

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

11 October 2022

TITLE:	Questions received from councillors
CONTACT OFFICER:	Linden Vernon – Head of Democratic Services
WARDS INVOLVED:	Non-Specific

1. Question received from Cllr Hardy for the Leader of the Council

“There is continuing local concern in Old Glossop about the Borough Council’s handling of the recent housing developments at Hawkshead and Bute Street and the implications of the recent inspectorate decision in relation to the NHS application for housing development at the former Shire Hill Hospital. Will the Leader of the Council/Executive Councillor for planning commission an independent enquiry into the consideration and implementation of these three proposals with a view to identifying where improvements might be made in the Council’s procedures and any lessons to be learned by Officers and Councillors?”

Response from the Leader of the Council:

“As Cllr Hardy knows all planning applications have to be considered on an individual basis according to the national and local planning rules.

Your question flags three applications in the Old Glossop ward, which have attracted public interest.

One application is still currently under consideration and Cllr Hardy has not sufficiently detailed the nature of the concerns regarding this or the other two.

It’s hard therefore to comment further without more details, and as such, there is no justification for commissioning any review or inquiry.

For the application which is yet to be determined application, I would encourage as always any residents who wish to make representation to object or in support to do so. These will be taken into account by the planning officer before any recommendation is made and considered by the Development Control Committee.”

2. Question received from Cllr Haken for the Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and Community Safety

“Will Cllr Todd please explain by written reply to the Council the following enquiry with regards to the refuse collection service in the High Peak. How many collection rounds have been missed or delayed across the brown, green and black bin service in the months of June, July, August and September this year. Will Cllr Todd please provide comparison data with the same period of June, July, August and September in 2021?”

Response from the Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and Community Safety

“As the question alludes to, AES has experienced disruption to the delivery of the core waste collection services. The cause of disruption has been the same as across all logistics sectors – the competition for qualified drivers resulting in shortages and the impacts of the COVID pandemic.

Since March 2020 the pressures experienced by AES and its workforce have been unprecedented. During the first year of the pandemic services across High Peak were not too badly affected and collections were provided pretty much as normal. This was a credit to AES’s workforce who were working extremely hard during very difficult times under extreme pressures.

However, in 2021 things changed. Pandemic-related absence levels were made worse by the loss of qualified drivers. Our own drivers were naturally tempted by higher wages offered elsewhere and agency drivers were also in very short supply as they were also diverted to other sectors. Labour shortages also emerged across the non-qualified staff sectors.

Into 2022, further pressures emerged. During the summer period AES relies heavily on the use of Agency Staff to support our core staff to enable them to take annual leave and to cover sickness. Unfortunately, this year the local Agencies that we use have been unable to supply enough staff to cover these posts. This coupled with existing driver and loader shortages and higher than normal absence levels, left AES at times without sufficient numbers of staff to carry out its normal functions. In addition, and for a variety of reasons essential spare parts for the refuse collection vehicles were in short supply with long lead times. This made maintaining and repairing collection vehicles difficult and the supply of spare vehicles was also seriously depleted as the same issues applied across logistics providers.

Delays to services are always something that AES try to avoid and where possible collections are generally caught up within a few days other than in some exceptional circumstances.

AES is confident that Services are now returning to pre-COVID levels. A recruitment drive locally has been successful and sickness levels have returned to acceptable levels. The supply chain for vehicle parts also now seems to be improving and AES has increased its stock levels to improve resilience. This is evidenced by only 4 rounds being delayed during September compared to 47 rounds either being delayed or cancelled during August.

The following tables provide the data requested.

The tables below provide the numbers of delayed or cancelled rounds per waste stream for the periods requested. The final table provides the overall totals.”

Waste Stream	Rounds delayed but completed		Rounds cancelled	
	June 2021	June 2022	June 2021	June2022
Recycling	2	5	0	0
Organic	1	1	1	1
Residual	0	0	0	0

Waste Stream	Rounds delayed but completed		Rounds cancelled	
	July 2021	July 2022	July 2021	July2022
Recycling	0	10	0	4
Organic	0	6	0	4
Residual	1	2	0	0

Waste Stream	Rounds delayed but completed		Rounds cancelled	
	August 2021	August 2022	August 2021	August2022
Recycling	4	20	0	3
Organic	15	13	2	3
Residual	2	8	0	0

Waste Stream	Rounds delayed but completed		Rounds cancelled	
	September 2021	September 2022	September 2021	September2022
Recycling	9	3	0	0
Organic	10	1	3	0
Residual	14	0	0	0

Note: Figures for Organics service for week com 19/09/22 have not been included as this was an agreed suspension of service.

Overall Totals

Waste Stream	Rounds delayed but completed		Rounds cancelled	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
Recycling	15	38	0	7
Organic	26	21	6	8
Residual	17	10	0	0
Total	58	69	6	15

3. Question received from Cllr Ashton for the Leader of the Council

“At the 5th May Council meeting, as per convention, the Leader actually promised to reply to my question re minor planning applications more than 8 weeks old, “in a few days” which is reported on the website as “shortly”. Does the Leader believe that he has kept his promise?”

Response from the Leader of the Council:

“In line with your further question and answer on the topic at the June meeting of Economy and Growth, I understand you have been provided with the requested information.”