

Responses to questions from Councillors requiring a written response

WQ1

Written question asked by Councillor Maria Watson of the Leader of the Council at the meeting of the City Council held on 26 April 2021

The loosening of Covid restrictions and the warmer weather has seen many citizens return to the City's parks and green spaces. It has become apparent that the City's capacity to keep the parks clean and tidy, and prevent anti-social behaviour is becoming increasingly stretched. Will the Portfolio Holder join us in a display of public thanks to those volunteers who are giving up their free time to keep the city clean and tidy, and outline what steps the City is taking so that we don't need to rely on volunteers to do what should be the Council's responsibility?

Councillor David Mellen replied as follows:

Thank you Councillor Watson for your question. It is true that during recent weeks the large numbers of parks visitors, combined with a significantly higher volume of fly tipped material and additional side waste presented alongside bin collections has indeed stretched our resources. Clearly the prolonged lockdown has led to people who are at home clearing out their unwanted household items which in turn has added hundreds of tonnes of extra weight into the waste stream and, in addition, as we all witnessed in recent weeks since the relaxation of lockdown rules hundreds of people have visited our parks to enjoy the natural environment and spend some time relaxing outside. Unfortunately, not all of the visitors have disposed of their litter responsibly. Recent incidents including the Arboretum and Forest Recreation Ground, adding additional pressure to our workforce who, despite great efforts during the day when the crowds gathered, were unable to keep on top of the littering during the gatherings. That said, on each of these days the Public Realm Teams put in extra resources to ensure that the parks were fully cleansed by early hours of the following morning. This huge clean-up was made possible in part by the army of local people who volunteered and came out to assist with the clear up operation. I would like to offer my thanks to both the Public Realm Teams and the many hundreds of Clean Champion volunteers who help us maintain our Clean City.

With regards to future improvements we are focused on supporting our Clean and Green teams and will ensure that this remains a priority as part of our revised Council Plan Priorities. As part of our planning we have a programme of activities for the coming year. These include the roll out of the summer street weed spraying, days of action and a soon-to-be announced National Spring Clean Campaign, winter leaf clearance programme and, as you may also be aware, we have recently revised our street sweeper deployment to ensure that every street is swept at least once every two weeks. With regard to volunteers we really do value the support that our Green Space and Clean Champion Volunteers provide and, whilst they provide additional support, they are part of a programme of community activities that encourage our citizens to take pride and ownership of their local environment. As part of this work we are also planning to carry out a city wide media campaign to

help encourage people to dispose of their litter responsibly and help promote our Clean City Priority.

WQ2

Written question asked by Councillor Kirsty Jones of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Local Transport at the meeting of the City Council held on 26 April 2021

Can the Portfolio Holder outline what steps are being undertaken to both punish and prevent citizens abandoning the Council's e-scooters outside of the designated bays?

Councillor Adele Williams replied as follows:

Wind Mobility (the e-scooter service provider) operates mandatory parking spots. This means e-scooters can only be left in designated parking spots around the City. When users come upon a parking spot at the end of their journey, if they are not close enough in the parking spot (defined as a 10m radius) the user is unable to end their ride and continues to be charged per minute. The Wind Smartphone App provides the user with information on where to park.

Failure to park e-scooters in designated parking spots by users means the vehicles have been left abandoned. In this case the operator levies fines to users. Recently the operator has tripled the fines for incorrect parking. The original parking spot radius of 25m was also reduced to 10m to try to contain the space within which e-scooters can be parked following initial reports.

Since the issue of bad parking came to light, the Council, working with Wind Mobility, has embarked on a programme to review and audit each parking spot using road safety advice to ensure spots are located in areas of the footway which allow a minimum of 1.2m clearance for pedestrians and are in line with other street furniture. Where space does not allow or other safety/access issues are identified, the parking spots are being removed from service. The work to physically mark the parking spots will aid users to correctly park e-scooters and also identify locations to the general public.

In March 2021 the operator introduced two full time street patrollers to provide a patrol the city and move badly parked scooters. This coincided with the introduction of number plates to allow for improved reporting. The operator is currently investigating the creation of a reporting tool to allow for reporting of badly parked scooters so their team can be deployed more effectively. This is in addition to a network of mechanics who regularly attend the e-scooters to swap batteries, refill hand sanitisers and move e-scooters that are out of area.

WQ3

Written question asked by Councillor Andrew Rule of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Local Transport at the meeting of the City Council held on 26 April 2021

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm the cost of the recent repair work to the slabs on Market Square and how this has been funded?

Councillor Adele Williams replied as follows:

The cost of the repairs to the Old Market Square, including the reconstruction works to both north and south terraces is £235,000. These works have been funded by the LTP Programme.

WQ4

Written question asked by Councillor Andrew Rule of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Local Transport at the meeting of the City Council held on 26 April 2021

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm how much revenue has been generated from car parking in the City Centre broken down over the last 5 years by location and the number of parked vehicles this relates too?

Councillor Adele Williams replied as follows:

Thank you for your question regarding the Council's parking income and transactions over the last 5 years. Parking is one of the Council's largest income generating services providing safe, clean, secure parking in convenient locations across the City for on and off-street parking in a very competitive environment. Providing car parking as one of the transport choices for travelling to our City for work, retail, leisure or entertainment supports the economic vitality of our City and manages the free flow of traffic on our highways. Parking Services operates a portfolio of two multi storey car parks, soon to be three again with the opening of the new Broadmarsh car park in the autumn, 26 surface car parks and over 2,500 on street parking bays across the City.

You asked about the income receipts from city centre parking since 2016/17 and I can confirm that for both on and off street parking the service has generated the following year on year:

		Income split between on and off street	
Year	Total parking income (£m)	Off street £m	On street £m
2016/17	8.982	5.644	3.338
2017/18	8.561	5.303	3.258
2018/19	8.874	5.044	3.830
2019/20	9.298	5.175	4.123
2020/21	3.085	1.418	1.667
2020/21 C-19 Gov't	4.826		

Compensation			
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The reduction in income growth in 2017/18 was due to the Broadmarsh multi storey car park closing mid-year as it was demolished and rebuilt and is soon to re-open in autumn 2021. Taking this into account, Parking Services income has grown by over 94% between 2010/11 and 2019/20, making a significant contribution to the Council's financial position. The customer transactions for this same period show there are over 2.2m customer transactions on average per annum across on and off street parking in non-Covid years - showing that our parking assets are key destination sites supporting our City and its visitors.

2020/21 has seen a dramatic Covid impact globally, and on our City and subsequently parking has seen a very turbulent year as the service has rapidly adapted to support key and critical workers during the height of the pandemic and now the city as we follow the roadmap to recovery. Although Covid has impacted significantly, the parking service still generated £3.085m income in 2020/21. Parking was also recognised as one of the key services that warranted financial support from the Government and we have applied for Government income compensation grant of £4.826m for the impact of Covid on this service, resulting in a final year end performance of £7.912m in a year we would all rather forget.

For 2021 the service is overhauling its on-street pay and display machines as they are at end of life and instead of costly like-for-like replacement, we will be retro-fitting these machines with fast and efficient contactless payments whilst still providing cash payments in key footfall locations. The new machines will improve customer service and ease of use in a Covid safe and resilient manner whilst driving out further efficiencies in the parking operation allowing a £100,000 pa contribution to the Council's budget pressures. The proposal was accepted at Full Council in November 2020, ensuring this Service remains fit for purpose and continues to provide its vital role in supporting the City's continued recovery and growth into the future.
