

COUNCIL MEETING - 21 FEBRUARY 2017

(6) QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

1. Councillor Robinson to ask the Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport and Consumer Services:

Demountable Pool at Rivermead

Following planning approval being granted at the Planning Application Committee on 8 February 2017 for the demountable pool at Rivermead, which is a temporary replacement for the much loved and now sadly closed Arthur Hill swimming pool, would the Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport and Consumer Services please advise on when this facility will be available for use and the full expected costs to the Council of the temporary facility including the implementing and decommissioning of the pool ?

REPLY by Councillor Gittings (Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport and Consumer Services).

The provision of a demountable swimming pool at Rivermead is an established phase in the programme to secure high quality swimming provision in Reading. As such, it is being provided as a temporary replacement of Central Swimming Pool following its planned closure, but will of course also provide facilities for people no longer able to use Arthur Hill.

The pool is scheduled to open in January 2018 immediately after Central Swimming Pool closes, and as a minimum would operate until permanent replacement facilities open in 2020. However, the demountable pool is to be housed in a permanent building with planning permission obtained until 2032, therefore allowing the use to be extended well beyond 2020, if required. Should the Council wish, it may also apply for further planning permission to use the building beyond 2032, as the building life expectancy is significantly greater than 15 years.

The Council has set aside a capital budget of £2.4m for the provision of a demountable pool facility. If the demountable pool is no longer required at some point in the future then it can be removed from within the building and therefore allow alternate leisure uses to take place in that space. The Council will therefore retain the built asset which can be re-used.

The costs include improved environmental building performance (meeting BREEAM standards), professional fees and the building costs of a permanent building with the appropriate foundations to meet the requirements of the specific ground conditions at the site.

The costs of decommissioning and converting the space for an alternative use are unknown at this stage, but will be offset to some extent by the future sale of the demountable pool structure and plant.

2. Councillor Rodda to ask the Leader of the Council:
Revenue Support Grant

Can the Leader of the Council give an update on the scale of the cuts in the Revenue Support Grant faced by Reading Borough Council since 2010 and how these cuts compare with those faced by other local authorities, in particular how they compare with neighbouring authorities in Berkshire ?

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council).

Revenue Support Grant (RSG) has existed in its current form since 2013/14, so it is only possible to do a like for like comparison from 2013, though clearly the reduction in government funding began in 2011 under the coalition government.

The current data includes figures through to 2019/20, and all authorities in Berkshire submitted a financial plan to DCLG in October in exchange for grant certainty. This followed the unexpected removal of greater amounts for 2016/17, which was in Reading's case an additional loss of £5million and was the worst in Berkshire.

The comparative position in Berkshire is as follows:

Grant Figures in £m	RSG in 2013/14	RSG in 2017/18	RSG in 2019/20	Actual loss per head 13/14-17/18 (£)	Total forecast loss per head to 19/20 (£)
Bracknell	22.1	11.3	1.7	-126	-171
Reading	40.3	16.8	2.0	-185	-237
Slough	39.8	18.5	6.1	-182	-231
West Berkshire	23.8	9.5	-	-129	-152
Windsor & Maidenhead	16.7	7.6	-	-91	-113
Wokingham	18.5	6.1	-	-115	-116

As you can see Reading does and will have suffered the greatest loss per head of population in Berkshire and there is no indication that the new funding system will restore funding to adequate levels.

3. Councillor Rodda to ask the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport:

South and East Reading Mass Rapid Transport Schemes

Could the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport update the Council on the progress of the South and East Reading Mass Rapid Transit schemes and how these schemes are expected to reduce congestion and air pollution ?

REPLY by Councillor Page (Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport).

I thank Cllr Rodda for his question.

The South and East Reading Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) schemes form a key element of our overall transport strategy to encourage use of sustainable transport, reduce congestion and improve air quality on two of the main routes into Reading, and promote economic growth.

South Reading MRT is a series of bus priority measures on the A33 corridor, between the Mere oak park & ride facility and Reading town centre. Funding of £4.5m has been secured from the Local Growth Fund for phases 1 & 2 of the scheme, which runs southbound between Island Road and M4 Junction 11. Construction of the initial section was completed last year and further works are due to start on-site in March.

