

ELECTED MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 25 MAY 2022

a) Question from Councillor R George to Councillor K Athwal, Cabinet Member for Highways, Assets and Transport

“How many parking tickets issued by DCC have been overturned due to the driver being engaged in a visit for necessary health or care purposes in the last financial year?”

Response:

“Thank you, Councillor George, for your question. I have been advised that our PCN processing software relying for this on numerous reports does not produce a cancellation report based on specific reasons as to why we have overturned a penalty charge notice. Mr Chairman, as such the data requested by Councillor George is not available.

However, the Government’s NHS Covid-19 parking permit was made available throughout the pandemic. This allowed essential healthcare and volunteer workers free access to Council owned car parks and on-street parking facilities such as limited waiting and pay and display bays to assist these workers in carrying out their duties. This national concession was formally removed on 21 June 2021 after 14 months, although in line with Government guidance Derbyshire County Council extended the use of the permit open till 19 July 2021. Thank you, I will take a supplementary if there is one.”

Supplementary question:

“Thank you very much for your answer, Councillor Athwal. A care worker who lives close to me, Susan Ball, in February was charged £70 for having to park on a single yellow line in Buxton to make an essential care visit. This is becoming an increasing problem for care workers who are very low paid, as we know, but carry out essential tasks now just as they did during the pandemic. Our parking schemes are administered by Nottinghamshire County Council who do have a parking permit for care workers to enable them to park on single yellow lines when they are engaged in necessary duties. I wonder whether Councillor Athwal would be prepared to consider this for care workers in Derbyshire who really can’t afford those £70 fines but also need to carry out their duties?”

Response:

“Thank you. Just on a point of clarification please, Councillor George, when did this care worker have their penalty notice issued to them, what date?”

Councillor George: "It was in April this year?"

"The Government scheme as I alluded to earlier on ended in July last year. The scheme we had last year was Government funded. It was in many ways administered by the NHS and we were a party to that. It is something other Councils may decide to do these schemes but we also have to look at our own budgets, our own finances etc and we need to look at affordability as to what we can and cannot do, but having said that the care worker in question is still able to appeal against this issue of the PCN and it will be considered on its individual merits. We would give due consideration to any mitigating circumstances and decide in accordance with our policy whether an appeal would be upheld or not and would depend on the nature of the parking and specific circumstances put forward by the appellant.

Really what I am saying is if the care worker has not appealed perhaps they should consider appealing and going forward as the scheme, which I have already answered, its affordability is something which we will consider but I can't promise you that. Thank you."

b) Question from Councillor R George to Councillor N Hoy, Cabinet Member for Adult Care

"How many families of people with a Learning Disability in Derbyshire have expressed a wish for their family member to use a DCC Day Centre when they do not currently have a place at a Day Centre, how many people with a part time place at a Day Centre for Learning Disability have requested to increase their attendance, and when will these requests be responded to?"

Response:

"We recognise that some people would like to return to the Derbyshire County Council Day Centres now that the pandemic restrictions are lifting or due to the change in their circumstances. Whilst we don't currently have a waiting list of people wanting to return we have had a handful of people approach us in the past few weeks requesting this and we are working with them to ensure they have the support in place."

Supplementary question:

"May I ask whether that support is the support of a Day Centre or the support of some alternative provision that they deem to be less viable than the Day Centre, which is what they were requesting please?"

Response:

"We haven't received any complaints of the support we have put in place. We have been very clear with our commitment that we will support people if

they want to go back to a building base Day Centre and this Authority is committed moving forward. I would request if anyone does contact Councillor George that they point them to officers who will be happy to support them.”

c) Question from Councillor R George to Councillor N Hoy, Cabinet Member for Adult Care

“Why has the Branching Out Garden Centre at Alderbrook been closed?”

“Branching Out, which is an extension of Alderbrook is not closed. Currently we have a lack of demand for this activity, therefore it is not being used. Colleagues have been temporarily redeployed to work within the Day Centre itself so that we can support more people to attend as we emerge from the Covid restrictions.

Should demand increase, and staff will be active in the Garden Centre again, I look forward to you publishing your public apology for the unnecessary upset and distress you have caused with incorrect and misleading information that you have circulated via the media. Yet again another elected member that craves the Facebook hits, shares and headlines with eyes fixed on nothing more than a headline on winning a seat back at Westminster with no consideration for the hurt and distress you have caused to the people and staff in Derbyshire. Next time you are hunting for a headline show some compassion and consideration to the people of Derbyshire and try, if at all possible, in speaking the truth when you are dealing with the media.”

Supplementary question:

“Considering that what I posted on social media was a post that was taken from the Alderbrook Branching Out Garden Centre’s own Facebook page posted by the staff there then I would request an apology from the Executive Member for that slanderous declaration. If she has any comment and claims that anything I state is not true because the Branching Out Garden Centre is closed, it is not open to the public, it has had a sign on it to say that it is not open it is therefore per se closed, be it temporary or be it permanent I have not said that, I have said it is closed. If she is trying to claim that I have had said something else then she should state so instead of making unfounded allegations claiming things about me which she knows absolutely nothing at all.”

Response:

“I would like to stand by the comments I made in my opening statement and I would just like to add that a local member, Councillor Peter Smith, actually brought it to my attention shortly before we came into this meeting that some

child-like taping had been put over the sign at the Branching Out Day Centre (this hasn't been authorised by this Authority) and he intends to rip this tape off that is mentioned that this is closed on his way home today."

d) Question from Councillor R George to Councillor K Athwal, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Environment

"When will the council act to ensure that Public Footpath 105 in Whaley Bridge is accessible for the elderly residents for whom it is their only means of access?"

Response:

"Thank you, Councillor George again for your question.

After a recent enquiry from a local resident the inspection was undertaken of Footpath 105 in which a number of potholes were identified for repair. These repairs are now in the Council's reactive maintenance schedule and I am pleased to say that they are planned to be completed by early June. I hope Councillor George finds this acceptable. Thank you."

e) Question from Councillor R George to Councillor K Athwal, Cabinet Member for Highways, Assets and Transport

"When will the council bring forward a consultation on the use of the Safer Roads Fund for the A5004 Long Hill and will the options include a safe cycle route, as stated in the Key Cycle Network plan 2020?"

Response:

"Mr Chairman, the intention is to commence the consultation on the A5004 Safer Roads proposal during June. I understand that this consultation process will be online via the Derbyshire County Council website.

In regard to the Key Cycle Network Plan the answer is yes, the option will be included. Thank you."