



CHELTENHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Notice of a meeting of Cabinet

Tuesday, 5 November 2019
6.00 pm
Pittville Room - Municipal Offices

Membership	
Councillors:	Steve Jordan, Flo Clucas, Chris Coleman, Rowena Hay, Alex Hegenbarth, Peter Jeffries and Andrew McKinlay

Agenda

4.	PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS	(Pages 3 - 10)
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5 November 2019

Public Questions (4)

1.	Question from Chris Nelson to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Your report states that "a 20% increase in traffic has been taken as the threshold for an acceptable level of traffic growth." This 20% figure seems a rather arbitrary figure that has just been 'plucked out of the air'. Can you please explain why 19.9% is regarded as acceptable and 20.1% is no longer acceptable?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The cabinet report at section 3.1 refers directly to the CTP phase 4 update report produced by GCC as the highways authority and notes key highlights of that report on the experimental traffic order at Boots Corner. The full report is also provided at appendix 2.</p> <p>Consequently I refer to section 3.2 of that appendix which explains the methodology for assessing growth with reference to UK government traffic growth forecasts for Cheltenham and experience of a previous closure at Boots Corner in 2009.</p> <p>Given the full explanation provided by the highways authority in the papers, I do not accept that the figure was 'plucked from the air'. As the assessment provides a clear rationale for this threshold I am happy to accept the basis for the analysis and recognise that having a threshold helps us to identify those locations where further investigation and work may be required.</p>
2.	Question from Chris Nelson to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Your report although comprehensive and full of detail is not always easy to understand. Please explain which road, post the Boots Corner changes, has experienced the biggest percentage increase in traffic since the 2015 baseline? What measures are proposed to mitigate this increase so that it is less than the 20% level deemed to be acceptable? If the mitigation measures do not reduce the traffic growth to less than 20%, what level will be achieved?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	Again I refer to the GCC report at appendix 2, specifically table 1 which utilises seven-day 24 hour two-way flows as the primary indicator for assessing and comparing the traffic flow at each site, as the scheme is in place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This shows a growth of 73% at Winchcombe Street South from November 2015 to March 2019 and is explicitly referred to in the text under 3.3.4. We understand that GCC has explored options for traffic calming on Rodney Road which is the feeder route for this traffic counter, with the aim of mitigating this increase. Our understanding is that the GCC preference is to undertake works once a decision is known on CTP phase 4 as this creates scope for engagement with local residents and businesses before deciding upon 'permanent' rather than temporary changes to best reflect the high profile of the High Street here.

	As the report highlights traffic levels are generally falling reflecting modal shift and changing work patterns, so what level will be achieved as behaviours change is difficult to forecast and will depend on the type of interventions supported.
3.	Question from Alan McDougall to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>While the cut off 20% increase in traffic flow stated in reports is seen as “<i>credible and acceptable</i>” to both Councils, a figure agreed by a closed body of experts, it is however unacceptable to residents affected by the dispersement traffic fallout from the Boots Corner trial closure. The justification for the Boots Corner trial closure is based on a required significant reduction of traffic flows, but more importantly on reduced NO2 levels it suggests that any increase on residential roads traffic is therefore equally unjustified, dangerous and unacceptable.</p> <p>A nonetheless significant increase in traffic volumes in Clarence Square (15%) where traffic flow monitors in both Clarence Square and Monson Avenue have been put in place, however, there are no NO2 monitors and evidence has not been provided.</p> <p>The official 2019.11.05 CAB Cheltenham Transport Plan appendix 3 air quality report concludes that “<i>from the data considered (above) is that the CTP Ph.4 has made very little difference, either positive or negative to air pollution levels across the town. This is probably not surprising, as the scheme was not explicitly designed as a project to improve air quality</i>”.</p> <p>As the Councils cannot argue for clean air in one town centre area at the expense of another residential area, can the Council(s) evidence that there has been a reduction to previously monitored NO2 levels in support of public safety in <u>all</u> affected areas?</p>
	Response from
	<p>The CTP air quality data is collected by the CBC environmental health team and the air quality report is set out at appendix 3 in full.</p> <p>Cheltenham has an extremely comprehensive air quality collection regime that complies with the council’s legal duties. This does not extend to air quality monitoring in every street in the town. The team have extensive understanding of monitoring and monitors sites where they anticipate problems to occur based upon a range of factors including traffic flows, width of streets, and ability for pollution to disperse.</p> <p>The report does not show clean air in one area at the expense of another area, but rather a gradual reduction in NO levels over time which mirrors the general reduction in traffic, less polluting vehicles, modal shift and changing work patterns. The area wide benefits of this should not be underestimated however we will continue to focus upon the persistent long term challenges at Poole Way which existed long before the trial. The planned traffic signal works by GCC along the A4019 in the next financial year should help alleviate this challenge.</p>
4.	Question from Alan McDougall to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	It is quite understandable that John Lewis will show their position on the High Street as a success otherwise they would not be in business and is based on their