The Council has recently secured further funding of over £10m for phases 3 and 4 of the scheme through the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP. These phases will provide further bus priority measures on the A33 between Rose Kiln Lane and Bennet Road, and enhancements to connecting routes in the town centre.

This East Reading MRT proposal, (which I would remind Council is separate from the nearby park & ride scheme recently granted planning permission by Wokingham BC), will help to manage and accommodate the very substantial growth planned over the next 20 years in the Wokingham area, and reduce the impact of this growth on residents in Reading.

The scheme is a vital first element of developing a public transport corridor between Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell, and would link to the preferred location for the Third Thames Crossing. It is our intention that any Third Thames Bridge will include dedicated public transport provision to link to park & ride sites north and south of the river.

Let me repeat that the proposed new bridge over Kennetmouth, which is part of the East Reading MRT, is intended for public transport, cyclist and pedestrian use only. The actual section of the bridge over Kennetmouth will be narrowed to a single lane which will facilitate shuttle working over the bridge and will ensure that it cannot be converted into a conventional road bridge without effectively completely rebuilding the bridge.

This single lane design will obviously result in a narrower bridge impacting less on the local environment and ensuring the listed Horseshoe Bridge is retained, besides reinforcing our commitment to public transport links.

During peak hours this proposed bus-only link from Thames Valley Park along Napier Road will save buses up to 15 minutes by bypassing the often congested and slow-moving London Road/Cemetery Junction/Forbury Road route.

Once this new and faster route has become established, it will significantly increase the attractiveness of public transport services and it is forecast that many thousands of car commuter journeys will switch to public transport, thereby reducing congestion and improving air quality in east Reading.

Significant progress on the scheme has been made to date with funding of over £15m previously allocated from the Local Growth Fund, and a further £3.5m has recently been secured towards the second phase of works.

The planning application is currently being prepared and pre-application discussions are being undertaken with both planning authorities (Reading and Wokingham) to ensure suitable mitigation measures are provided as part of the overall scheme. It is anticipated that the full planning application will be submitted in the spring.

4. Councillor Livingston to ask the Leader of the Council: Benefit Changes

Can the Leader of the Council tell me what impact the Coalition Government's benefit changes have had on residents in low paid jobs and consequentially on the workload for staff assessing claims ?

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council).

The government's Welfare Reform agenda of increasing cuts to benefits has resulted an increase of workload as the makeup of the Housing Benefit caseload now includes larger number of customers who are in work but require frequent changes to their assessment of benefit. This puts constant pressure on the service and increases the costs of the service to respond in a timely manner and deal with higher volumes of work.

To explain this further, working age customers who work in low paid employment but are still receiving help through Housing Benefit are often given zero hour contracts. This means that their hours can vary week to week leading them to report changes in circumstance more

frequently. This increases the complexity of the claim, with more contacts needed with the Benefits and Customer Service teams.

This also impacts both customers and landlords as the volume of these changes results in longer turnaround times to reassess claims. The service does all it can to mitigate these delays including reviewing business processes, increasingly using technology to automate parts of the work which requires investment, asking customers to self - serve via the website and increasing staffing levels temporarily.

The culmination of all the changes to Welfare Reform has without doubt affected the ability of lower paid working age customers looking for accommodation in Reading to secure suitable affordable housing.

The reduction over the last 5 years to the Local Housing Allowance, and now the freeze on this until 2020, has led to there being no correlation between the rents most private tenants are charged and the Local Housing Allowance rate that must be used in the calculation of housing benefit entitlement. Therefore customers in receipt of Housing Benefit find there is a shortfall in their rent. This will continue to worsen where their rents are increased each year and the rates which must be used to calculate their entitlement have been frozen until 2020.

The introduction of the Benefit Cap in September 2013 and the further reduction in November 2016 has led to approximately 380 Reading households being affected by the cap. These complex claims all required reassessment during December 2016 and will require ongoing reassessment as circumstances change. They will have had contact with various council departments in order to mitigate the effect of being capped.

The above changes have led to an increase in applications for Discretionary Hardship Payments to cover the shortfall in turn creating extra work for the Debt Advice team. The government's Discretionary Hardship funding for Reading Borough Council for 2016/17 is £505k and the forecast is that all of this will be used by the end of financial year.

