

Public Questions (3 total)

1.	Question from Tess Beck to the Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing and Business, Councillor Victoria Atherstone
	<p>It has been good to see an increase in the numbers of people coming into Cheltenham since lockdown restrictions have relaxed. Unfortunately, with The Wilson still closed until March 2022, there is no Tourist Information Centre.</p> <p>Do the terms of the service level agreement/ contract/ arrangement between Cheltenham Borough Council and The Trust require The Trust to provide Tourist Information Centre services?</p> <p>Is there a commitment by Cheltenham Borough Council/ The Cheltenham Trust to re-instate in-person Tourist Information Centre services when The Wilson re-opens in March 2022?</p>
	Response from the Cabinet Member
	<p>First of all can I thank you for taking the time to submit this question as this is an important issue.</p> <p>The current specification, which forms part of the management agreement, specifies the council's requirements for the Trust's contribution to the town's leisure and culture offer. The requirement to run a tourist information centre is identified within the specification.</p> <p>The council has the right to keep the specification under review in accordance with the terms of the management agreement (and in so far as permitted under procurement law) to ensure that it continues to reflect the council's requirements.</p> <p>As such, a review of the specification is underway with recommendations for its revision being brought to cabinet at its December meeting. The revisions will include a review of the requirement for the trust to continue to provide the tourist information centre.</p> <p>The revision will take into account a number of factors that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wilson closed in March 2020 due to the pandemic and will reopen in April 2022 following major refurbishment, that the council has supported. The investment will transform the ground, mezzanine and third floors to improve the venue as a major visitor destination in the town, and to ensure its future financial sustainability. • During the period of closure visitors have accessed information via digital channels. The main portal visited is visitcheltenham.com. In

	<p>2017, there were 290,000 visitors to the site. In 2021 this more than doubled with more than 600,000 visiting the site and more than 40,000 followers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing Cheltenham is currently working on a new pilot that tests an innovative and more agile approach to the provision of visitor information. It is planned to have the pilot in place by Christmas this year. The pilot is funded using the Welcome Back grant funding. <p>I hope that answers your question</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Question from Andrew Cater to the Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling and Street Services, Councillor Iain Dobie</p>
	<p>Council car parks - a few of them have no wheelchair access to the machines - on plinths / too high etc. Would you consider allowing disabled drivers to remain there with Blue badges but without tickets?</p>
	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>All Council-owned public car parks (other than the Regent Arcade which does have mobility accessible parking payment machines) are free of charge to blue badge holders for up to 3 hours. Unlike many other local authorities, Cheltenham allows blue badge holders to park for free in any space, in addition to those wider spaces which are specifically designated for mobility parking.</p> <p>Of our 45 parking payment machines, 30 (67%) are either on level ground, or have a dropped kerb to enable access. We are working towards making all of our machines fully accessible, as and when upgrading works are undertaken.</p> <p>All car parks except the Pittville Pump Room and Regent Arcade offer a 'Pay by Phone' app facility, which is available for all users to "top-up" their parking session remotely, if a stay beyond 3 hours is needed.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Question from Andrew Cater to the Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services, Councillor Martin Horwood</p>
	<p>Wheelchair taxi situation is a little crazy. I'd need a private hire car to get my wheelchair into town - usually Dial-a Cab - to find some wheelchair taxis in the middle of town. Can we have some liberalisation for other Private Hire wheelchair accessible vehicles ? Dial a Cab are run off their wheels trying to meet the needs of wheelchair users who can't always use the Cabs on taxi ranks.</p>
	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>The authority is aware of the issues disabled users are experiencing trying to access licenced accessible vehicles. We have had conversations with the licenced trade and we know, from this, that the number and availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles have diminished as a consequence of people leaving the trade due to the pandemic and Brexit.</p> <p>The authority is however working on solutions including the potential use of a smartphone app that will connect wheelchair accessible vehicles with users. We are in discussion with a potential supplier and the licenced trade.</p> <p>The recent announcement setting out the authority's ambition to move its hackney carriage (taxi) fleet to electric vehicles, has created the need to develop a new</p>

policy and an important feature of this will be ensuring the authority continues to meet its equality obligations. The authority will extensively consult on any future policies with the public, especially disabled users, the trade and with councillors, including the Licensing Committee.

