

ITEM No 5

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

MEETING 9

1 FEBRUARY 2007

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION NO 1

By Councillor Dawe to be answered by the Executive Member for Sport, Culture and Tourism at a meeting of the Council on 1 February 2007

Given the adverse weather conditions on 31 December 2006, it was the correct decision to cancel the Hogmanay street party; but there is a view that the decision was taken too late to allow people to make alternative arrangements.

Question (1) At what time was the decision taken to cancel the event?

Answer (1) The decision was taken at the Gold Group meeting which began at 20.00hrs on 31 December 2006.

Question (2) Who took the decision?

Answer (2) The decision was taken by the Director of City Development, who is the Chair of the Gold Group, and unanimously supported by all parties.

Question (3) How was this transmitted to the public?

Answer (3) Operating from the Joint Agency Communications Centre at Fettes, Council Corporate Communications Officers prepared media statements which were quickly disseminated. Information was fed directly to Edinburgh's Hogmanay's PR Agency and Edinburgh's Winter Festivals staff at the 'on site' press office in the Royal Overseas League to be relayed to the accredited media who were waiting for information.

The Edinburgh's Hogmanay web site was updated within the hour. All internal communications systems carried notice of the cancellation to as many event stewarding staff as possible and standard contingency communication procedures to contact elected members, senior Council staff, sponsors and partners were activated. The cancellation message was also relayed through the Police safety text messaging system, at approximately 20.50 hrs, to all members of the general public who had registered to receive safety information through this new facility.

In addition, a press conference was held at 22.30hrs at the Police HQ at Fettes to fully explain why the decision had been made to cancel the Royal Bank Street Party, the circumstances that led to it, to provide full information and give an opportunity for the media to ask questions.

Question

(4) Why was the decision taken so late in the day?

Answer

(4) Leaving the decision to the last possible moment was due to three main factors, the uncertainty around the weather, the inherent robustness of the event following the changes made since 2003/04 and the desire not to cancel the event if at all possible.

QUESTION NO 2

**By Councillor Dawe to be
answered by the Executive
Member for Children and
Families at a meeting of the
Council on 1 February 2007**

In the *Sunday Herald* of 14 January 2007, a table showed the number of teachers on sick leave for stress and stress-related illness as of December 2006 in Scottish local authorities. Edinburgh was one of only two local authorities where it was stated, "Data not available".

Question (1) Why was this data not available?

Answer (1) The data for City of Edinburgh Council was made available but not published.

Question (2) When will it be available?

Answer (2) The data is currently available and is as follows:

Number absent through stress	13
Number absent through depression	8

QUESTION NO 3

**By Councillor Dawe to be
answered by the Executive
Member for Corporate
Resources at a meeting of the
Council on 1 February 2007**

Question (1) How many Street Traders' Licences were granted in each of the preceding three financial years and in the current financial year to date for (a) 1 year, (b) 2 years, and (c) 3 years?

Answer (1) 1/4/2003 - 31/3/2004

1 Year Street Trader licence Grants = 119
2 Year Street Trader licence Grants = 6
3 Year Street Trader licence Grants = 11

1/4/2004 - 31/3/2005

1 Year Street Trader licence Grants = 122
2 Year Street Trader licence Grants = 1
3 Year Street Trader licence Grants = 11

1/4/2005 - 31/3/2006

1 Year Street Trader licence Grants = 109
2 Year Street Trader licence Grants = 3
3 Year Street Trader licence Grants = 8

1/4/2006 - 31/12/2006

1 Year Street Trader licence Grants = 149
2 Year Street Trader licence Grants = 1
3 Year Street Trader licence Grants = 0

Question (2) Guidance on the Council website indicates that Street Traders' Licences "can be granted for one, two or three years". Are applicants given any further guidance on the likelihood of licences being granted for more than one year?

Answer

- (2) Applicants are advised that within the City Centre the maximum period they can apply for is 1 year with the exception of the 'High Street' where it is current Council policy to only consider only temporary licence applications.

They are further advised by the Licensing Section that they can apply for 2 or 3 year licences outwith the city centre at double or 3 times the application fee; they are also advised that fees are non refundable.

QUESTION NO 4

By Councillor Mackintosh to be answered by the Executive Member for Transport and Development at a meeting of the Council on 1 February 2007

Question

I understood that a report specifying the main traffic routes in Edinburgh was due to be presented to the Executive in the second half of 2006 as a preliminary step to reassessing the relative priority for traffic calming of those residential areas not yet traffic calmed or subject to 20mph zones. When will a report specifying the main traffic routes in Edinburgh for that purpose be produced?

Answer

A formal commitment to produce a report specifying the main traffic routes was not given. This was discussed at a meeting Councillor Mackintosh had in 2006 with officers in the road safety team as a possible way forward.

The formulation of a robust definition of main routes (i.e. those to be excluded from 20mph zones and thus not subject to physical traffic calming) has proved problematical. Whilst this is still being worked on it has become clear that this will not be complete to enable the list to be reassessed for 2007/08. As most accidents now occur on the main road network a further report will also be presented on action on these.

It is therefore proposed that that the zones to be traffic calmed in 2007/08 are selected from the 2004 priority list, but taking into account the updated accident history in each zone. If the particular circumstances for any single street forming part of that network indicated a need for traffic calming, and that street was a bus route, a traffic calming feature will be agreed with the bus companies.

QUESTION NO 5

**By Councillor Mrs MacLaren
to be answered by the
Executive Member for
Children and Families at a
meeting of the Council on 1
February 2007**

Question (1) For each of the undernoted primary schools how many children resident in each school's catchment area are expected to require to start primary school in each school year from August 2007 to August 2015?

Answer (1) The following data is based on the anticipated number of children expected to live in each catchment area and wish to attend Local Authority schools. It is based on an extrapolation of the number of births in the catchment area five years previous. Data from this source does not extend beyond 2010 as the children are yet to be born. Also listed is the percentage of these children who are expected to choose to attend their catchment non-denominational school – ie the school named in the table (based on previous trends). The remainder will choose to attend their catchment denominational school, or request other, non-catchment schools.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	% expected to attend named school
James Gillespie's	66	51	57	54	70%
Bruntsfield	61	64	63	59	73%
South Morningside	74	87	66	85	90%

Question (2) For each of the undernoted primary schools what is the current capacity for both primary children and classes in (a) permanent classrooms and (b) temporary classrooms?

Undernoted schools

James Gillespie's Primary School

Bruntsfield Primary School

South Morningside Primary School

Answer (2)

- James Gillespie's Primary School's accommodation is all within the main building. It has a notional capacity based on 14 classes, which is equivalent to 415 pupils.
- Bruntsfield Primary School's accommodation is all within the main building. It has a notional capacity based on 18 classes, which is equivalent to 523 pupils.
- South Morningside Primary School is located in main building, annexe and temporary unit accommodation. It has a notional capacity based on 21 classes, which is equivalent to 658 pupils. Of the 21 classes, 15 are in the main building, 2 are in an annexe and 4 are in temporary units. Notional capacity only relates to the total school organisation and a breakdown of the pupil equivalent of the capacity for different elements of the accommodation is not available.

It should be noted that notional capacity is not a physical capacity – it reflects the optimum operating capacity of the school. The notional capacity methodology is consistently applied across the entire estate, and accordingly needs to be flexible enough to address local circumstances in every school and take into account additional factors.

Question (3) When will the temporary classroom units at South Morningside Primary School reach the end of their design life or require replacement?

Answer

- (3) The temporary units on the South Morningside site have a remaining economic life of at least 10 years which could be extended to 20 years if the roofs were replaced at the end of the ten year period. It would be more economic to invest in replacing the roofs of the existing units than for the units' complete replacement.

QUESTION NO 6

By Councillor Scobbie to be answered by the Executive Member for Housing and Community Safety at a meeting of the Council on 1 February 2007

Question

(1) Could the Executive Member provide the following information on anti-social behaviour:

- i) How many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been secured by the Council (or Housing Associations) for each year since they were introduced up to the present?
- ii) How many have been secured in Scotland's other three main cities?

Answer

(1) i)

ASBOs Secured in Edinburgh	
1999	0
2000	4
2001	1
2002	1
2003	1
2004	15
2005	28
2006	37
2007	5

Of the 92 ASBOs secured in Edinburgh 72 are currently live, the balance includes expired or revoked orders.

- ii) Information concerning other cities is either incomplete or unavailable. Scottish Executive statistics are available for the three financial years as shown in the table below.

Area	Orders granted (number)			Total
	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
Dundee	13	11	27	51
Edinburgh	3	11	37	51
Aberdeen	13	14	11	38
Glasgow	2	13	2	17
Total	31	49	77	157

Source: Scottish Executive

Other information sought directly from these authorities for the period 1999 - 2007 indicates the following.

Aberdeen:

Of the 65 ASBOs secured in Aberdeen 44 are currently live, the balance includes expired or revoked orders.

Dundee:

Currently Dundee has 82 live ASBOs.

Glasgow:

Between 1st January 2003 and 31st December 2006, 29 applications had been made to Glasgow Sheriff Court, the majority of which were made by Housing Associations.

Question

- (2) For each ASBO secured in the city, how many offences were committed or complaints made from the public about the recipient for the period:
- i) six months before the date of issue;
 - ii) six months after the date of issue?

Answer

- (2) i) An audit of recent applications put before the courts commonly identifies up to 30 or more incidents which are evidenced in support of an application.

- ii) Offences committed after the issue of an ASBO are dealt with by the Police. To date the most breaches recorded following the issue of an ASBO is four. The assessment of crimes before and crimes after would have to be looked at on an individual basis and would have to go through the proper procedures for the release of the information. This exercise could be undertaken and reported on at a later date.

The overall reaction from complainers is that the granting of an Order has a dramatic effect on the level of antisocial behaviour being exhibited by the perpetrator. The primary reason for the reduction of antisocial behaviour could be the criminal consequences of breach. If an order is breached the defender is usually arrested, charged and kept in custody regarding the breach. Further breaches rarely occur.

Question

- (3) Where there have been further offences or complaints, can the Executive Member outline any further action that has been taken?

Answer

- (3) If an ASBO is breached the enforcing authority is the criminal court. If the perpetrator is a council tenant, or a member of the family of a council tenant, a decision will be made on the granting of a full ASBO as to whether the secure tenancy should become a 'Short Secure Tenancy'. If an ASBO is breached this would give grounds for raising an action for eviction (whether or not the tenancy had become a 'short' one). The decision to raise eviction proceedings would be based on whether it was proportionate to the nature of the breach and/or whether there were repeated breaches. Council staff and police work closely to monitor cases where an ASBO has been granted.

Support will continue to be offered to perpetrators after an ASBO has been granted. Where tenancies are being placed at risk by continued behaviour (both council and private, since private landlords may serve Notice to Quit on such tenants) use has been made of the Council's Intensive Family Support Service, where perpetrators agree to work with the service.

QUESTION NO 7

By Councillor Scobbie to be answered by the Executive Member for Housing and Community Safety at a meeting of the Council on 1 February 2007

Question

- (1) Can the Executive Member please provide details of any analysis of crime by the Scottish Executive that provides the following information:
- i) The crime rate index by population for each of Scotland's four main cities;
 - ii) The clear up rate for each of Scotland's four main cities; and
 - iii) The crime rate index by population for crimes in Edinburgh and Aberdeen for:
 - a) vandalism
 - b) domestic housebreaking
 - c) serious assault.

Answer

(1) i)

Crime rate index for each of Scotland's four main cities Index of rate per 10,000 population 2005/06 (Council area)			
City of Edinburgh	Aberdeen City	Glasgow City	Dundee City
133	148	160	134

Source:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/08/30140700/15>

ii)

The clear up rate for each of Scotland's four main cities 2005/06 (Council area)			
City of Edinburgh	Aberdeen City	Glasgow City	Dundee City
37%	35%	45%	56%

Source:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/08/30140700/13>

iii)

Crime rate index by population for crimes in Edinburgh and Aberdeen for: Index of rate per 10,000 population 2005/06 (Council area)		
	City of Edinburgh	Aberdeen City
Vandalism	107	111
Domestic Housebreaking	180	246
Serious Assault	58	69

Source:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/08/30140700/15>

Question

- (2) Could the Executive Member for Housing and Community Safety provide details of the extra police 100% funded by the local authority for each local authority in Scotland?

Answer

- (2) Currently there are 54 police officers funded 100% by the City of Edinburgh Council. Information on other local authorities is not held centrally.

QUESTION NO 8

**By Councillor Cardownie to
be answered by the Executive
Member for Housing and
Community Safety at a
meeting of the Council on 1
February 2007**

Question

- (1) What requirements are there for local authorities to ensure that carbon monoxide detectors are installed in:
- a) sheltered housing;
 - b) care homes; and
 - c) general housing stock under its control containing gas central heating or gas fires?

Answer

- (1) There are no legal requirements to install and maintain carbon monoxide monitors in residential premises such as care homes, sheltered housing and general housing stock.

The regulations that do apply are the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. These require that gas appliances, together with their pipe work and flues, should be checked at least once per year.

The Health and Safety Executive issued guidance in October 2006 recommending the fitting of carbon monoxide detectors as good practice, but stopped short of making them mandatory.

They point out that fitting detectors must not be used as a substitute for regular checks and servicing by a CORGI-registered installer.

Any work on gas appliances and pipe work must be undertaken by companies or individuals who are members of the Council of Registered Gas Installers (CORGI).

The Council complies with the gas safety regulations and ensures that gas appliances are checked once per year.

Given the new advice from the Health and Safety Executive the Council is reviewing its policy regarding the installation of carbon monoxide monitors in residential premises.

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|-----------------|--|
| Question | (2) How has this requirement been dealt with by the Council in the above premises? |
| Answer | (2) The requirement to inspect gas appliances and comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 is being met through a programme of annual inspections. |
| Question | (3) Has the requirement been met in full and if not what plans have been made to do so? |
| Answer | (3) The requirement to inspect gas appliances and comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 is being met in full. |

QUESTION NO 9

By Councillor Paisley to be answered by the Executive Member for Children and Families at a meeting of the Council on 1 February 2007

Question (1) Why was a grant instalment of £30,000 advanced in December 2006 to Craigmillar Childcare Services Ltd before the Council's Internal Audit team had an opportunity to establish whether:

- a) the company was solvent; and
- b) the company had provided, or was likely to provide, services in accordance with the original Community Regeneration Fund grant agreement?

Answer (1) a) The 30K was advanced to pay salaries for Craigmillar Childcare Services staff on condition that the Internal Audit Team were allowed to go in and examine the accounts.

The Internal Audit Team were unable to examine the accounts until after Christmas which obviously would have been too late to pay staff before Christmas.

- b) The Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) grant is formally to pay staff salaries and therefore the payment was indeed in line with the CRF grant agreement.

Question (2) What steps are now being taken to follow the public pound and recover any funds that have not been used for the purpose intended in releasing the grant?

Answer (2) The Internal Audit Team are currently investigating the overall financial situation of the Company and as part of that they will be looking carefully at the solvency of the company and how the CRF grant money has actually been spent.