5. Councillor Steele to ask the Leader of the Council:
Local Government Pension Scheme

According to the Centre for Policy Studies about £9bn in charges over the past decade (half of that in hidden fees) has had to be paid into the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Will the Leader of the Council please confirm how much money Reading Borough Council either has already paid or will have to pay in the future towards this £9bn shortfall ?

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council).

The Berkshire Pension Fund manager has advised the Council's Head of Finance that the £9 billion estimate of total fund management costs in the LGPS over the last decade makes significant sweeping assumptions about non-invoiced costs. Furthermore, it ignores the benefit of excess returns (for example, in Berkshire estimated at £50+ million on Emerging Market Equities) which can (and should normally) massively outweigh fund management fees.

From the tables the Berkshire Fund appears well placed with fund management costs per member of £89.10 (14th) against average of £178.10 (per fund). The total across all the LGPS is £148.70 per member.

In Berkshire, total fund management costs (invoiced/imputed) to appointed managers (i.e. excluding any fees to underlying managers in funds of funds and the absolute return portfolio)

in 2015/16 were £5.8 million or 0.33% of assets. Reading BC is the largest employer in the fund, and our nominal share will be around 1/6th of these figures.

In the pension fund manager's view the author of the study can on occasion display a lack of understanding of investments, and the author holds some prejudices against pensions in general, and public sector pension funds, especially the LGPS in particular.

6. Councillor Steele to ask the Lead Councillor for Neighbourhoods:
Green Waste Collection Payments

Council Tax can be paid by rolling direct debit. Payment for green waste collection can "only" be made on a credit or debit card. Elderly residents are having to get friends or neighbours to make the payment and then to make the refund. Will Reading Borough Council consider widening the payment methods to include cheques cash or direct debit as soon as possible?

REPLY by Councillor Terry (Lead Councillor for Neighbourhoods).

The Council are currently processing payments via the Council's website as the preferred option for payment for the service. However, we have also been taking payment via the phone and by cheque directly to the service area.

I understand that officers have explored the option of payment by annual direct debit. Currently the D/D option would be resource intensive compared to the current payment options, although we will continue to explore this method when we have the facilities to renew DD's via the web. The Council introduced a Corporate Debt Policy during 2014, which emphasised the need to introduce upfront payment for any new services and not rely on invoices and also the promotion of cheaper self service payments such as internet self service payments, automated telephone payments and direct debits. In implementing the collection charge for green waste we have applied this policy to take payment only on-line and by telephone in advance of delivery of the service. Widening the payment options further would in fact increase the Council's costs and not reduce them.

7. WITHDRAWN

8. Councillor Dennis to ask the Lead Councillor for Housing:
Rough Sleeping

In January, the Department for Communities and Local Government released the 2016 figures on levels of rough sleeping across England. Can the Lead Councillor tell me how the figures in Reading compare to previous years and what the causes for the difference are?

REPLY by Councillor Davies (Lead Councillor for Housing):

Annual Rough Sleeper Count

Background

Since 2010, all local authorities in England have been required to submit an annual figure to the DCLG to indicate the number of people sleeping rough in their area on a 'single typical night' between 1 October and 30 November. All local authorities have their validated rough sleeper count or estimate figure published by the DCLG the following February. Each local authority has the choice to arrive at this figure by means of a count or an estimate, but they should use a method that will most accurately reflect the number of individuals sleeping rough in their area. Both a count and an estimate are a snapshot and do not include everyone in the area with a history of rough sleeping.

Reading Borough Council took the decision to carry out a physical borough-wide headcount for the Annual Rough Sleeper Count in 2016 rather than submit an estimated figure as we have in previous years in order to best inform future plans.

2016 Headcount Findings

Five multi-agency teams carried out a thorough survey in the early hours of 2nd November and found 22 rough sleepers. The informal weekly headcounts routinely carried out between May and October 2016 by St Mungo's Street Outreach Team reported between 7 and 18 rough sleepers for any one night and on average this was 9. The estimated figure submitted for the official annual count in 2015 was 16.

Nationally there has been a significant increase in the number of rough sleepers in recent years - up 16% in 2016 and 50% since 2010. Locally numbers of rough sleepers have also increased and particularly over the last 3 years.

