

COUNTY COUNCIL

25 JANUARY 2017

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

QUESTION FROM MR M CUNNINGHAM

I refer to the barbaric practice, carried out in certain hospitals across the United Kingdom, of the incineration of the remains of aborted babies in their 'waste-to-heat' furnaces: as reported in early 2014. As the numbers of Non-Viable Foetuses, as reported within the Crematorium Committee's documentation; has not varied much within the County over the past years; can the Council advise me if they queried, within all the Durham hospitals within their purview, if this abominable practice had ever been carried out, as routine, within their hospitals: and also to ensure that all the remains of aborted babies, are now, and always have been, treated with the respect deserving of human remains; no matter how unwanted those remains may have been?

RESPONSE

Thank you Mr Cunningham for your question.

The crematoria operated by this Council are run in partnership with other Councils and carry out funerals of non-viable foetuses in the main through funeral directors. Such funerals involve the separate cremation of non-viable foetuses and return of the ashes. The funerals are carried out with due respect to the deceased and families and there are no such referrals by hospitals. It is understood that hospitals would be responsible for talking to families about their wishes, but this is not an area in which the crematoria become involved.

QUESTION FROM MR T CLARK

Installation of the new £2.5m SCOOT system has now seen the introduction of sets of traffic lights at major roundabouts in Durham City. Can figures be made available to show how this has helped traffic flow and eased congestion in that city, and what is hoped to be the effect of further improvements in relation to this scheme?"

RESPONSE

Thank you Mr Clark for your question.

Whilst the physical works to introduce traffic signals at Leazes Bowl and Gilesgate roundabouts was completed in October, further work is still ongoing to introduce additional traffic detection equipment across the City. Additional work will also follow to link these two junctions with others across the City in a controlled and coordinated way using the computer application 'SCOOT'. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by March of this year.

It is also the case that the volume of traffic flowing thorough Durham City changes significantly across the differing months of the year making early comparisons from an incomplete system very difficult.

Early indications are however that traffic queuing has reduced against a backdrop of a small increase in traffic volumes. Whilst these early indications are positive it will be some time before a more detailed comparison can be made.