

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The following questions have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answers which will be included in an addendum that will be circulated at the meeting:

(a) Councillor Elgood

“The NLC (NCP) on-street parking enforcement contract includes a clause to allow for a two year extension when it expires please could the Cabinet Member state:

- Has the council undertaken this extension?
- Who made a decision on this and on what date?
- What member involvement did this include?
- What consultation was undertaken with residents to assess their views on potentially extending it?
- What is the total value of any extension?
- When they would be informing residents of this decision?”

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

“Thank you for your questions about the NSL contract. The council has extended the NSL contract for two years, from January 2011. The NSL contractual period – including the extension option – was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee in November 2006, before the award of the contract. Therefore it was not necessary to seek further approval to implement the option to extend and legal advice confirmed this.

After careful evaluation of NSL’s performance and consultation with the Director of Environment, the council extended the contract with NSL in April 2010. The value of the NSL contract is approximately £3.5 million per year. Member involvement and public consultation was not required because the approvals process did not require further specific authority for the implementation of the two year extension, which was referred to in the original Policy and Resources Committee Report.”

(b) Councillor Carden

“Following a number of accidents to elderly residents tripping on poor paving, will the council reduce the mismatch for repair from 19mm to 12.5mm to make it safer for them?”

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

“The standard for pavement repairs is set using National Guidance and all councils endeavour to adhere to a similar level. Brighton and Hove is set to

20mm as the level where repairs are considered and this is a common standard across the South East.”

(c) Councillor Carden

“As there still are not enough grit bins in North Portslade will the council provide several more in areas that are not covered?”

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

“North Portslade had an additional five new grit bins this year making the total in North Portslade to 28. This is a high number compared to some other wards, in recognition of its position as a colder area. However, we must balance the amount of grit bins in the city with what we can sensibly provide for and refill, during severe weather.

This means that we cannot supply an unlimited amount for every street in the city. We looked at all the requests we received over the last year and officers assessed each site, placing bins where they met the criteria, hence the additional bins in your ward.

A map of the grit bins is on our council website so people can find out where their nearest bin is sited.”

(d) Councillor Kitcat

“Could the Cabinet Member for Central Services please list which publications the council's media monitoring service surveys and does it include Private Eye which often has stories of relevance to this authority. What is the cost per annum of providing this monitoring service?”

Reply from Councillor Alford, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

“The city council no longer monitors print publications using an external provider and stopped doing so at the end of the last financial year as part of its work to seek savings and efficiencies.

However, we now use an agency called Meltwater to monitor online news sources. The cost for 2011/12 will be £3,250, around half the annual cost we were incurring by monitoring print publications. As part of the contract, Meltwater monitors 130,000 online news sources every day (by comparison, the most commonly used free service, Google News, monitors around 4,000 sources). Private Eye's website is one of the 130,000, along with almost all mainstream local, regional and national news media websites in the UK.

Meltwater produces a daily report, including at weekends, which is emailed to 10 licence holders. Licence holders also have access to an online area, where the council can produce its own tailored analysis reports based on any of

numerous available metrics, including tone, audience size and geographical area of coverage.

The licence enables 10 groups of similar search terms to run at any one moment. For example 'Brighton and Hove City Council', 'Brighton and Hove Council' and 'Brighton Council' would all be part of one group. The council can use any of the other nine groups to monitor coverage of any other search item, for example another council, an individual person, an organisation, or a theme, such as 'severe weather'. Search groups can be amended or replaced at any moment.

The Meltwater service enables the council to monitor and react to public opinion as mediated by the new and traditional media. Furthermore, it enables the council to assess whether its media communications, which are in essence designed to make services as accessible, are effective."

(e) Councillor Kitcat

"Given, as reported in Private Eye, Vodafone's avoidance of at least £6 billion in UK taxes, will the Cabinet Member responsible make a statement on whether the council will continue to use Vodafone's services noting that, if Vodafone are cheapest, that low price has come at a cost to the tax payer.?"

Reply from Councillor Alford, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

"In line with Council's Value for Money Programme we are already committed to reviewing our contracts, particularly for ICT. This work is in progress and a procurement plan for mobile and telephony services is being developed. Any new contract will be let with due regard to the Council's Procurement Strategy and Codes of Practice.