	<p>business model irrespective of the trial closure. It is also true that The Brewery Quarter will have a significant uplift in footfall due to the adjacency of the NCP car park, benefit from debt fuelled investment from the Restaurant Group, Mitchell and Butler etc., but more importantly from the coincidental major new access created through to the High Street.</p> <p>Given the fact that in general High Street retail sales are down significantly and casual dining is not sustainable at present levels can CBC provide a detailed response regarding:</p> <p>a) What was the projected sales target, not just footfall numbers, given by John Lewis Partnership to the Council pre-agreement, pre-opening and pre-June 2018 compared to figures quoted around October 2019?</p> <p>b) In terms of risk assessment and due diligence, does the Council consider the fiscal debt of all the parent companies currently based in The Brewery to be acceptable?</p> <p>c) As the Council supports east-west/west-east footfall in the High Street as a benefit over the demise of the more unique retail differences in The Promenade and other surrounding streets, can they please publish like-for-like figures specific to those areas before and since the BC trial closure in order to show that benefit footfall and sales have not just migrated to the High Street?</p>
	<p>Response from</p>
	<p>a) The data requested is not available to this Council and will have to be requested directly from John Lewis and partners, although I suspect it will be commercially sensitive and unavailable.</p> <p>b) This council does not undertake due diligence assessments of organisations operating in the Brewery or wider town other than for properties owned by the Council, where covenant strength is a material factor in any lease determination.</p> <p>c) Again sales are not a matter of public record so I am unable to advise. Footfall data for side streets does not exist so I am unable to provide further assistance,</p> <p>However there was no intention of favouring one part of the town centre over another. The success of any town centre depends upon the vibrancy and mix of the offer and Cheltenham, whilst suffering from certain 'brand' losses like every town centre continues to attract new names – Oliver Bonas, Urban Outfitters, the Alchemist – and equally continues to benefit from investment as demonstrated at the Quadrangle and 111-117 High Street.</p>

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5th November 2019

Member Questions (7)