Below is data for the last 6 years versus other Berkshire authorities:

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Reading	6	5	4	8	12	16	22
Slough	14	7	8	30	26	17	25
West Berkshire	5	6	11	8	23	15	14
Bracknell Forest	1	1	1	2	4	5	10
Wokingham	1	2	2	3	2	14	11
Windsor and Maidenhead	6	7	4	7	6	35	8

The most significant findings were:

- A clear increase in those sleeping rough in the peripheral areas of the borough - these were all male; all had local connection to Reading and they had been sleeping rough for varying lengths of time from 1 day up to 5+ years. A third of this group were not current clients of the outreach team.
- An increase in women sleeping rough - these were located in the immediate town centre areas of Reading and they had been sleeping rough for between one week and up to six months. The majority of these female rough sleepers had no local connection to the borough; they were clients of the outreach team and aged 18 - 35.

Reading consistently has a group of around 6 - 7 individuals that have recourse to public funds, but do not have a local connection to the borough. These individuals tend to be transient and the Street Outreach Team has some success in reconnecting them to their borough of origin, however, new rough sleepers from other boroughs are attracted to and remain in the borough. Reading has substantial faith and voluntary sector provision and support for rough sleepers including a night shelter from the beginning of January through to the end of February, a day centre, regular food hand outs and hand outs of other items such as sleeping bags and clothing. This substantial provision appeals to rough sleepers in and around Berkshire and it can attract and then sustain rough sleepers from other boroughs.

Whilst Reading's Street Outreach Team works to reconnect rough sleepers to their borough of origin, some rough sleepers will choose to remain and utilise the voluntary sector provision on offer here. The implementation of Crossrail connections will likely see further increases in rough sleepers without local connection.

The Chief Executive of St Mungo's this week said there was 'no single reason' why people end up sleeping rough. It could be attributed to a variety of factors including housing affordability and changes to Local Housing Allowance and welfare reform, including income benefit sanctions. The Council notes a number of local authority areas with the highest numbers of rough sleepers nationally are in the south and St Mungo's this week also highlighted a lack of affordable housing in the south as a key factor, as well as cuts to welfare and services covering mental health, drug and alcohol abuse.

The Council's Response

In comparison to many other local authority areas, Reading has substantial voluntary sector provision and support for rough sleepers, with significant levels of funding from the local authority (a savings proposal is currently out to consultation to reduce funding for commissioned services by 17%).

Reading Borough Council works with partners to provide support and accommodation to homeless people all year round, and this work is even more vital in the winter when temperatures fall.

We commission St Mungo's to provide a street outreach team to support rough sleepers into treatment and accommodation throughout the year. We also commission a number of services to support and accommodate local single homeless people, including the provision of more than 200 supported accommodation beds, and a floating support service, operated by homeless charity Launchpad Reading, which supports vulnerable people who need help to retain their tenancy or with resettlement. A health outreach liaison team also provides assertive health outreach support for rough sleepers/those vulnerably housed not accessing primary healthcare services.

Whilst the Council makes these services available all year round, people can be more likely to accept help during the winter months. Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) has operated in Reading for many years and is activated whenever the Met Office forecasts three nights or more with a minimum temperature of 0°C or below.

SWEP is provided by St Mungo's, Launchpad Reading, social housing provider Riverside and the Salvation Army, working in partnership to ensure that anyone at risk of sleeping rough during severe weather is offered emergency accommodation. During this time, extra support and advice is also available with the aim that people do not have to return to rough sleeping.

The 'Bed for the Night' (B4N) night shelter run by a consortium of local churches is also operating in the borough every night until the end of February - this offers a total 18 bed spaces for those who are verified as homeless and that have a local connection to the borough.

Individuals rough sleeping often have complex and multiple needs. Whilst the Council and other organisations provide a range of services, individuals may choose or be unable to engage with these and it can take time to build relationships and trust.

Rough sleepers from other boroughs can also be attracted into Reading for a variety of reasons - including because Reading has substantial provision and support available including St Mungo's actively seeks to reconnect rough sleepers with their borough of origin.

In addition to the above, under the 'Narrowing the Gap' grant funding programme priority of 'Meeting Basic Needs' the Council also funds the partnership between Christian Community Action, the Churches in Reading Drop In Centre (CIRDIC), Readifood/FAITH and Reading Refugee Support Group. Collectively the partnership provide a range of services and support including a food bank; drop-in for homeless individuals; furniture/new home start-up packs; and other practical help to people in crisis who cannot afford to meet their basic needs. Those who are homeless are referred as appropriate to specialist services for support and health care.