The Council has been using Vodafone for its mobile phones and Blackberry estate since 2003. At this time there was a wide gap in mobile network coverage between Vodafone with good to excellent coverage and the other suppliers operating in the City with mediocre coverage. As such engaging with any service provider has to be a balance between cost and service, a key factor in the decision to use this particular provider. Many of our mobile devices are used by lone workers visiting clients in their homes or relatively remote locations in parts of the city where coverage from other suppliers is patchy. Vodafone both assures service by making our staff contactable, and supports our Lone Worker policy by assuring these staff a means of contacting colleagues or third party services wherever they may be.

Since engaging Vodafone the Council has reviewed the contract terms on many occasions, meeting with other suppliers and benchmarking against other authorities' providers and solutions. In addition, we have renegotiated the tariffs on several occasions to take account of what we have found through benchmarking, and the changing needs of the business. As a result savings of up to 66% on voice costs have been made, Blackberry device costs have been

significantly reduced and we have a wider range of tariffs to suit different usage patterns reducing the overall cost of the service.

Independent advice has confirmed that the pricing through the OGC contract framework that Brighton & Hove currently has is extremely favourable compared with other authorities. Taking into account the prohibitive transition costs of moving to another supplier combined with the good service and coverage that Vodafone provide at the moment there is no advantage in changing to another supplier as coverage is likely to be reduced and revenue costs increased.

We remain open to exploring new services and offers from other suppliers, whilst continuing to watch the market closely and benchmarking regularly. The market is developing rapidly and we recognise the need to move with it. We have undertaken trials of alternatives to Blackberry and a review of voice and data service provision for users of mobile devices is currently underway. A summary report of findings and options appraisal will be available before the end of the year.”

(f) Councillor Kitcat

“Will the council consider using a free YouTube Partner account to host webcast videos in a low-cost and accessible format for online access – as other councils, including Calgary City Council, are considering?”

Reply from Councillor Alford, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

“The Leader’s Group is currently reviewing various options for future web casting of Council meetings and I will ensure that your suggestion is fed into that review. However, it is important to note that the Council web cast has recently been upgraded to improve online access. Greater functionality has been added to enable users to embed the web cast on their own site or link directly to it from a range of online and social media channels (Facebook, Digg, StumbleUpon, MySpace, Windows Live, Twitter, Google Bookmark & Browser Favourites). This can be done for the web cast as a whole or individual agenda items.”

(g) Councillor Kitcat

“Cllr Mears' previous response to my question; ‘Will the Leader of the Council commit to wherever possible now publishing Council information, including spending data, under an open licence such as Creative Commons or the National Archive's new Open Government Licence?’ failed to address the issue of licensing, but instead spoke of data formats and transparency.

I am once again asking the Leader if she will commit the Council to using more permissive terms than straight copyright on the Council's publications and data. This is so that others can remix and reuse the work of this council, paid for by taxpayers, in new and imaginative ways.

Will the Council commit to using an open licence and which one will it use?"

Reply from Councillor Mears, Leader of the Council.

"The council is fully supportive of the coalition government's transparency agenda and is actively looking at the newly developed Open Government License. As this is based on the existing Creative Commons license but specifically tailored to be available for cross public sector use, it does look to be the most appropriate choice.

A significant amount of the data that we currently publish through the city's Local Information Service (www.bhlis.org) is provided by our partners. Before committing to the Open Government License we will work with our partners across the city to agree the most appropriate license position."

(h) Councillor Kitcat

"Given the ongoing cold snaps, will the Council administration now agree to implement an ambitious insulation scheme for homes in our city, as proposed by Green Councillors at budget councils in previous years? This would keep residents bills down, homes warm and reduce the city's carbon emissions."

Reply from Councillor Caulfield, Cabinet Member for Housing.

"We already operate a successful insulation scheme in the private sector through the Brighton & Hove Energy Action Partnership having delivered 1346 loft insulation and 1037 cavity wall insulation measures in the private sector since the partnership was established in 2005.

In the council housing stock we have historically invested significantly in insulation & heating, much of this from utility-funded grant programmes. The current SAP Energy Rating of 76.4 puts us in the top quartile of performance in this indicator. We are investing £3.5 million in boiler & heating replacements and upgrades, installing high efficiency condensing boilers and last year we completed 2 insulated overcladding projects to Wiltshire House & Somerset Point and a communal solar hot water system at Hazelholt sheltered scheme, funded 100% by utility company grant monies

Further to those measures above we will be addressing carbon emissions and resident's energy bills through the development of a feed in tariff scheme. The scheme will see the mass installation of solar PV across the council stock and will examine ways to expand these opportunities into the private sector.