In the meantime, the Licensing Section maintains a contact list wheelchair accessible vehicles. Please contact them on licensing@cheltenham.gov.uk or 01242 264135.

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18 October 2021

Member Questions

1.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to the Cabinet Member Waste & Recycling & Street Services, Councillor Iain Dobie
	<p>My understanding is that the Recycling Skips at Morrisons Supermarket were removed at the request of the Shop.</p> <p>My observation is that other sites such as Bath Road have come under greater pressure particularly with regard to Cardboard .</p> <p>Has the Cabinet Member assessed the impact of the closure of the facility formerly at Morrisons both on door set collections and alternative sites such as Bath Road ?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>As Cabinet Member for Waste, Recycling and Street Services I am committed to providing residents in Cheltenham with the best waste and recycling service we can within available resources and it is very unfortunate that the work at Morrisons in Hatherley has necessitated the removal of the recycling bring banks.</p> <p>Officers are still seeking an alternative site where the bring banks could be safely relocated, however, in the meantime to ensure the other bring bank sites nearby have sufficient capacity to cope with any extra recycling, one additional cardboard recycling bank was already installed some weeks ago at each of the following sites: Sainsbury's in Oakley; Sainsbury's on the Tewkesbury Road and at Bath Terrace car park. This is three extra cardboard bring banks that have already been deployed some weeks ago.</p> <p>I am pleased to say that Cheltenham offers a really good kerbside recycling service to residents. Every fortnight cardboard; paper; glass; plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays; aluminium cans; steel cans; clean foil; dry textiles and shoes; small electrical items and batteries can all be sorted and put in the kerbside boxes for collection from homes. We are also the first local authority to sign up to collecting coffee pods at the kerbside and are the best performing authority out of those delivering this service.</p> <p>Residents don't need to use the bring banks for all the items I have listed, these items can be collected at kerbside although I do understand sometimes we all have an extra quantity or certain items that it is easier to dispose of in the bring banks.</p> <p>I would like to remind everyone that the bring banks are for domestic household recycling items and are not for businesses to use, businesses should have separate arrangements in place for disposal of their waste and recycling. Equally, on the odd occasion where bring banks are full, I am sure my colleagues would support me in urging residents NOT to leave recycling or refuse bags of waste, old doors or other items on the floor.</p>

2.	Question from Councillor Flo Clucas to the Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services, Councillor Martin Horwood
	<p><u>Tewkesbury Road/Elm Street</u> As the Cabinet Member may be aware, over the last 18 months or so, a number of road traffic accidents have occurred at the above location, requiring both police and ambulances to attend. In addition, emergency service vehicles have not been able to drive down the road and have had to reverse out of it.</p> <p>Recognising that this is a Gloucestershire County Council matter, rather than a Borough Council matter, would the Cabinet member write formally to the County Council Cabinet member responsible, to request an urgent response to residents' requests.</p> <p>Requests are: for warning/advisory signs to be placed at this location; for a 20mph limit to be input in place by means of a temporary TRO.</p> <p>Further that a survey of residents be done to look at a one way system being introduced in the area from Elm Street and Sun Street.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Thank you for raising this concerning matter with us. A letter to GCC highlighting this can indeed be written, as well as raised through officer channels to investigate the incidents and GCC's review process after an incident occurs. This will complement the letter written in response to the 20 mph motion raised this summer, which asked GCC to consider implementation of 20 mph zones across Cheltenham as a matter of urgency.</p>
3.	Question from Councillor Stephan Fifield to the Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing and Business, Councillor Victoria Atherstone
	<p>The Pump Room is widely advertised as the last place in Cheltenham where it is still possible to "take the waters". The mineral water has however been unavailable since the building re-opened to the public, and prior to that there have been concerns for several years about the absence of its distinctive taste. The mineral water is an important part of the Pump Room's heritage and of Cheltenham's history as a spa town. Could the cabinet member confirm when will it be available again?"</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>I agree with Cllr Fifield how important the spa water is to Cheltenham's heritage and that it is unfortunate that tasting the water has not been possible since the pump room reopened as a visitor attraction following its closure due to covid. I am, therefore, really pleased to report that we now have a timescale for making the water available again as part of this popular destination.</p> <p>The council working in partnership with The Cheltenham Trust has recently cleaned the water tank and system and replaced the UV filters. However, the pump required replacement and contractors will therefore be installing a new pump at the bottom of the well on the 29 October.</p>