Further detail about these and a wide range of services can be found in the Reading Street Life Guide: http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5417/Street-guide/pdf/RBC_Street_Guide_2016_v5.pdf

9. Councillor Hacker to ask the Lead Councillor for Education:
Failing Academies

In January 2013 Battle Primary school became an academy because of a string of poor Ofsted inspections. They were taken over by NET Academies.

In October 2014 they were inspected and found to require improvement. They were visited again in 30 November - 1 December 2016 and have once again been found to be requiring improvement. This is disappointing and must be a blow to my residents whose children attend this school.

Converting primary schools into academies has failed to improve their results, according to a study by the London School of Economics. It would seem the government's policy to forcibly turn failing school into academies is also failing our children and not providing them the good education they deserve.

I clearly remember asking NET what would happen if they failed to improve the school and they were confident it would be rated good within two years.

So can the Lead Councillor for Education please tell me what the government's policy is regarding academies that have not succeeded in turning a failing school into a good one ?

REPLY by Councillor Jones (Lead Councillor for Education).

I believe that pupils in failing academies are being ill served by the Department for Education (DfE).

Whether at the chalk board, white board or examination board too many pupils have been failed by the current system of oversight.

Most people think that in Reading we the council are responsible for such matters. But this is not the case. In fact, the little heard of and lesser understood Regional Schools Commissioner, has the responsibility for such matters.

But when our commissioner (someone of whom I have great respect) is responsible for all the academies in the North West London and Central South England - which stretches from Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, to Camden and the City of London, Ealing and Enfield, to West Berkshire and Westminster- it is little surprise that failing schools are allowed to flounder for too long: we have seen this close at hand in Reading.

Technically, where a multi academy trust or school that has been turned into an academy has not ensured the school has become good there are a number of options.

- The Funding Agreement (a legally binding contract) between the Secretary of State and the academy sponsor enables the Secretary of State to remove and replace a sponsor should that be required due to poor performance or other serious issues.
- In cases of sustained poor academic performance at an academy, Ministers may issue a pre-warning notice to the relevant Academy trust, demanding urgent action to bring about substantial improvements, or they will receive a warning notice.
- If improvement does not follow after that, further action can be taken - which could ultimately lead to a change of sponsor. In cases where there are concerns about the performance of a number of an Academy trust's schools, the trust has been stopped from taking on new projects.
- The RSC can arrange for a DfE review team to visit the academy.

This system is far too remote.

I firmly believe that responsibilities for such matters should be returned to local councils, dealing with people who know their locality and are directly accountable for their decisions.

NOTE: Authorities covered by RSC in North West London & Central South England

- Barnet
- Bedford
- Bracknell Forest
- Brent
- Buckinghamshire
- Camden
- Central Bedfordshire
- City of London
- Ealing
- Enfield
- Hammersmith and Fulham
- Harrow
- Hertfordshire
- Hillingdon
- Hounslow
- Islington
- Kensington and Chelsea
- Luton
- Milton Keynes
- Northamptonshire
- Oxfordshire
- Reading
- Slough
- West Berkshire
- Westminster
- Windsor and Maidenhead
- Wokingham

10. Councillor Hacker to ask the Lead Councillor for Education:
School Funding Losses

Schools in our town are facing real term funding cuts. Per-pupil funding is being frozen while day to day costs, pension and national insurance contributions rise. When your expenses go

up but your salary doesn't the amount of money you have to spend decreases - it's simple household budgeting that the Conservative government doesn't seem to understand.

Figures from the National Union of Teachers and the Association of Teachers & Lecturers, using Government statistics, show that even after a new funding formula 98% of schools would face budget cuts over this Parliament, with an average budget cut of 9.5% in primary schools and 8.7% in secondaries.

From schools serving Battle ward alone the following is being lost:

- Oxford Road Community School: £-£61,194 or - £261 per pupil (equivalent 1 teacher)
- Wilson Primary School: -£104,505 or - £268 per pupil (equivalent 2 teachers)
- Battle Academy: -£232,770 or - £579 per pupil (equivalent 7 teachers)

Across Reading this is - £7,275,456 across the town, - £408 per pupil (equivalent 195 teachers)

Will the Lead Councillor for Education tell me what impact this loss of funding will have on schools and the education of children in Reading?