The proposals referred to by Cllr. Kitcat would impact on the levels of Council Tax for all residents.

We are seeking to maximise inward investment from external sources such as energy companies that would enable us to continue to deliver targeted insulation measures across both the private and social housing sectors."

(i) Councillor Hamilton

“In October you told me that there were career pathways in some areas of the council, including legal services. In a review situation, where job losses are likely, do you agree that it is important to provide career pathways for all staff, especially those on low grades or with many years of service? This would give staff greater prospects of redeployment within the authority, reduce redundancies, save money, and retain staff that are already familiar with the council and its work culture”

Reply from Councillor Alford, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

“It is important that the Council provides opportunities for its employees to develop their skills and knowledge to enhance both their current job performance and future career prospects. The Council also benefits from ‘growing its own talent’.

We have learning centres where staff are encouraged to undertake learning activities and skills for life courses to help those who want to develop their numeracy and literacy skills. In addition to this we have set up job shadowing and employee mentoring schemes. Staff are sponsored to undertake professional qualifications.

The council also operates two in-house staffing pools to supply workers for carer and administrative roles. These are designed to provide entry level roles for individuals who can be deployed flexibly, build up knowledge of the organisation and in the case of the care workers receive specialist induction training. Many of these individuals subsequently move into permanent roles with the council.

In situations where jobs are at risk within the council it is particularly important that as a responsible employer we try to mitigate the risk of job losses through redeployment of existing staff to other suitable roles. We have a tried and tested consultation mechanism and redeployment process which has been used successfully in recent years to re-train and retain existing staff.”

(j) Councillor Mitchell

“In light of recent government statements that would indicate a rethink of its withdrawal of funding from Schools Sports Partnerships, including the Brighton and Hove Schools Sports Partnership, will the Leader of the Council commit the council to pro-actively working with and maintaining a dialogue with schools, sport leaders and partners in the city to ensure that the expertise, significantly increased participation and enthusiasm for the varied programme of sporting and healthy activities supported by the Partnership to schools across the city is maintained during any changes to the funding regime?”

Reply from Councillor Mears, Leader of the Council.

“Brighton and Hove School Sports Partnership is highly regarded. The Strategic Director – People has met with sports leaders from across the City to discuss how its work can best be secured should there be a change in the funding regime. A commitment has been given to look at sports development work across the City, including as part of the review of youth provision, to ensure that all children and young people have access to a wide range of sporting and other forms of health promoting activities both during the school day and out of school hours.”

(k) Councillor Kitcat

“What is the pay multiple in Brighton & Hove City Council between the lowest paid and highest paid members of staff.”

Reply from Councillor Alford, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

“At the beginning of December the Work Foundation set out the case for a maximum pay multiple that would keep the pay of top executives in the public sector bounded to what their staff earn. This is expressed as a pay multiple or ratio between the lead executive and the lowest paid.

The pay multiple in Brighton and Hove is 13: 1

By comparison, pay for median FTSE 100 CEO executives is 88 times the UK median wage.”

(l) Councillor Kitcat

“I refer Councillor Geoffrey Theobald to section 7.4 of the minutes for the City Sustainability Partnership Meeting of 1st November 2010:

"PB inquired after the usage of communal bins and their effect regarding individual responsibility for waste recycling. JJ answered that they were monitoring the levels of recycling in relation to the introduction of communal bins. PB asked if this monitoring was focused solely on the bins in the city centre. JJ replied that this monitoring was focused on both residential and city bins and he stated that there did seem to be a contingent drop in the levels of recycling."

How is it that when I have repeatedly asked the Councillor whether recycling rates are lower in communal bin areas than elsewhere he has said he is unable to answer. Yet here one of our officers is able to report that monitoring shows drops in levels of recycling? Will Cllr Theobald explain himself and report what is being done to remediate the drop in recycling rates that I have long argued was likely to happen in communal bins areas?"

