behind structural cladding on the bridge and extensive civil engineering works are needed to provide a supply to the four lights in compliance with current electrical safety standards. This element of the work has not been costed and trial holes would be required to determine the exact nature and full costs of the project.