REPLY by Councillor Jones (Lead Councillor for Education):

The Tory government promised to protect school funding.

The current review of school funding will, it is widely estimated, to mean an overall cut in funding to schools by approximately 8%.

The impact of the loss of funding on schools and the education service for Reading will be that budgets for each school will be put under significant pressure. The pressure and impact will be different for each school and it is difficult to say at this stage what this will specifically be for each school and their context.

Reading tries to passport as much funding to the individual schools as possible.

However, this is undertaken within the context of reductions in the revenue support grant and the removal of the education services grant (1.3million) from September 2017.

Additionally, there are increasing costs for schools and the council relating to increased pension contributions (17.2% - 21.9%) and the creation of the apprenticeship levy, (0.5% on all non-teaching salaries).

There will also be a national change in business rates that increase business rate costs for schools.

Clearly these issues will place a heavy pressure on school finances both in Reading and nationally.

And when even the Parliamentary Education Select Committee slams the government for failing to reach its own new teacher recruitment target for the fifth year in a row - something even tougher for us in the South east - then any loss of real income can only hurt the education of our children and is to be roundly condemned.

11. Councillor White to ask the Leader of the Council:
Consultant and Interim Manager High Pay

Following my question to Policy Committee which shockingly revealed the excessively high pay of consultants and interim managers working for the Council, can you clarify how many days per week each of the people mentioned in the table works and what we pay for their services over a year?

Where a job title contains an abbreviation can this be expanded to aid readability?

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council).

The table below updates the information given to Cllr White in response to his question to the Policy Committee in January. There is one change to the list. The person shown as Interim Head of Adult Social Care in the January list has since been appointed, by Personnel Committee, to be Interim Director of Adult Care & Health, and is shown below in that role. A permanent appointment has been made to the post of Head of Adult Social Care.

The purpose of an interim management appointment is to provide short-term cover to key funded vacant posts. Of the 10 posts listed below, only two have been filled for longer than a year. The full-year costs of these two appointments can be calculated and are given in the table. A permanent appointment has now been made to one of these two posts.

For the remainder of the posts, in the majority of cases the pay is based on a weekly or monthly timesheet submitted by the post-holder, and therefore will vary by month. This makes a full year projection unreliable. The Education Consultant is paid following the delivery of set pieces of work.

For the avoidance of doubt, interim appointments do not receive holiday, sickness, pension or NI payments.

Job Title	Daily Rate £	Days Per Week	Appointed	Contract ends	Commentary
Interim Director of Adult Care & Health	971	4.5	23/01/17	July 2017	Appointment for period of 6 months
Interim Director of Finance	960	4	03/10/16	31/03/17	
Transformation Manager	758	4	10/10/16	10/04/17	
Education Consultant	750	0.5	01/09/16		Paid by delivery of set pieces of work
Managing Director	735	4	04/07/16	Spring 2017	Recruitment to Chief Executive post in process - Personnel Cttee 17 March
Schools Partnership Advisor	730	3	04/11/15		Full-year cost - £105,120
Head of Commissioning	730	5	04/01/17	03/03/17	Short-term cover for sickness absence of post-holder
Service Manager Special Educational Needs	633	5	16/05/16		
Service Manager Children's Services	632	5	12/12/16	28/02/17	
Service Manager Children's Social Care	625	5	04/08/15		Permanent appointment made to post. 17/02/17 Full-year cost - £150,000

12. Councillor White to ask the Leader of the Council:

Total Spend on Consultants and Agency Staff

Can you provide me with the total spend per year on consultants and agency staff for the current year to date and the previous 2 years?

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council).

The expenditure recorded in the accounts as of today for Agency & Consultancy is as set out in the table;

Actual expenditure

	Agency		Consultancy	
	15-16	as at 21/02/2017	15-16	as at 21/02/2017
General Fund	8,392,398.22	9,704,320.03	4,588,847.79	3,134,696.95
Housing Revenue Account	272,371.87	136,050.20	51,173.98	17,500.00
Schools	1,171,239.33	1,038,663.45	0.00	1,630.00
Total	9,836,009.42	10,879,033.68	4,640,021.77	3,153,826.95