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

“I have set out below the previous responses that I have given to you nearly two years ago on the matter of recycling rates in the city centre. This situation has not changed. Whilst we do not have the exact figures we estimate that recycling rates are higher in wheelie bin areas and that recycling tonnages in the city centre have always been lower even when we had black bags.

This administration believes in increasing recycling rates both to protect the environment and to reduce costs, as recycling is cheaper than waste disposal. To this end:

- (i) We have written to all residents reminding them when their recycling collection day is, and how they can recycle.
- (ii) Officers are preparing a communications campaign targeting the city centre in particular early next year.
- (iii) Officers will be working with residents on a trial of communal recycling bins later next year to see if that makes it easier for people to recycle and hence increase our recycling rate.

I suggest that you contact Jan Jonker directly so that he can clarify any comments he made in the meeting to which you are referring.

Cabinet Question 1 Dated 15 January 2009

“Could Councillor Theobald provide, in detail, any arrangements for measuring the levels of waste and recycling collected during and after the introduction of communal bins to the city centre?”

“The introduction of communal bins should keep our city’s streets cleaner, because there will not be back sacks on the streets that can be ripped open and rubbish strewn about.

Residents will also be able to put their rubbish out at any time rather than having to keep it in their homes until a certain day.

Communal bins will also save the taxpayers of this city around a million pounds.

Waste and recycling figures are only compiled on city-wide level.

Recycling rounds do not correspond to refuse collection rounds, and neither rounds correspond to ward areas. Collection vehicles for recycling and refuse have different routes meaning any figures recorded on collected tonnages are not directly comparable. Hence it is not possible to draw reliable conclusions about collection variations in particular areas.

The council is able to provide waste and recycling collection levels across the city before and after the introduction of communal bins, but not in specific areas.

Both now and after the introduction of communal bins, the council will continue to provide a weekly recycling service in the city centre, rather than a fortnightly one, recognising that many people have less storage space for recycling in these areas.”

Cabinet Question 2 Dated 15 January 2009

“On what Constitutional basis Councillor Theobald could ignore recommendations agreed in September 2007 by the Environment Committee that recycling rates would be measured?”

“As the Leader and Director of Environment explained, we do collect detailed waste and recycling data for the city as a whole, and we are able to identify broadly the impact of wheelie bins. The difficulty is breaking this data down further whilst maintaining its accuracy.

The collection of data by any other area than citywide depends on how the refuse and recycling rounds are configured.

Where the refuse and recycling rounds cover the same area, we can extract data to show the total amount of waste generated by households (refuse and recycling) and the amount recycled (as measured through the tonnage collected on the recycling trucks). As Councillor Mitchell mentioned we were able to produce reasonable quality data to allow a before and after comparison of the impact of wheelie bins in the Preston Park area because the refuse and recycling rounds broadly mapped each other. As the refuse rounds have changed and the recycling rounds are about to change following the build of the Waste Transfer Site and Material Recycling Facility, the extent the refuse and recycling collection areas match each other has reduced considerably making it almost impossible to produce meaningful data on recycling levels on a round by round area. However, we will continue to look at how best to collate and present data on waste as part of our work on the waste strategy and our drive to improve recycling rates and further reduce waste levels.

You have previously raised questions implying that residents with communal bins in the city centre recycle less than other residents. I have replied to you that the small wheelie bins do seem to have had a good impact on recycling levels from the data we have been able to collate (as in the Preston Park area). However, as the Director explained, we do not have accurate data (and we have never claimed to have such data) to show that residents who use the on street communal bins, recycle less or more than residents who use black sacks in the city centre. There are many factors which affect waste and recycling levels, including residents knowing how to access the recycling service. I and the professional officers in my directorate are committed to improving recycling levels and we will be running recycling campaigns later in the year to inform and encourage residents to recycle more. We will happily work with you in your ward to target our communication campaign.

You asked a supplementary stating that Environment Committee on the 13th September 2007 determined that performance data on recycling levels should be recorded both before communal bins are implemented and afterwards. I have carefully looked at the Decision List and cannot find such a conclusion but I may be mistaken. I would be grateful if you can check whether you were correct.”

(m) Councillor Meadows

“In Wild Park there is a by-law/highways permission allowing cyclists to ride on the pavement beside the main Lewes Road although there is a perfectly safe cycle lane on the Lewes Road. The police believe it is a by-law so when cyclists use this path without lights they won’t enforce it, some council officers believe it is highways permission so they won’t remove signage, either way it means that pedestrians have to share a narrow path with cyclists leading to

confrontation and residents almost getting run over. Will the council rescind the by-law or revoke that permission to allow pedestrians to take precedence on this pathway and to ensure that cyclists use the cycle lane provided for them?"

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

"The footpath alongside Wild Park was designated for shared use from the Home Farm Road junction through to Coldean Lane before Brighton & Hove became a unitary authority. Therefore, the shared use of this path was in place before the Lewes Road cycle lane and remains shared use today.

Children or those who are less confident may feel safer cycling along the pathway. I will suggest that officers consider improvements to this area in light of any funding opportunities safely to accommodate the volume of both pedestrian and cyclist users.

If you consider that there is a significant problem I can arrange for officers to discuss this with the ward councillors."

(n) Councillor Steedman

"The Council's Corporate Procurement Team are not currently able to mandate that all procurement by Council officers goes via central corporate contracts, which offer the efficiencies of bulk purchasing and the opportunity to set minimum standards for product specification, environmental performance, support for local buying, etc. As a result, individual departments or teams can – and do – bypass corporate procurement contracts. Does the Cabinet Member for Central Services believe that this situation represents good value or that it accords with the Council's corporate priority of 'better use of public money'?"

Reply from Councillor Alford, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

"Obtaining value for money in all that we do is an important issue for this authority particularly in these current challenging times. As part of Procurement work-stream within the VFM programme there is a review of how officers can engage with Corporate Procurement to ensure that they correctly utilise the corporate agreements that are available. Information is gathered on a regular basis to establish levels of compliance across the organisation and this shows that the majority of relevant council spending does go through the corporate contracts. All significant off-contract spend is investigated to establish the reasons why it takes place and address any service concerns relating to either product availability or quality issues.

For example in the first quarter of 2009/10 one area was shown to be using the corporate stationery contract for only 51% of their stationery spending and they were using 17 different suppliers. Investigations showed that the main reason for this low figure was the use of another supplier for high volume copier paper where there were doubts about the quality of the paper supplied under the corporate contract due to bad experiences in the past. Discussions were held with the corporate supplier, options were suggested and testing was undertaken

that re-assured the client that the paper was fine for the vast majority of their uses. The resultant switch to the corporate contract delivered significant savings. By the third quarter of 2009/10 the area use of the corporate stationery contract had risen to 93% of relevant spending and they were using only 3 different suppliers leading to further savings in invoice processing and supplier management.

Where it is identified that services are not using corporate contracts resulting in a significant failure to achieve value for money and there are no mitigating circumstances then action can and will be taken to block off-contract spending within the financial systems.”

(o) Councillor Steedman

“None of the Council’s committee reports – including the Council agenda paper in which this question appears – are printed on recycled paper. Does the Cabinet Member for Central Services believe that this is acceptable and that it accords with the Council’s corporate priority of ‘protecting the environment while growing the economy’?”

Reply from Councillor Alford, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

“As you will be aware, the Printing and the Procurement Teams have been working together to find a suitable solution to the difficulties that have been experienced when using large amounts of recycled paper in the council’s printers and copiers.

Although recycled paper is the council’s preferred option, it has been found that the quality of paper purchased is unsuitable where the quantity of printed material produced is substantial, such as in the King’s House Print Room. This is because deposits from the recycled paper are left on the printing equipment and particularly on the glass and the council would need to purchase appropriate cleaning products at an additional cost to have them removed.

Whilst I would like to be able to tell you today that higher grade recycled stock has been purchased, such products are very much more expensive and being mindful of severe budget pressures, a change to a higher grade recycled paper in the current economic climate is simply not a viable option.

In the circumstances I feel that the decision to use a keenly priced, non-recycled paper is an acceptable alternative and in terms of reduced paper wastage and cost, it does accord with the council’s policy of “protecting the environment while growing the economy”.

(p) Councillor Steedman

"We welcome the announcement that the Council is considering how to insulate homes and install renewable energy technologies through the creation of an energy services company. The Birmingham Energy Savers programme, already up and running, uses an innovative 'pay as you save' mechanism to recycle the savings from the energy bills of households that have benefited from insulation and low-carbon technologies, to ensure that the maximum number of houses can be reached, in the private as well as the social housing sector.

