

WRITTEN ANSWERS FOR COUNCIL

9TH DECEMBER, 2015

Agenda Item 18 – Members’ Questions to Advisory Cabinet Members and Committee Chairmen

(3) In a supplementary question Councillor Reynolds queried the aid to congestion as he believed there was more congestion now, meant a detour for drivers and a traffic light system had to be installed, the majority of businesses were now closed and there were fewer parking spaces than there was previously and asked what the cost benefit analysis on what was spent had meant to the people and businesses of Bramley.

Answer – The majority of businesses within Bramley are not closed. Within Cross Street and Main Street the Master Brewer Public House is currently closed, but there are development proposals for this site which include additional retail units, and a further business at the Southern end of Cross Street is currently closed and undergoing refurbishment.

As previously stated the traffic management scheme has eased congestion on the A631. Prior to the scheme being introduced, and the additional traffic resulting from the Woodlaithes Village development being introduced, traffic turning right into Cross Street queued past the end of the right turn lane, leading to congestion and queues of right turn traffic blocking westbound ‘ahead’ traffic. In the current scheme right turn movements are allowed at the Church Lane junction and there is a right turn lane at this location that accommodates turning traffic, including additional traffic to Woodlaithes Village.

As the need and funding for the traffic management scheme were secured as part of the planning approval for the Woodlaithes Estate, and the scheme opened to traffic in advance of the Woodlaithes Estate being fully built out, residents and businesses have never had to experience the full effects of congestion that would have arisen had the traffic management scheme not been introduced.

The traffic scheme acknowledged the demand for on street parking and accommodated it where possible, with four parking spaces (including two disabled spaces) on Main Street, which prior to the introduction of the traffic management scheme had no defined on street parking spaces and yellow line restrictions were present. In addition sections of parking on Cross Street were revised from being parallel to the kerb to echelon parking, to increase the number of spaces available.

Furthermore, as part of the planning permission for the new Aldi supermarket in Bramley the car park will be available for use by any driver for up to 2 hours, providing additional parking opportunities for people visiting Bramley.

(18) In a supplementary question Councillor Reeder referred to the recent court case where costs were awarded to the Council of £23,000 and asked if any of this had been paid.

Answer - As a result of the Council successfully defending the claim for judicial review made by Rotherham Action Group Limited, the company were ordered by the High Court to pay the Council £23,128.40 in costs. A total of £18,663.72 has been recovered to date by the Council and the Council is currently considering its options for recovery of the remaining balance of the costs.

(19) **Councillor Parker** - Now that the new city region project is in doubt, how will this affect the Medium Term Financial Strategy?

Answer - Any implications of any developments that could affect the Council's medium term financial position, including any devolution arrangements, will be fed into the Medium Term Financial Strategy at an appropriate point. Because the City Region devolution agreement is only in principle, no specific financial assumptions have been included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Projected financial implications will be incorporated in the Medium Term Financial Strategy when the details of the devolution are sufficiently clear and developed, and when it is prudent to reflect the arrangements in financial terms.

(20) **Councillor Parker** - With the suggested number of new builds that the Council are willing to impose on Rotherham, can the Leader tell us what the estimated Council Tax take will be each year and what band the majority of these properties will be.

Answer - The Council is not imposing any building. The Council is required by law to make available adequate land in order to meet housing and employment needs. This is what the Council is attempting to do with its draft Local Plan. If we do not do this, the Government will impose a plan on the borough.

It is expected that a significant number of the new build properties would be within Bands A and B, but each development will be subject to planning permission, so it is not possible to give a definitive number.

The impact on Council Tax receipts of the new builds is uncertain as this would be dependent upon the Valuation Office's designated bandings for any new properties and the likely projections for Council Tax in future years. However, if the new build bandings were replicated in line with the bandings of the current property base in the borough, a reasonable projection of Council Tax income would be in the region of an additional £400k to £450k per year for each year of development, based on an average of 588 new builds per year. This projection would increase to £650k to £700k if there were 958 new dwellings per annum, which is the estimated number of new builds per year in the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy.