

ITEM No 5

**THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL**

**MEETING 9**

**27 JANUARY 2005**

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**QUESTION NO. 1**

**By Councillor Paisley to be answered by the Executive Member for Children and Families at a meeting of the Council on 27 January 2005**

**Question** (1) Can you please advise the total spent on repairs and improvements to the following schools in the last five years:

1. Riccarton Primary
2. Curriehill Primary
3. Dumbryden Primary
4. Hailesland Primary

**Answer** (1) The total Capital and Revenue expenditure including devolved expenditure spent on repairs and improvements to Riccarton, Curriehill, Dumbryden and Hailesland Primary Schools between 1 April 1999 and 31 March 2004 is as follows:

Riccarton Primary School	£100,000.00
Curriehill Primary School	£286,000.00
Dumbryden Primary School	£250,000.00
Hailesland Primary School	£430,000.00

**Question** (2) What if any repairs or upgrades are on hold pending the outcome of the amalgamation process at –

- a. Riccarton Primary
- b. Curriehill Primary
- c. Dumbryden Primary
- d. Hailesland Primary

**Answer** (2) All non-essential repairs have been suspended until the outcome of the amalgamation process is known. Only those contracts that were legally committed have been undertaken.

The following works were under consideration as part of a future planned maintenance programme:-

Riccarton PS

Window Replacement	£125,000.00
Toilet Refurbishment	£60,000.00

Curriehill PS

Window Replacement	£150,000.00
Security System Upgrade	£15,000.00

Dumbryden PS

Covered Walkways and Security Improvements	£150,000.00
Window Replacement	£40,000.00
Electrical Rewiring	£75,000.00
Drainage Works	£25,000.00
Final phase of Playground Upgrade	£20,000.00

Hailesland PS

Windows Ph4	£40,000.00
Improvements to Covered Walkway	£60,000.00

**QUESTION NO. 2**

**By Councillor Whyte to be answered by the Executive Member for Sustainability and Finance at a meeting of the Council on 27 January 2005**

**Question**

What impact do you expect the payment of employees' pensions to have on the Council's finances in future years?

**Answer**

The following additional provisions have been made in the resource allocations for 2005-2008 for superannuation payments to Lothian Pension Fund

2005-2006	£1.4m	Increasing employer's contribution from 18% to 18.9%
2006-2007	£1.5m	Increasing employer's contribution from 18.9% to 19.8%
2007-2008	£1.1m	Increasing employer's contribution from 19.8% to 20.4%

Based on the most recent information from the Fund's actuary, a further increase of £0.56m may be required for 2007-2008 and this will be incorporated into the resources allocations.

Proposed changes to Local Government Pension Schemes are currently out for consultation. It is not possible to estimate the effect of these proposals on Lothian Pension Fund or the Council's budget until the outcome of the consultation is known.

**QUESTION NO. 3**

**By Councillor Elaine Aitken to  
be answered by the Executive  
Member for Human and  
Corporate Resources at a  
meeting of the Council on  
27 January 2005**

**Question (1)** Which Councillors had special Christmas cards printed in 2004, including if possible any printed by the Joint Boards?

**Question (2)** How much did each special card cost in design, printing and postage?

**Answers (1&2)** (a) The following Councillors had special Christmas cards printed in 2004:

	<b>Total Cost</b>
Lord Provost	£1,708.96
Councillor Rev Ewan Aitken <sup>1</sup>	£494.41
Councillor Henderson <sup>2</sup>	£424.64
Councillor Cardownie <sup>2</sup>	£435.62

<sup>1</sup>This card was produced as part of the Education Department's Annual Christmas Card Competition.

<sup>2</sup>These cards were printed in house; an additional 200 of each card was run and sold in Culture and Leisure Retail outlets at £1.25 per unit.

(b) It would not be appropriate for me to respond to those parts of the question which relate to the Joint Boards.

**Question (3)** Which Departments had special Christmas cards printed in 2004, including if possible any printed by the Joint Boards?

**Question (4)** How much did each special departmental card cost in design, printing and postage?

<b>Answers</b>	<b>(3&amp;4)</b>	(a)	The following Departments/Directors printed special Christmas cards:	
				<b>Total Cost</b>
			Director of Education/Children and Families <sup>1</sup>	£475.95
			Department of Housing	£485

<sup>1</sup>This card was produced as part of the Education Department's Annual Christmas Card Competition.

- (b) It would not be appropriate for me to respond to those parts of the question which relate to the Joint Boards.

**QUESTION NO. 4**

**By Councillor Whyte to be answered by the Executive Member for Children and Families at a meeting of the Council on 27 January 2005**

- Question** (1) When did the Janitor's house at Flora Stevenson Primary School first become empty?
- Answer** (1) The last resident janitor vacated the house at 177 Comely Bank Avenue on 6 May 2002. Thereafter the house was identified as a potential capital receipt to the Council.
- Question** (2) When was it decided to offer the house to the Janitor at the former North Merchiston School which was burned down?
- Answer** (2) Following the fire there was an option to offer the Flora Stevenson house to the resident Service Support Officer (SSO) at 31 Bryson Road on the basis that the North Merchiston site could be worth more without the house than with it. This option was not considered until it was decided to sell the North Merchiston site rather than redevelop it for educational purposes.
- Question** (3) When did it become clear that the North Merchiston Janitor did not wish to take up that offer?
- Answer** (3) Despite correspondence with his legal representative, the SSO at present resident at 31 Bryson Road has never indicated that he either did or did not want the tenancy of 177 Comely Bank Road. In order to progress the sale of this house the Department decided to withdraw the offer in a letter dated 30 September 2004.
- Question** (4) When is the house likely to be advertised?
- Answer** (4) The Department informed Estates of its decision to withdraw the offer of this house and has asked them to proceed with the sale.

- Question** (5) Why has all this taken so long?
- Answer** (5) Further to the decision of the Council to offer resident SSOs secure tenancies of their houses, the policy has been to offer empty houses for sale. However, in the case of the house at 177 Comely Bank Road and a few other houses, there have been delays that have been caused by the need to look at the total housing requirements of the Department, particularly with regard to PPP developments. In recent years it has been necessary to relocate 3 SSOs from their tied tenancy into empty properties at other schools. If houses had been sold as soon as they were empty the Department would not have had this option. There have also been discussions about the suitability of some houses to be sold, and the work – usually fencing and exterior security measures to ensure separation from the school – required prior to sale.



**QUESTION NO 5**

**By Councillor Murray to be  
answered by the Executive  
Member for Children and  
Families at a meeting of the  
Council on 27 January 2005**

**Question**

What progress has been made in regard to the retention and recruitment of social workers for/by the City of Edinburgh Council?

**Answer**

In preparing this response, I have consulted with the Executive Member for Health and Social Work.

The Director of Corporate Services reported to the Council in June last year (report no CEC/20/04-05/CS) on the improved salary progression arrangements for basic grade social work staff. Since that time the acute pressures relating to the recruitment of professionally qualified social work staff have eased.

However, although posts have been widely advertised, recent recruitment has only attracted one applicant. Nonetheless, at the time of writing, vacancy levels in Children and Families practice teams are running at 10% compared to over 20% this time last year. Vacancy levels in Community Care and Criminal Justice practice teams have also reduced.

It is worth noting that in January 2005, some 16 newly qualified Social Workers will join our Children and Families practice teams. These efforts are as a result of huge investment in these individuals during the period of their study and have come about as a result of partnership between Personnel, Employee Development and Operations.

2004 saw wide-scale regrading for Practice Team Social Workers, Seniors and Managers. Three additional increments were added to the top of the Social Worker scale and six monthly increments were introduced. In addition, Senior Social Workers, Senior Practitioners and Practice Team Managers were regraded – all with effect from 1 January 2005 and the Child Protection Allowance was also introduced from that date. A Mental Health Officer Allowance was also introduced backdated to 1 January 2002. Newly qualified Social Workers have also attracted incentive payments through the Scottish Executive of £3,000 per annum for the first three years of their employment.

A positive outcome in terms of concentrated recruitment effort is the position within Residential Child Care, where there are now only around 6 permanent vacancies, a much improved situation compared to this time last year.

Recruitment pressures have not disappeared in terms of professionally qualified staff; this remains a national problem, but the difficulties now being felt most acutely are in other parts of the Department. This is particularly the case in relation to recruitment of Social Care Workers and Assistants in Homes for Older People as well as in relation to catering and domestic staff, where we are incurring high agency costs.

