

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS
Council Meeting – 2 February 2023

Question: 1.
From: Councillor Wilson
Response by: Councillor Frost (Cabinet Spokesperson for Regeneration and Culture)

Question:

Following the government's recent announcement on house-building targets. What will the impact be on the Council's area and local plans?

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Wilson.

The announcement doesn't appear to change anything compared with the existing situation.

These reports merely relate to the content of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and until it becomes an Act of Parliament, it has no bearing on how things work. Even if it is enacted, it is likely that secondary legislation will be needed to set out how things will work in practice.

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Question: 2.
From: Councillor P Fielding
Response by: Councillor T Cave (Cabinet Spokesperson Children's Services)

Question:

As the number of looked after children in Barnsley continues to increase above the national average, all Councillors, as corporate parents, will wish to know about the placements of these children.

Can the Cabinet Member please say approximately how many looked after children are currently accommodated in each type of placement setting, and what the typical cost per child is to the Council for a place in each setting including;

- Residential homes
- Foster Care
- Out of district accommodation
- Temporary B&B/hotel accommodation and other unregulated or unregistered settings

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Fielding.

Our Looked After Children numbers are increasing in line with the national trend. However, Barnsley remains around the national average with 70 children per 10,000 and is not, as suggested, an outlier.

Almost half of our children and young people are in Barnsley Council foster care, which is a strong position, but we're seeing increasing numbers of children and young people going into private placements, including independent foster agencies and residential provision. This is placing pressure on the placements budget.

We're currently developing a local sufficiency strategy that will focus on increasing local placements for our children and young people.

Alongside this, we're investing in more creative edge-of-care solutions to ensure that only those children and young people that need to come into care do so.

The current position is as follows:

	Number of Children	Number in Borough	Number out of Borough	Cost per week
Foster Care	149	128	21	£415
Independent Foster Care	74	32	42	£892
Supported or Semi-supported Living	24	6	18	£1029
Residential	29	7	22	£5796

With regards to those in temporary B&B/hotel accommodation and other unregulated or unregistered settings, there are currently zero.

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Question: 3.
From: Councillor Lodge
Response by: Councillor Frost (Cabinet Spokesperson Regeneration and Culture)

Question:

Despite numerous interventions, residents in Berneslai Homes managed Independent Living Schemes in the Worsbrough Ward have been plagued by faults and failures with their heating systems, with the most recent issue being, accounts wiped of credit. At what point will there be a final resolution to this matter and should residents receive suitable compensation?

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Lodge.

There have been a number of issues throughout December with the district heating plant at two schemes in the Worsborough Ward.

The schemes at Elm Court and Maltas Court have been experiencing heating outages intermittently throughout the period, affecting the homes connected to the system.

It was agreed that while the issues with the heating plant were being resolved, the tenants would not be charged for their heating. Both systems are now working, and tenants' heating charges have restarted.

The district heating plant has been replaced at Elm Court, and the district heating plant at Maltas Court is due to be replaced in the summer of 2023.

Switch 2, our heat metering and billing provider, have confirmed that as of 25th January 2023, all credit balances at the time we paused the charges have now been added back onto people's payment meters.

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Question: 4.
From: Councillor Denton
Response by: Councillor Higginbottom (Cabinet Spokesperson
Environment and Transportation)

Question:

As part of its Small Grants Programme, the government has announced that, from March 28th 2023 money will be made available to fund innovative local road safety projects, subject to successful application.

Is the Council intending to take advantage of this and what direction would the Cabinet member give to other elected members wishing to put forward initiatives for their wards?

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Denton.

The next round of the Small Grants Programme opens for application on 28 March 2023 and closes on May 4 2023.

We will review the eligibility criteria and determine if any of our existing or future road safety intervention schemes meet the necessary grant criteria and will take forward as part of business as usual.

If members have any suggested initiatives, they should get in touch with the Highways Service in the first instance.

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Question: 5.
From: Councillor P Fielding
Response by: Councillor Franklin (Cabinet Spokesperson Core Services)

Question:

Since the adoption of the Council’s Advertising and Sponsorship Policy in 2019, how many potential advertisers or sponsors have been turned down because of the restricted criteria? Please break the numbers down by each of the restricted criteria.

Information for response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Fielding.

Since the policy was approved at full council in September 2019, we have had two recorded instances where potential advertisers or sponsors have not been able to proceed under the criteria of “affects public support for a political party, a person identified with such a party, or a point of view or question of political controversy.”

There have been no other instances where we’ve had to apply the restricted criteria.