1.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>The impact on air quality, both at Boots Corner and elsewhere in the town arising from the trial closure, is of concern to many residents. The figures in the report paint a rosy picture.</p> <p>However, at a seminar held in the Council Chamber prior to the trial commencing, concern was expressed by Members cross party that there was limited data available at that stage to form a starting point.</p> <p>Is the Cabinet Member confident that there is an adequate pre-trial basis of data from key sites to enable a valid statistical comparison with the current situation, and does he have any concerns about any specific locations?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The environmental health team have produced a comprehensive report based not only on recent but long term changes and patterns, with some data as far back as 1993. On this basis I am confident of the data produced by CBC staff and believe that the extensive monitoring programme can be relied upon.</p> <p>This report essentially shows that the current trial has been benign in terms of air quality; no major spikes up or down. Rather what they have evidenced is a gradual long term improvement across the town reflecting lower emissions from vehicles, falling traffic volumes (as highlighted by GCC), modal shift and changing work patterns.</p> <p>They clearly cite the long term challenge on the A4019 at Poole Way and we are hopeful that the planned GCC interventions in new, smarter, signals in 2020 will assist with that problem.</p>
2.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor Rowena Hay
	<p>The Public Convenience Provision report includes a proposal to close the Bath Terrace Public Toilets in my Ward. Can the Cabinet Member specify what consultation has taken place with the Bath Road Traders and their response?</p> <p>Can he also confirm whether likely alternative community provision would be available to members of the public who might not be customers of the premises involved?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The council has been consulting on proposals to improve access to wcs by exploring a community partnership initiative with commercial businesses which aims to access more and better maintained wcs with longer opening hours. The initial feedback from the consultation and dialogue with Gloucester City Council has given the council confidence that a community partnership scheme can be developed in Cheltenham. As a result the Cabinet is due to consider a report</p>

	<p>which proposes the closure of 3 council run wcs subject to an alternate community partnership scheme being delivered which would deliver savings to offset the cost of a new wc facility at Sandford Park and the cost of the new changing places facility in Pittville Park.</p> <p>The Bath Road Traders were consulted but did not respond, however, following a Cabinet decision further targeted consultation will take place in the Bath Road to develop a community partnership scheme ahead of any final decision.</p> <p>The purpose of a community partnership scheme is to sign up businesses to allow people to use their wcs even if they are not making a purchase.</p>
3.	Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Development & Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	To provide information around road safety statistics pre- and post-Boots Corner closure on affected roads.
	Response from Cabinet Member
	The county council receives information from the police on injury collisions which it publishes on its web site. Data are analysed over a three year period as the number of such collisions is low and some fluctuation can be expected within statistical tolerances. Information on injury collisions in the town centre is currently being collated for publication within the papers to be considered by the Traffic Regulation Committee in December.
4.	Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Development & Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	To provide an assessment of the impact of the Clarence Parade / Clarence Street two-way changes.
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The GCC component of the report makes a very specific claim in its opening paragraph which I repeat here.</p> <p>The traffic data collected during March 2019 suggests the closure of Clarence Street as part of the Cheltenham Transport Plan Experimental Traffic Regulation Order is having only a limited effect on the wider traffic network.</p>
5.	Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Development & Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	To ask what plans have been considered to address the increase in traffic now driving along the High Street, between Rodney Rd and Winchcombe St.
	Response from Cabinet Member
	We understand that GCC have considered options for traffic calming on Rodney Road which is the feeder route for the Winchcombe Street South traffic counter. Such traffic calming is also likely to have a deterrent effect on the number of users. Our understanding is that the GCC preference is to undertake works once a decision is known on CTP phase 4 as this creates scope for more appropriate 'permanent' rather than 'temporary' works.
6.	Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Development & Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	To provide an update on plans for a bus station in Cheltenham.
	Response from Cabinet Member

	<p>CBC has just completed the Connecting Cheltenham commission by Systra. This itself will feed into the GCC Local Transport Plan review which we understand will have a fundamental shift in emphasis towards sustainable transport with a particular emphasis on public transport. All of which accords with the Connecting Cheltenham key messages.</p> <p>We believe that GCC will be recommending, subject to public consultation a number of interchange points around the town to encourage modal shift. In the light of this I am not sure that a single bus station for Cheltenham is necessarily the right solution. We do however understand that as part of both the Systra work and LTP review, Stagecoach are keen to explore options for re-routing certain town centre services but this depends upon the outcome of the CTP phase 4 trial.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to the Leader, Councillor Steve Jordan</p>
	<p>To provide an update on any discussions with Gloucestershire LEP regarding a bus station in Cheltenham.</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>Given the response to Qu 6 above, it would be premature to be engaging in any discussions until an agreed solution had been established.</p>

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