Some of the efforts to improve recruitment in key areas are as follows:

- Making use of recruitment events to bring in large numbers of potential employees at one time and then matching them to vacancies rather than advertising vacancies individually.
- Reviewing the use of agency staff with a particular emphasis on quality control and reducing costs.
- Training in-house social care assistants with the aim of achieving social care worker status.
- Working with local colleges to develop apprenticeships in social care.

The recruitment event approach has paid dividends in Domiciliary Care, where there has been a significant fall in the vacancy level. The Department is at full budgeted establishment in Domiciliary Care.

Recruitment in a Department of more than 5,000 people is obviously an ongoing business. The recruitment events will continue and efforts will be focused on finding permanent staff for Homes for Older People, Day Centres for Adults with Learning Disabilities and practice team social workers.

WP3/CEC/CQ270105/AS

**QUESTION NO 6**

**By Councillor Gilchrist to be answered by the Executive Member for Transport and Public Realm at a meeting of the Council on 27 January 2005**

- Question** (1) What is the current estimate of Capital Costs in connection with the introduction of cameras, associated technology, etc, for the Congestion Charging Scheme?
- Answer** (1) The current estimate of scheme start-up costs including capital costs at the start of the congestion charging scheme is £22.6M (2003 prices). These costs were presented to the Public Inquiry last year.
- Question** (2) What are the total estimated annual running costs of the whole Congestion Charging Scheme including staffing costs, loan charges etc?
- Answer** (2) Total estimated annual Operating Costs, including staffing costs, over the life of the scheme are £19.8M per annum at 2003 prices. Deducting these costs leaves £761M (2002 prices) worth of transport projects funded (averaging £38.05M per annum). Again these figures were presented to the Public Inquiry last year.

**QUESTION NO 7**

**By Councillor Gilchrist to be answered by the Executive Member for Transport and Public Realm at a meeting of the Council on 27 January 2005**

**Question** (1) What are the total legal costs the Council has incurred in connection with the Transport Edinburgh Referendum?

**Answer** (1) The total legal costs incurred in connection with the referendum to date are £16,332.50.

**Question** (2) What is the estimate of legal costs still to be incurred?

**Answer** (2) It is not possible to determine the legal costs at this time

**QUESTION NO 8**

**By Councillor Gilchrist to be answered by the Executive Member for Transport and Public Realm at a meeting of the Council on 27 January 2005**

**Question** (1) How many traffic related fatalities have occurred on Princes Street since the ban on East bound general traffic was introduced in 1996?

**Question** (2) How many fatalities occurred in the eight years prior to the introduction of the ban?

**Answers** (1)&(2) Four fatal accidents since the eastbound ban for general traffic was introduced (during the period 1 August 1996 to 31 July 2004). In the eight years prior to the ban there were 4 fatal accidents (1 August 1988 to 31 July 1996). All 8 were pedestrian fatalities.

Overall, however, road accidents have dropped from 781 to 497 and, most significantly, fatal and serious accidents taken together have fallen by 55% from 117 to 53. The measures have produced similar reductions across the remainder of the First New Town.

**Question** (3) What has been the reduction in traffic volume (in percentage terms) since the ban was introduced, i.e. using the latest available figures compared to those immediately prior to the introduction of the ban?

**Answer** (3) Overall traffic has decreased by 6.8%. This is based on data recorded in 1995 (before ban introduced on eastbound traffic) and 2002 (after ban introduced on eastbound traffic). The change in car traffic has to some extent been offset by taxis and buses. Traffic flow overall continues, as from the start of the scheme, to be an improvement on the situation prior to 1996.

**QUESTION NO 9**

**By Councillor Gilchrist to be answered by the Executive Member for Human and Corporate Resources at a meeting of the Council on 27 January 2005**

I refer to your answer to my question at the Council on 29 April 2004 (Council staffing).

**Question** Please insert the latest available figures for the current financial year to the undernoted table.

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Increase/Decrease</b>	<b>Total Staff (FTE)</b>
	2004/05	+607	16,817
	2003/04	+559	16,210*
	2002/03	+234	15,621
	2001/02	-15	15,387
	2000/01	+209	15,402
	1999/00	+169	15,193
	1998/99	-70.63	15,024

\*Please note previous incorrect figure of 16180 has been amended.

