

**Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 06 October 2025**

**Question from: Gavin Butler**

**Question to: Councillor Dacre, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources**

### **QUESTION**

In the 2024–25 budget consultation, the proposal for The Shay was presented as a “disposal” to achieve savings by “transferring a long leasehold interest,” yet one option— “disposal on the open market”—under council policy normally implies selling the freehold outright.

Could the Cabinet:

Explain why residents were not explicitly informed that a full sale of The Shay was on the table, and why the wording suggested only a lease transfer?

Acknowledge whether using the term “disposal” without clarifying lease versus sale may have misled residents into unknowingly endorsing a freehold sale?

Clarify why the option to retain The Shay under council control—which featured strongly in written responses—was omitted from the consultation choices?

### **Response**

The Council undertook a comprehensive consultation as part of its financial planning and budget-setting process for 2024/25. The survey sought views on the principle of the proposed saving, not on the specific method of disposal, and provided opportunities for free-text comments on each Directorate section. The Consultation did not include the option of maintaining the current position as this would not have achieved a budget saving. The free-text allowed consultees to register their objection to the savings proposal.

The consultation was conducted at a formative stage, with sufficient information provided to enable informed consideration, and adequate time for responses. All feedback was conscientiously considered, including both quantitative and qualitative data.

The budget proposal pro-forma published as part of the consultation set out high-level options, including open market disposal, transfer to one of the clubs or a jointly owned company.

Of those responding, a majority, 55%, were in favour of disposing of the Shay, 34% were against and 11% did not express a view.

Following approval of the budget, the Council engaged with the Halifax Town Supporters Club (who registered a Community Right to Bid), the Football Club, and

the Rugby Club to explore interest in acquiring the asset. Reasonable timescales and access to information were provided, and all representations were followed up, including from interested third parties. The process included a formal assessment of bids and ongoing dialogue with stakeholders. The bids received were presented in the report to Cabinet 17 March 2025, the Appendices were exempt for publication due to commercial content of third parties. The reasons for the recommended course of action were set out in the report including why the second option was not recommended.