

# Questions and Answers

**Executive**  
**Thursday 30th March 2017**

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# **Executive Meeting**

## **30 March 2017**

Questions and Answers



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## **Public Questions as specified in the Council's Procedure Rules of the Constitution**

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There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

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# Members' Questions as specified in the Council's Procedure Rules of the Constitution

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**(a) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People by Councillor Mollie Lock:**

**Question:**

*"How many children attend a school within their catchment area that is not their nearest school and so are therefore not eligible for free home to school transport?"*

**The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People answered:**

Last year it was worked out that of the current year 7 cohort, 150 pupils were affected which equates to approximately 10% of all secondary applications.

We believe it will be similar this year for the current year 6, which means approximately another 160 pupils will be affected. That will continue to roll forward and as the change comes into place more pupils will be affected each year.

**The Chairman asked:** *"Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?"*

**Councillor Lock asked the following supplementary question:**

*"If their nearest school is in another local authority, do we ensure that on transition they have the same experience to give a smooth transition as they would have if they went to their catchment school?"*

**Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People answered:**

Thank you for your second question Councillor Lock.

Interestingly, I have spent quite a lot of time with the schools in the East and they have a split cohort between both Reading and West Berkshire and we were talking about that very transition and making sure that the relationships exist with primary schools and secondary schools in both areas so that transition is the same regardless if you are going to a West Berkshire secondary or a Reading secondary.

There was a mixed response, so I think it's something that we can do more work on and we need to work more closely with our colleagues in neighbouring boroughs. Some people found that there were really good relationships and I think that's probably the key here, about the individual relationships between schools. But it is certainly something that we can actually encourage and oversee as well.

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**(b) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and External Affairs by Councillor Lee Dillon:**

**Question:**

*“How many fraudulent claims for benefits have the Council identified in the last year and of those how many have been successfully prosecuted?”*

**The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and External Affairs answered:**

This is a slightly tricky one for us to answer as from 1 December 2014 the Department for Work and Pensions assumed full responsibility for receiving reports of suspected benefit fraud.

However from liaison with DWP I can confirm that there were 21 discrepancies identified by DWP for further investigation from December 2014 to now. Through liaison we know that at least two of those resulted in prosecutions in 2016/17 but once again that information may be incomplete as it is dependent on liaison with DWP and it is ultimately their responsibility to handle the prosecution in that respect. So that is as close as we can be to answering your question.

**The Chairman asked:** *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

Councillor Dillon did not have a supplementary question.

**(c) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care (answered by the Acting Deputy Leader) by Councillor Lee Dillon:**

**Question:**

*“How will the Council spend the additional Adult Social Care funding from the Chancellors recent budget?”*

**The Acting Deputy Leader answered:**

The Council will receive one-off funding of £1.5m over the next three financial years, £700k of this is due in the 2017/18 financial year. We are currently working with health partners to develop plans that will maximise its use, and we are likely to use the additional investment for ‘step down’ beds and additional domiciliary care capacity. It is felt that both of these will support significant improvements in delayed transfers of care, improving outcomes for our most vulnerable residents. Full details will be published as part of the West Berkshire Better Care Fund Plan and as we know from this afternoon’s Health and Wellbeing Board that that has not yet been published, I think principally because of this additional funding which has only recently been announced.

**The Chairman asked:** *“Do you have a supplementary question arising directly out of the answer to your original question. A supplementary should be relevant to the original question and not introduce any new material?”*

**Councillor Dillon asked the following supplementary question:**

*“Given the challenges we have with delayed transfers of care, I know from the reports the myriad of reasons why that figure can change. We welcome the allocation for that.*

*I know a supplementary would have to have a written reply, but it would be useful to have some commentary on why our allocation was the value it was, in comparison to other neighbouring authorities?”*

**Nick Carter, Chief Executive, answered:**

There is a methodology, which I have briefly read through, and Andy Walker has been tasked with putting that together for Councillor Chadley and I’m sure we could share that with you. So there is a methodology, yes, and we seem to have got a lot less than other neighbours but there is apparently good reason for that. We will share that with you when we’ve understood it.

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