## Reasons for FTE difference between December 2003 and 2004

Department	2003/4 Dec 03	2004/05 Dec 04	FTE Difference	Major Factors Involved
City Development	1008.68	1031.99	23.31	
Corporate Services	590.58	593.59	3.01	
STO/ Catering/Cleaning	739.00	745.77	6.77	
Education	6100.30	6260.39	160.09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 staff transferring from Secure Services in Social Work</li> <li>Ongoing Scottish Executive funding for recruiting Learning Assistants and Breakfast Club Assistants to integrate pupils and reduce class sizes</li> <li>Vired monies within schools to fund additional hours</li> </ul>
Environmental & Consumer Services	1204.50	1182.00	-22.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes in numbers of seasonal contracts</li> </ul>
Finance	519.57	510.85	-8.72	
Housing	1346.73	1494.96	148.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scottish Executive funding for Safer Communities – Community Safety Concierge and Anti-Social Behaviour Unit</li> <li>Also Scottish Executive funding for Housing Support Workers</li> </ul>
Culture & Leisure	631.39	672.90	41.51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase for approximately 20 FTE due to weekend opening of libraries.</li> </ul> <p>The original figure for 2003/04 has been amended as it was incorrect.</p>
Social Work	4069.90	4324.90	255.00	<p>The main reasons for this increase include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14 new trainee social workers</li> <li>35 new Social Care Assistant posts for Home for Older People</li> <li>65 staff from the Care Homes taken over by Social Work</li> <li>9 staff employed in a new Youth Justice Team</li> <li>20 staff working on new projects – Working Together and Through and After Care</li> <li>8 staff in Secure Services transferring to Education (internal transfer)</li> <li>27 due to drive in filling vacancies in Children and Family Teams and Criminal Justice</li> </ul>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16210.65</b>	<b>16817.35</b>	<b>606.70</b>	



**QUESTION NO. 10**

**By Councillor Lowrie to be  
answered by the Executive  
Member for Environmental  
Services at a meeting of the  
Council on 27 January 2005**

Please list for years 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and for 2004 to date:-

**Question** (1) The number of planning applications which should have had, but did not, a report from Environmental Services.

<b>Answer</b>	(1)	<b>Year</b>	<b>Environmental Report</b>
		2001/2002	0
		2002/2003	0
		2003/2004	9
		2004 to date	164

**Question** (2) The number of planning applications which have had a report from Environmental Services.

<b>Answer</b>	(2)	<b>Year</b>	<b>Environmental Report</b>
		2001/2002	1079
		2002/2003	968
		2003/2004	895
		2004 to date	681

**Question** (3) The average and maximum time taken for decisions requiring an Environmental Report from submission to determination.

**Answer** (3) Applications requiring an Environmental Services input – figures in days

<b>Year</b>	<b>Average Processing Time</b>	<b>Maximum Processing Time</b>
2001/02	83	1158
2002/03	106	926
2003/04	95	604
2004	30	252

Processing: Time in days from submission of a planning application to determination.

**Question** (4) The average and maximum time taken for decisions which do not require an Environmental Report.

**Answer** (4) Applications not requiring an Environmental Services input – figures in days

<b>Year</b>	<b>Average Processing Time</b>	<b>Maximum Processing Time</b>
2001/02	80	1134
2002/03	75	931
2003/04	75	622
2004	47	276

Processing: Time in days from submission of a planning application to determination.

**QUESTION NO 11**

**By Councillor Tritton to be  
answered by the Executive  
Member for Sustainability and  
Finance at a meeting of the  
Council on 27 January 2005**

**Question** (1) How many owners of properties did not receive Council Tax books before the start of the Financial Year in April?

**Answer** (1) All 220,000 Council Tax Demand Notices including Voucher Books (VBs) were successfully produced and issued for 2004/05 during the first three weeks of March 2004. Subsequently, as a result of a system fault, there was a problem in providing replacement VBs for those people who either lost or did not receive their original VB (i.e. not delivered by Royal Mail). In addition, those who wished to change to paying by VB from another method of payment were also affected.

**Question** (2) How many of these owners subsequently received a Council Tax book?

**Answer** (2) The number affected by the problem detailed above is not available from the system but is estimated to be a few hundred. Those taxpayers who contacted the Revenues and Benefits Division have now received a Council Tax book.

**Question** (3) What information was provided to owners of properties which did not receive Council Tax books? When was this provided?

**Answer** (3) On contacting the Revenues and Benefits Division, taxpayers were advised VBs would be issued as soon as possible. While waiting for the computer software problem to be corrected, taxpayers were advised that they could make payment by Switch using a Freephone number, in person at Council offices or by staff issuing manual counterfoils.

**Question** (4) What contact details were given to these owners in order to enable them to make appropriate payments?

**Answer** (4) See Answer 3 above.

**QUESTION NO 12**

**By Councillor Tritton to be  
answered by the Executive  
Member for Environmental  
Services at a meeting of the  
Council on 27 January 2005**

**New Refuse Collection Routes**

**Question** (1) How many calls to Environmental Services from traders (in the whole city) complaining about trade waste collection by the Council were received in:

November 2003  
November 2004  
December 2003  
December 2004

<b>Answer</b>	(1)	November 2003	188
		November 2004	3141
		December 2003	189
		December 2004	881

These are the number of telephone contacts dealt with by Trade Waste staff. It is not possible to establish from the number of contacts how many were complaints and how many were repeat complaints. Nor is it possible to establish how many contacts were requests for information.

**Question** (2) How many traders have demanded a rebate of their trade waste charges?

How many have received a rebate?

<b>Answer</b>	(2)	Requests for rebates received	91 (to 20.01/05)
		Rebates provided	0

All requests for a rebate are being investigated. It is the Department of Environmental & Consumer Services' view that all trade customers received a service, although this may have been later than the normal collection day. All excess refuse was cleared. Officers are in the process of visiting customers who have complained to determine whether a rebate payment is justified.

**Question** (3) Have any extra collection vehicles been required to deal with the separate collection of trade and domestic waste? If so, what is the cost of each vehicle?

**Answer** (3) Yes. It is estimated that six vehicles have been added to the fleet specifically as a consequence of separating the collection of trade and domestic waste. As the vehicles provide differing services, costs range from £200 to £900 per week.

**Question** (4) What savings were predicted in the Business Plan from the separation of trade and domestic waste? Were these savings achieved in November 2004, December 2004?

**Answer** (4) No savings were predicted. The principal reason for separating trade was from domestic waste was to comply with the European Union Landfill Directive.

**Question** (5) What was the total cost of refuse collection in

November 2003  
December 2003  
November 2004  
December 2004

**Answer** (5) **Refuse Collection Costs**

November 2003	£847,153
November 2004	£869,287
December 2003	£959,457
December 2004	£1,156,025

The differences in costs are attributable to Strategic Waste Fund claims and the actual number of pay periods in each month.

**Question** (6) a) How many calls were made to the Department in each of the first 5 working days of January 2005?

b) How many of these were answered?

**Answer**

Date	Offered	Answered
5.1.05 - Wednesday	15,936	1,419
6.1.05 - Thursday	14,687	1,671
7.1.05 - Friday	11,911	1,258
10.1.05 - Monday	8,662	1,557
11.1.05 - Tuesday	3,844	1,335
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,040</b>	<b>7,240</b>

**QUESTION NO 13**

**By Councillor Mackintosh to be answered by the Executive Member for Transport and Public Realm at a meeting of the Council on 27 January 2005**

**Question** (1) How many bus services use the bus stop constructed as part of the Edinburgh Fastlink Project on the southside of the Edinburgh to Glasgow railway line at Edinburgh Park Station?

**Answer** (1) At present one service uses these bus stop ie Stagecoach East Scotland's X40 (Dunfermline – Riccarton Campus). This is expected to increase.

**Question** (2) At what frequency do buses call at these bus stops?

**Answer** (2) The X40 runs Monday to Friday on an hourly frequency and operates through the working day.

**Question** (3) How many of those bus services are operated under subsidy from the City of Edinburgh Council or the Scottish Executive Route Development Fund and what is the cost of each service?

**Answer** (3) The City of Edinburgh Council awarded the contract for the X40 to Stagecoach East Scotland at a cost of £98,228 per annum for three years. The contract is part of the City Growth allocation awarded to the Council from the Scottish Executive and approved by the Council following discussion with partner authorities. The scheme is designed to provide a one-off contribution to help 'kick-start' the service.