Given that the Council has missed its carbon savings target for the local authority area by nearly 50%; that the domestic sector accounts for 42% of Brighton and Hove's carbon emissions; and that there are nearly 14000 households in fuel poverty in the city as we enter another freezing winter at a time of rising fuel bills, will the Cabinet Member for Housing:

- a) set out how the Council's housing policies will deliver at least a 42% cut in carbon emissions by 2020 from the domestic sector, and an 80% cut by 2050, as agreed in the Sustainable Community Strategy?
- b) ensure that any energy services company scheme targets deprivation and fuel poverty first, and benefits residents living in the private (especially private rented) sector as well as the social rented sector?
- c) seek to take advantage of the money available to local authorities for energy efficiency projects under the recently revised rules of the European Energy Recovery programme?
- d) commit to a 'pay as you save' mechanism like Birmingham's for Brighton and Hove to ensure that we make our money go as far as possible?
- e) join me in meeting the architects of the Birmingham scheme to learn from their experience?"

Reply from Councillor Caulfield, Cabinet Member for Housing.

"Through the Brighton & Hove Energy Action Partnership we operate a comprehensive grant scheme in the private sector. Since the partnership was set up in 2005 it has delivered;

- 2400 insulation measures
- 1481 heating measures
- 141 solar water heating systems (since 2006)

In 2009/10 alone the above scheme through the installation of 800 measures for those at risk of fuel poverty alone saved 650 tonnes of CO2.

In this period we have seen steady reductions in CO2 emissions in Brighton & Hove, achieving an above average reduction compared to the national average. The trend of reduction in the domestic sector in the city is better than the average in both the South East and England as whole.

We will continue to reduce carbon emissions through the continued delivery of home energy efficiency measures and increasing the use of renewables across both the private sector and council housing stock;

A Community Energy Savings Programme scheme will deliver over 10,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide savings and early analysis of a Feed In Tariff (FIT) scheme in Brighton & Hove shows the potential to deliver over 30,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide savings and reduce residences fuel bills.

We already meet our Local Area Indicators on reducing fuel poverty.

We are exploring a range of options to further reduce CO2 emissions and tackle fuel poverty across the city; this would be a major objective of any Energy Services Company (ESCO).

The availability of any EU funding will be considered alongside other investment options when further details are forthcoming.

We will be extending the availability of affordable/recyclable loans for home energy efficiency measures enabling residents to pay for energy efficiency measures at a low borrowing rate whilst saving money on their energy bills.”

(q) Councillor Allen

“The announcement that the new owners of Anston House are preparing a plan for a mixed-use development of the whole site is excellent news for the city. Residents of Dyke Road Drive in particular will be delighted to see that the pressure they exerted on the council to sort this problem out has been so successful. Would the Leader of the Council agree with me that it will now be important to give local residents, above all those in Dyke Road Drive whose views of Preston Park will inevitably be affected, every opportunity to influence the plan as it moves forward?”

Reply from Councillor Mears, Leader of the Council.

“I am delighted that the owners of the site have commissioned Urban Splash to take forward the development of this site with their preferred architects. Officers will be meeting with both shortly. In the meantime we have been working proactively with the owners to encourage a realistic high quality vision for the site.

The developers will have to demonstrate that they have consulted local residents but I share your desire to see them and ward councillors fully involved in this process.”

(r) Councillor Duncan

“Could Cllr Theobald describe the measures taken to ensure the paths inside and roads surrounding Queen's Park were safe for pedestrian use during the recent cold weather, and reassure residents that adequate resources will be available to ensure park users' safety in any future 'cold snap'?”

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

“Our Highway Winter Service Plan was agreed at the Cabinet Member Meeting on the 4th November 2010 and it sets our priorities. Our resources are deployed to bring the maximum benefit to the greatest number of people. This means that we treat all A and B roads, most C roads plus all bus routes. We also carry out pavement gritting in main thoroughfares.

In order for the treatments to be effective, they need to be ground in by heavy traffic and footfall so that’s why we need to concentrate our resources on these roads and pavements. I am sure you will appreciate that we cannot do every road, pavement and park in the city as this simply wouldn’t be feasible. Therefore I’m afraid that Queen’s Park cannot be included in any clearance programme although nearby Queen’s Park Road and other main roads surrounding this area are gritted.”