	To ensure public safety, the water will need testing to check bacteria levels over the course of two months immediately prior to being available for tasting by the public. It is hoped that the water will be available again for visitors to sample by January 2022.
4.	Question from Councillor Chris Mason to the Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor Peter Jeffries
	Whilst recognising that the COVID pandemic has meant a number of companies and organisations have not been able to keep up with their rental payments. Could the Cabinet Member for Finance please confirm the amount of rent with more than 3-months arrears owed to the Council? Could the Cabinet Member also provide an indication on how confident they are of recovering the rent arrears?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	The Finance and Property team have been working closely with our tenants over the last six months to ensure we receive rent owed in a timely manner. I am pleased to report that only £7k of rent arrears are overdue by more than three months.
5.	Question from Councillor Emma Nelson to the Cabinet Member Finance and Assets, Councillor Peter Jeffries
	<u>Council owned properties</u> What is the current status on the sale of Council owned properties: 30 St Georges Place (formally Shopmobility since 2016, offers in region of £275k) and land at White Hart Street (guide price £20k). With regards to rental properties, I appreciate several properties are currently rented out (Question from Councillor Chris Mason refers) but what is the current situation please regarding vacant properties as advertised on the CBC website as available: First floor office at 53-57 Rodney Road (rental £36k), the remainder of Ellenborough House, and available rental space in Municipal Offices. Finally, what are the plans for Delta Place when it becomes available for rent in April 2023 vis a vis possible re-location of Council from the Municipal Offices?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	The sale of the Horse & Groom is continuing and we are working to secure a buyer for the land at White Hart Street. For the rental properties which are currently vacant, we are pursuing a number of strategies to secure tenants. Our properties are advertised on Rightmove, we are working with local agents and conversations are ongoing. No decisions have been made in relation to the re-location of staff and the future of the Municipal Offices. At present, the focus is on understanding the space required for staff as they start to transition into a post COVID work environment.
6.	Question from Councillor Nelson to the Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services, Councillor Martin Horwood
	For clarity for the public and voters please would you explain in simple terms, the process for planning applications with regards to Outline Planning Permission vs Full Planning Permission. Furthermore, when the Planning Officer is considering the application, do they attach a different weighting to objections/ comments from

	<p>the various Statutory Consultees in deciding whether it should go to Planning Committee or not.</p> <p>I am aware of the 21 day “call in” rule for the local member, please confirm whether this also applies to Applications for Outline Planning Permission and explain why it does not apply when previously approved plans are subsequently fundamentally changed and re-submitted by an applicant? A situation that seems to be occurring more frequently as homeowners seek to potentially overdevelop their properties.</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>Applications for outline planning permission seek to establish whether the scale and nature of a proposed development would be acceptable to the local planning authority, before a fully detailed proposal is put forward. This type of planning application allows fewer details about the proposal to be submitted. Once outline permission has been granted, the details will be subject to a further application known as “reserved matters”. By submitting a Full Application however you are seeking complete approval for the design of your proposal (including the amount, scale, layout and appearance of the development, as well as any landscaping) and the approved access arrangements.</p> <p>The procedure for dealing with planning applications and in particular the appropriate level at which a decision is made is set out in the Council’s constitution.</p> <p>I can confirm that the 21 day “call in” rule does apply to outline applications. To allow a further call in period relating to amendments would present a considerable challenge in terms of planning applications being dealt with in the statutory period and would increase the chances of applicants appealing against non-determination, thereby taking the decision completely out of the Council’s hands. Applicants can only make limited changes to a planning application and these are usually in response to officer comments . Extending the call-in deadline not only runs the risk of non-determination but might attract sanctions from government who demand that applications are determined in what they regard as a timely manner.</p> <p>Where a proposal is “fundamentally” changed it would require submission of a new application which would be subject to the usual call-in procedure. I recognise that the call-in procedure could be more transparent and thus I would like the new digital platform the council is developing to make the council’s call-in deadline clearer for both councillors and the public.</p>