

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Mr Calder (Wallasey)

Q: When is Wallasey Road going to be re-surfaced again, this time by a competent contractor?

A: Brian Smith - Business Services/Commissioning Support - The remedial work is currently scheduled to take place, from mid-August. The contractor is BAM Nuttall Ltd a multi-National Company, who use a specialist sub-contractor Kiely, a large national company. The product failure was due to bitumen binder mix associated with weather conditions. The surface dressing, may appear to be quick and low cost, but is in fact a very technical product and I would direct you to Road Note 39 (attached).

Mr Harries (Moreton)

Q: When is the fire service going to enter the modern world. Austerity measures are based on number of crews and response times. Offset cost of sprinkler systems in 6000 tower blocks by rapid delivery of spray water to high rise buildings by large 20 ton capacity helicopters capable of delivering foam or water. There is no tower or building that is beyond reach of this method and traffic jams would never be a delay factor. Every city has sea, river or lake water in proximity. Crews can be landed by gondola and response times increased dramatically and area covered by one helicopter is more than 5 of present fire stations. Gondolas can also be used to rescue many people trapped on high floors who would otherwise perish. The old tech is no longer fit for purpose.

A: Answer drafted by Group Manager Andy Groom from our Protection Department - The Fire Service is continually innovating and keeping up to date with modern technology. The use of helicopters have been utilised successfully in moorland and forest wildfires. The use of helicopters in an attempt to extinguish compartment fires in buildings particularly high rise where each individual occupancy is effectively within a concrete shell (walls, ceilings and floors) would have limited if any effect in the extinguishment of a fire that has breached in to the internal structure of a building. It is possible for helicopters to rescue persons from roofs of buildings but the numbers that can be evacuated is limited and this would be dependent on the conditions being suitable for helicopters to operate in the area. Sprinklers have been around since the 19th Century and even today they are proven technology that is highly effective in attacking a fire in its early stages and in suppressing and containing a fire before the arrival of the Fire Rescue Service. Something has obviously gone catastrophically wrong at Grenfell and there is an ongoing judicially led public enquiry and criminal investigation to establish the facts. High Rise buildings are designed for Firefighters to enter in to the building via a structurally protected route to fight the fire and conduct rescues internally within the building.

Mr Wolfe (Wallasey)

Q: I have noticed the proliferation of Japanese knotweed at various locations around the borough. Is anything being done to combat this extremely damaging invader?

A: Alan Lipscombe - Housing Renewal Team Leader - Japanese Knotweed (JKW). JKW an invasive, non-native plant, that can spread, rapidly and cause a public nuisance. The owner of land where JKW is present is responsible for dealing with any JKW infestation. The majority of the land on Wirral is privately owned.

There is no statutory requirement to control/eradicate JKW, nor is it necessary to report its presence, however, it is advisable to take measures to control its spread. Disputes between different landowners involving the spread of JKW from one site to another can be deemed to be a civil matter and dealt with as a 'private nuisance'. Various pieces of legislation do exist that relate to JKW, including the Countryside and wildlife act 1981, the Environment Protection Act 1990 and Hazardous waste regulations 2005 and these largely deal with regulating its removal and disposal. Failure to comply with this legislation can lead to large fines.

There is a relatively new power enabling the Council to take action under ASB legislation via the service of a Community Protection Notice. This notice can be used against individuals who are acting unreasonably and who persistently or continually act in a way that has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality. The notice can place restrictions on a person's behaviour and, if necessary, force them to take steps to rectify the behaviour that is having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of the community.

In the case of assets, including park land, owned and managed by the Council, routine monitoring is undertaken for JKW. Should an infestation be identified, appropriate measures are taken to deal with the infestation, using specialist external contractors. This can involve its removal and disposal or treatment/containment measures on site, depending on the circumstances and expert advice. The Council has had JKW removed from regeneration sites to facilitate redevelopment. The Council's Environmental Health Section does get enquiries about JKW and general advice is given out in the form of a letter (see attached).

Mr Griffiths (Wallasey)

Q: I read recently about the possibility that 10 Wirral libraries could face closure. Having seen Waterstones change their business model by adding coffee shops to their premises, and having recently been to Liverpool Central library that features a busy cafe, please can somebody let me know whether the possibility of renting space within libraries in the form of such concessions has been fully explored and costed ahead of any consideration of closures?

A: Julie Williams - Customer Services Senior Manager - Firstly with regards potential closures of libraries can I reassure you that there have been no decision taken on any closures. Shared Intelligence a consultancy company have provided a piece of research looking at how services currently operate. Their report covers a range of information including suggestions for potential ways services could change or be delivered differently in the future. This report will be considered as part of the wider review into leisure, libraries cultural services review. This review is not simply about closing buildings or services - it's about working with people to find imaginative solutions to provide more comprehensive services to residents. As a service we look to ways we can make the service sustainable and income generation is part of that sustainability. Renting spaces for a café area is something we are looking at across the library network along with a whole host of ideas. These ideas we will feed into the overall review.

Mr Dodgson (New Brighton)

Q: Are there any plans to improve the roundabouts along New Brighton seafront to be more in keeping with a Tourist town i.e. the 6 "red" roundabouts on the Coastal Drive and the A554 road immediately behind the sea wall? The current roundabouts are simply made of a very tired looking red cement. However, these are the main approach roads into the town and the look of this whole area could be easily improved upon for tourists with the simple planting of some all year round Trees and shrubbery on the roundabouts.

A: Shaun Brady - Highway Asset Manager - The Council made some improvements to the roundabouts about five years ago, however in the current financial climate there are no plans to undertake further works save for routine maintenance when necessary.

Mr Paton (New Brighton)

Q: Is there any progress on the Lacys site in New Brighton as the building is an eyesore and brings the look of New Brighton down for people entering the area 2nd question could some painting to done the canopy at New Brighton station the canopy is in a very poor state and looks terrible as a gateway to New Brighton.