

Council

Thursday, 19 April 2018

Public Questions and Standing Order 15 Questions and Responses

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**Public Question Time
Full Council
19th April 2018**

Mr Roy Worman has asked the Leader of the Council:

Membership of England's Economic Heartland Strategy Transport Forum

1. Is the sum of £30000 per annum justifiable bearing in mind closure of children's centres, redundancy of council staff etc?
2. How often will this forum meet?
3. Will minutes be taken at meetings and signed as a true record?
4. How will Swindon Taxpayers be aware of any outcome?
5. What will the £420,000 per annum be spent on? How will you ensure that Swindon Benefits equally on any outcome?

The Leader of the Council has responded:

Thank you for your questions.

- 1) Yes, as a party to the England's Economic Heartland Strategic we are supported by the Business Unit, which provides a professional and credible advocacy service to Government on behalf of the EEH partners. It also secures us access to a key database from all the councils in the EEH covering local plans, transport strategies etc. to provide more robust and informed bids for infrastructure funding, also to have access to studies and technical reports which will support our business cases. It is our best means for making sure Swindon gets its share of infrastructure funding when we are competing against the city regions and combined authorities.

It will also mean Swindon is considered alongside other authorities in the Cambridge-Oxford-Milton Keynes corridor in terms of securing wider economic benefits brought by improved infrastructure, ie better digital connectivity, access to skilled labour and transport between key housing and employment sites.

- 2) At the moment, EEH is a voluntary partnership and its meetings are not covered by the standard local government access to information rules. Any formal decisions would be made by individual councils through their usual decision making process.
- 3) Yes, but these are not in the public domain. Please use the contact the England's Economic Heartland directly
<http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/pages/contact-us.aspx>.
- 4) As stated in my response to question 2, accountability will be provided through the Council's existing decision-making and scrutiny processes.

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- 5) Please could clarify to what you think this figure of 420k refers and I shall respond in writing.

As with any partnership working, we will negotiate to secure the best outcomes for the Borough. I can say that taking this opportunity to join will best place us – politically, strategically, economically, and technically - to make the case for the major infrastructure funding resources we need to improve the A420 and other key transport links that will benefit the growth, economy, and people of Swindon.

**Councillors' Questions
(Standing Order 15)
Full Council
19th April 2018**

Councillor Jane Milner Barry has asked the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Digitalisation and Lydiard House and Park:

1. What is the total amount that SBC has spent on the maintenance of
 - a) Lydiard House and
 - b) Lydiard Park over the past 10 years?
2. What is the total amount that SBC has spent on the maintenance of
 - (a) Lydiard House and
 - (b) Lydiard Park over the past five years?
3. How many people are currently employed at Lydiard House and Park?
4. How many vacancies are there?
5. How many of these are management vacancies, and how many are staff?
6. How many vacancies of each type have been advertised in 2018?
7. What roles have been filled?

The Cabinet Member has responded:

Thank you for your questions

1 and 2) A written response will be provided in ten working days.

3) Directly employed at Lydiard House and Park, we have 11 contracted staff, 30 Casual workers and 7 temporary agency staff.

4 and 5) Currently there are no managerial vacancies, and no managerial roles have been advertised in 2018. There are seven other vacancies.

6 and 7) No permanent roles have been advertised in 2018. Vacant roles are being covered contract and temporary staff.

**Councillors' Questions
(Standing Order 15)
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Councillor Jane Milner Barry has asked the Cabinet Member for Regeneration:

8. Has the North Star development been registered with the Building Research Establishment for BREEAM assessment and certification?

The Cabinet Member has responded:

Thank you for your question.

8) It is for the developer to make an application. The development has not been registered with the Building Research Establishment for BREEAM assessment and certification. This is not a planning requirement.

**Councillors' Questions
(Standing Order 15)
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Councillor Fay Howard has asked the Cabinet Member for Communities and Place:

9. Could the Cabinet Member please advise what happens to Swindon's plastic collected on the doorstep?

The Cabinet Member has responded:

Thank you for your question.

- 9) Plastics collected from the kerbside in Swindon Borough are taken directly to Thamesdown Recycling in Cricklade.

**Councillors' Questions
(Standing Order 15)
Full Council
19th April 2018**

Councillor Carol Shelley has asked the Cabinet Member for Education and School Attainment:

10. How many Swindon Schools have children visit and stay at Oxenwood?
11. How many Swindon schools have children visit & stay at Braeside?
12. What information & when did the Cabinet Member have (if any) on the potential closure of both Braeside & Oxenwood?
13. What has the Cabinet Member and/or the Leader of the Council done to represent our Swindon children who access Braeside & Oxenwood as Wiltshire closes these facilities?

The Cabinet Member has responded:

Thank you for your questions.

10). Individual schools commission use of this facility, not the Council, so we have no data. You would have to contact each school.

11) See the response above.

12) This is not a Council commissioned service therefore I was not briefed about proposals for it.

13) Since no schools have indicated there is an issue, neither the Leader nor I have made any representations. I am happy to meet with you or any school governing body outside this meeting to discuss this issue further.

**Councillors' Questions
(Standing Order 15)
Full Council
19th April 2018**

Councillor Bob Wright has asked the Cabinet Member for Regeneration:

14. We have been told Havelock Square is complete however work has still been taking place?
15. Why were the lights recently lowered?
16. Why were the trees rebudded on Monday 12th of March?
17. How much has this work cost and who is paying for it?
18. Were the problems with the specifications or contractors?
19. Where can I find the accounts for this work and others such as the Railway Frontage and the Wellington Street development?

The Cabinet Member has responded:

Thank you for your questions.

14) All the work within the original contract has been completed by Griffiths Groundworks and a Practical Completion certificate was issued on 17th November 2017. However, there have been other utility companies working in the area, which I believe are unrelated to the Havelock works or contract. There is also some historic remedial work to be undertaken to the chamber, which is related to a latent defect, which is not specific to the contract.

15) I am not aware of the lights being recently lowered as all remedial items were concluded by the 17th November last year. There is a 12 months Defects Liability Period (DLP), which runs until the 17th November 2018 and any faults would be repaired by the contractor during this time. Any other work would have been undertaken by SBC Streetworks, which again are not related to the contract.

16) Trees are under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and maintenance agreement, so this may be routine. Again, I am not aware of any further work.

17) There has been no cost extra incurred as far as I am aware. The final account was agreed last year and settled, however, there is some retention monies to be paid in accordance with the DLP.

18) I have not been made aware of any issues with either the lights or trees and consequently are not able to comment on specification or contractors, however, if there is more information available we may be able to provide a further update.

19) The Contract Final Account for Havelock Square is £741,891. The Railway Frontage was completed some years ago and we would need to review the historical files as I believe there was a contract dispute. Wellington Street is ongoing and although FSL is involved, the Council's Highways team is leading on the project with specialist Project Management from WSP. The total approved budget is £605,055.

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