

WRITTEN ANSWERS FOR COUNCIL

16TH SEPTEMBER, 2015

Agenda Item 13 - Rotherham Local Plan – Publication of the Sites and Policies

Question - Councillor Jepson asked did people have to make representations at the next consultation stage in order to have an opportunity at the inspection stage.

Answer – Yes, people must make their comments on the Publication Sites and Policies document in order to be eligible to attend the Inspector’s public examination.

Comments on earlier drafts were not rolled forward. Attendance at the public examination was by invitation of the Inspector, he or she will decide who to invite based on the comments submitted on the Publication version. This was stated clearly in the consultee notification letter and email that would be going out the week commencing 21st September, 2015 so that no one is in any doubt.

Agenda Item 16 – Audit Committee

Question - Councillor Parker referred to Minute No. C5 (Internal Audit Progress Report) and the indication that there were five areas that had been concluded as “inadequate” following audit work – one of which was taxi licensing. He asked if there were any ongoing investigations in this Council at the moment as far as fraud or any other irregularities were concerned and would like confirmation whether there was or was not.

Answer - There are six investigations currently being carried out by Internal Audit.

Details of all investigations are presented to the Audit Committee when completed. This is in line with the authority delegated by the Council to the Audit Committee to review the work of Internal Audit.

Agenda Item 21 – Members’ Questions to Advisory Cabinet Members and Committee Chairmen

(8) Question from Councillor Currie - what on average per year, over the last five years, had the revenue from taxi licensing created, and where had this revenue been used would be responded to in writing as he was unable to be present.

Answer - All fees that the Council charge in relation to licensing are used to cover the Council’s costs of providing the service. This includes the cost of all staff that are directly employed in the Licensing Service, as well as other associated costs such as

legal support. Over the last five years, the average income that the Council has received from taxi/private hire licensing fees is £330,178.38.

(9) Question from Councillor Currie - the Prime Minister has given a 5 year pledge to take Syrian refugees in to Britain under the current UN scheme, where will Rotherham be in this allocation?

Answer - The Prime Minister announced last Monday that Britain would accept up to 20,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees over the next five years. These refugees will be granted a five year humanitarian protection visa. No consultation had taken place with local authorities prior to that announcement, and the actual details of the scheme are not yet known. At this stage, I am not able to say what the direct implications for Rotherham will be.

The Local Government Association, which represents Councils throughout the country, is meeting with Home Office officials to agree the terms of the settlement programme and we would expect a public announcement shortly. The Prime Minister did give a commitment that the Home Secretary would update the House of Commons this week.

The Council will, of course, comply with national law and policy, and we will meet the obligations placed upon us. However I do want to see a clear, transparent and effective national approach put in place.