**Question** (4) How many passengers have been carried by subsidised or Route Development Fund funded bus services using these bus stops in the last 6 months?

**Answer** (4) The service has been operating for just over two months and patronage returns from Stagecoach East Scotland give an average 420 passengers per week. These figures will be continually monitored.

**QUESTION NO 14**

**By Councillor Mackintosh to  
be answered by the Executive  
Member for Transport and  
Public Realm at a meeting of  
the Council on 27 January  
2005**

- Question** (1) Will the Public Hearing into the proposed extension to the Controlled Parking Zone commence in January 2005 as approved by the Executive of the Council on 4 May 2004 and if not when will it commence?
- Answer** (1) The Public Hearing will not commence in January 2005 it will commence on 12 April 2005. There will be a report to a March Executive informing members.
- Question** (2) How long will the Public Hearing last?
- Answer** (2) The Public Hearing is scheduled to last for 4 weeks.
- Question** (3) Who are the two Reporters who will carry out the Inquiry as recommended by the Director of City Development?
- Answer** (3) There is only one Reporter and his name is David Woodrow.
- Question** (4) When was the Council's written statement prepared and submitted to the Reporters?
- Answer** (4) The Council's written statement was prepared during October and early November 2004 and was published on 12 November 2004.
- Question** (5) What notification has been given to the Objectors of the date of the public hearing?
- Answer** (5) The Programme Officer has notified the Objectors in writing of the Public Hearing. This was done on 22 November 2004. In addition, there will be regular updates of the Public Hearing timetable on the Internet at the Council's website [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpzextension](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpzextension).

- Question** (6) When will the Council receive the Reporters' report of the Public Hearing?
- Answer** (6) The Minute of Agreement between the Council and the Reporter requires that the Reporter shall use all reasonable endeavours to deliver his report on the Hearing to the Council on or before 6 August 2005.
- Question** (7) Will the correction of errors in the orders, changes requested by local members or changes requested by the Environmental Quality Scrutiny Panel be incorporated in these orders (a) prior to the Public Hearing, (b) at the Public Hearing or (c) after the Public Hearing?
- Answer** (7) Any changes to the orders, including any decisions made by the Council after receipt of the Reporter's report will be made after the Public Hearing.
- Question** (8) Given that the orders must be made prior to their expiry in November 2005, what is the last meeting of the Executive at which a report from the Director of City Development recommending the approval of all or part of the orders must be considered in order to allow, if required, call-in of the decision to the Environmental Quality Scrutiny Panel and return to the Executive prior to the expiry of the orders?
- Answer** (8) The timetable for meetings of the Executive has not been published beyond July 2005 at present. It is assumed that a report to be submitted to the Executive in late September would satisfy the above requirement.
- Question** (9) Will the Executive Member guarantee that the Executive's decision on the proposed extension to the Controlled Parking Zone will be able to be called into the Environmental Quality Scrutiny Panel?
- Answer** (9) The decision on the whether or not to approve all or part of the draft orders is one for the whole Council to take and will be taken following the normal procedures laid down by the Council including the opportunity for the report to be called into scrutiny.



**QUESTION NO 15**

**By Councillor MacLaren to be  
answered by the Executive  
Member for Children and  
Families at a meeting of the  
Council on 27 January 2005**

Given that the Council policy is to provide water fountains and drinking water outlets in schools:-

**Question** (1) Which schools have this facility?

**Question** (2) How were the fountains/drinking water outlets funded and what was the cost per school?

**Question** (3) Which schools have asked to have these facilities and are still waiting?

**Answer** Schools are able to purchase water coolers from within the budget provided under the Education Department's Devolved School Management (DSM) arrangements. There are, however, a number of schools where improvements in the infrastructure are required to ensure that fresh potable water supply is available throughout the school premises. This work can range from simple extensions to existing water pipe circuits to the installation of new mains supplies. Where such works are required the Department has indicated that potable water coolers will be provided until it has been possible to complete the required improvements.

There are also a number of schools which have asbestos material contained within the ceiling structure and the Department is continuing with the asbestos removal programme prior to the installation of a mains water supply.

A number of schools have chosen to install water coolers which can be either bottled or mains fed and the Department is currently seeking information from every school to ascertain their current drinking water provision. This will be reported to Council in due course.