

Question asked by Councillor Matthew Black to Councillor Peter Jackson

Salt Ayre Leisure Centre is one of the jewels in our council's crown, providing high quality and affordable health, fitness, and recreation opportunities that benefit residents across our district.

I walk my dog alongside the centre every day, as many of our residents do, and I cannot help but notice the state of the area reserved for the Gravity attraction. It saddens me to see it in such poor condition. I remember how popular that part of the site once was, particularly for football and tennis, it now stands neglected.

Could the Cabinet Member confirm what plans, if any, exist for bringing this area back into community use? (For example whether any new activities such as the very popular paddle ball could be installed and/or a return for football teams to use all weather flood lit pitches.)

Councillor Peter Jackson replied:

Thank you, I welcome the opportunity to share plans with Councillors. Plans are currently progressing on a number of fronts regarding this site, including feasibility of a new 3G football pitch or a project that would see a wind turbine to further reduce power costs (we would still be seeking to get an all weather football pitch on a different site if there is a wind turbine).

Padel is the fastest growing sport in the world at present and SALC has been identified as a site which could potentially have courts for public use. Discussions are currently taking place with a number of suppliers to look at the feasibility of delivering Padel Courts to SALC in order to generate additional revenue streams to the business, whilst increasing the recreational offer to our residents and visitors. Any development would involve design and planning to be considered, but officers continue to work on potential delivering within 2026. Looking at courts being operational by summer of 2026.

The Council's Play Pitch Strategy, identifies that there is a shortfall in provision of 3G pitches both for current, and future demand across the Lancaster District. All current district facilities are operating towards capacity at peak times, especially during the winter period. There are currently 205 teams currently playing within the district with grassroots football in both boys and girls teams, growing each year. With this in mind, officers continue to have regular open dialog with Lancashire FA, Football Foundation and internal finance colleagues to look at the feasibility of additional 3G football provision at both Salt Ayre and other locations within the district.

In response to Councillor Matt Black's supplementary question about timings, Councillor Peter Jackson replied that there would have to be negotiations with the football foundation regarding timings.

Question asked by Councillor Matthew Black to Councillor Paul Hart

In July I was very pleased to receive an email announcing that Lancaster City Council would be using the new Love Clean Streets app. The app is designed to make it easier for residents to report issues in their community, such as graffiti, fly tipping and other forms of environmental damage. It promises to be a quick and effective way of ensuring problems are logged, tracked, and resolved, while giving residents confidence that the Council is listening and responding.

On 24th July I submitted a report through the app regarding highly offensive graffiti – sprayed in half-metre sized lettering – on a popular cycle track bridge. On 30th July I received a notification that the case had been closed. I thought this was excellent and that the system

was working as intended. However, the very next day, while cycling to work, I saw that the graffiti was still there – no work had been carried out. I therefore reopened the app and submitted a second report. Over six weeks have now passed, and the offensive graffiti remains untouched. We know the app allows staff to upload a photo once the job is complete, and indeed some reports do come with an “after” photo attached. So it is frustrating that cases are being closed without even that very basic check. This looks like an operational failure.

So my question is what exactly is going wrong operationally that results in reports being closed without the work being done?

I struggle to accept that this is down to “teething problems” or “glitches” in the system. Our residents need the assurance that when they take the time to report issues, the Council responds swiftly and effectively.

Since the rollout of Love Clean Streets in July 2025, there has been an increase in public engagement and reporting. In July and August, 1,888 cases were received across Public Realm, representing a 41% rise compared to the same period last year. On average, cases were resolved and closed within 3.31 days, which meets the Council's service level agreement of 5 working days.

The specific case referenced was subject to an internal investigation. It was found that the case should not have been closed initially and resolution was delayed due to operational issues related to the fleet and personnel. The graffiti for this individual case was removed on 18th August 2025. The time from the original report was 25 days. During the time period of this case, operational issues relating to the vehicle to be used for the cleaning, and it being overweight for the location, didn't allow us to react as quickly as possible. Solutions have since been found and the issue is now rectified. The graffiti was removed by our internal team.

Feedback has been considered, and a new category, called 'offensive graffiti' has been added to the app to facilitate identification of urgent requests. If a case is reported to the district council for another authority for example the County Council or Network Rail it is closed, closed on the system. Based on the feedback from this particular case, officers are working with the app provider to update the messaging sent to residents when the case is closed, including guidance on how to report it to the relevant agency.

I have to observe that from personal experience anyone who has used Love Clean Streets will have had the app, put a report in and it comes back closed, so you assume it's been done. This has been going on for some time. Now, I discovered this evening that this particular bridge where the graffiti was is actually County Council property and when Skerton Bridge had graffiti on it, County removed it. I have to make further enquiries about why that didn't happen, but in any case, we have put new ways of working in place.

Councillor Matt Black asked a supplementary question:

Going forward, what is the City Council doing to make sure that cases are not closed down?

Councillor Hart replied that he was not privy to how the software worked, but he had been assured by officers that they had taken measures to stop this happening in the future.