

Public Questions (8 total)

1.	Question from Izaak Tailford to the Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	Given the increased public debate on active travel, what is the council doing to bring forward the proposals for the Cheltways scheme outlined in the Connecting Cheltenham report?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The Connecting Cheltenham report was submitted to Gloucestershire County Council as part of the Local Transport Plan review. We have received confirmation that the report, and its proposed local cycle improvements, has been considered. The LTP is due for publication in the new year.</p> <p>We are engaging with Gloucestershire County Council as the Highways Authority, highlighting the importance of investment in cycle schemes in the most urban centres which will benefit the most people.</p> <p>An action plan is currently being developed and finalised as a result of the Connecting Cheltenham report – which identified considerable funding needed to achieve aspirations. This action plan will help inform and develop “bid ready” projects in which to apply for funding should opportunities arise. The predicted cost of Cycle Cheltways, as identified within the Connecting Cheltenham report is estimated to be £5 to £20 million.</p>
2.	Question from Izaak Tailford to the Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	Given the lack of formal proposals for cycle infrastructure in Cheltenham from Gloucestershire County Council, the highways authority, is the council looking at any other ways to deliver off-road cycle paths like the Honeybourne line?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>See response to question 1.</p> <p>Officers are working with relevant teams within Gloucestershire County Council to agree priorities of cycle infrastructure; this will include exploring opportunities for off road cycle paths.</p>
3.	Question from Dan Harte to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	Cycling is my primary means of transport for short journeys around Cheltenham. And my 5-year-old son has just started riding to school. But many of the roads around our town can feel dangerous. What is the Council doing to provide high quality, segregated cycling infrastructure to keep myself, my son and other cyclists safe?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Gloucestershire County Council is the Highways Authority and therefore responsible for undertaking any segregated cycling related works on the public highway.</p> <p>In 2019, CBC developed the ‘Connecting Cheltenham’ report this was informed by key stakeholders, including the County Council. This is being considered in</p>

	<p>GCC's Local Transport Plan due for release in the new year.</p> <p>Additionally, we have for many years been working with partners on a southern extension of the Honeybourne Line to Lansdown Road. This information has been discussed publicly and I understand has been an ambition of local cycle campaigners for decades. Most recently, officers and cabinet members have been engaged in discussions with GWR and Network Rail about the project. I hope to be able to announce positive news soon.</p> <p>See response to question 1.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Question from Sarah Pineger to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</p>
	<p>I've noticed a significant increase in families out cycling together during lockdown and, having participated, saw how popular the last critical mass cycle ride (along the A40 and into town) was. Cheltenham is a great town for cycling, being relatively flat and not too big. Would the Borough council consider supporting regular family cycling days with traffic reduction measures along key roads to encourage more families to try out cycling together and to gain experience of cycling around the town? One of the biggest barriers to people (especially women) cycling is traffic, this of course, becomes a self-perpetuating problem.</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>Both the Think Travel team and the Highways Authority in Gloucestershire County Council would be responsible for running events of this nature. They are running three 'School Street' trials one each in Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury. This may lead to further initiatives of this nature.</p> <p>Within the Connecting Cheltenham report, community led projects were identified as a priority, with the community playing a key role in the delivery of key events such as play streets and parklets. A mechanism for establishing a pot of money and bidding process for communities needs to be developed.</p> <p>In 2019 the Borough Council led on 2 cycling events, both well received and very much aimed at the audience you have highlighted. We were planning a further cycling event for 2020 which unfortunately had to be cancelled due to Covid-19.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Question from Tom Godsmark to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</p>
	<p>Do you have any information on the increase in numbers of cyclists in Cheltenham during lockdown? It would be a good indicator of those with a propensity to cycle if infrastructure and highway safety were improved and the car was less dominant.</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>According to pedestrian and cycle data collected in June over the last three years, there has been an increase in cycle movements by 14% from 2018 to 2020 and 46% from 2019 to 2020.</p> <p>Whilst this does show a positive increase in cyclist from last year, 2019 did see a drop in movements by 22% on 2018 data. This data is only collected from one section of the high street and over one week at the same time each year. This therefore cannot be seen as a complete and accurate representation of the overall increase in cycling due to Covid-19 and the lockdown measures.</p>

	<p>The Propensity to Cycle Tool is being used by GCC to assist transportation planners and policy makers to prioritise investments and interventions to promote cycling. It has also been used to develop our Cycle Cheltways aspirations within the Connecting Cheltenham Strategy report.</p>
6.	Question from Tom Godsmark to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	<p>Are you able to share any insight on the plans for the Active Travel Fund allocated to Gloucestershire. How much is allocated for Cheltenham and what schemes?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Gloucestershire County Council applied for a Tranche 2 DfT Emergency Active Travel Fund of £10.5million. A priority within the bid was the progression of a cycle route between Cheltenham and Gloucester, via the B4063. The County Council received £864,750. That amount falls some way short of the figure needed for the County's priority project. We have contacted the County Council to ask how it plans to spend the money it has received, and whether it might be allocated to Cheltenham projects such as the Cheltways scheme.</p>
7.	Question from Hamish Breach to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	<p>I am a Parish Councillor in Prestbury and wanted to ask what the plans are from CBC to enhance the number off-road cycling networks throughout the town, to improve uptake of cycling as an alternative to car driving? Several local residents have stated to me that they would cycle more if they felt safe in doing so, but worry about narrow main roads, and the risk of injury from cycling alongside motor vehicles.</p> <p>In addition, I understand there is a possibility that the Honeybourne Line could be extended north of its current termination point, near the Prince of Wales stadium, up towards Swindon Lane and the racecourse, which would increase connectivity for residents within Prestbury Parish. Would you be able to comment on whether this would be a viable option?</p> <p>Prestbury Parish Council have just launched a Climate and Environment committee, of which I am a member, and we are very keen to work together with CBC to embrace carbon neutral policies, to tackle the climate emergency. Encouraging walking and cycling would seem a sensible first step, and expanding current networks such as the Honeybourne Line would strike me as potentially a cost-effective solution.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>See response to question 1.</p> <p>The West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme (WCTIS, led by GCC, has plans for Phase 3 and 4 to deliver segregated cycling and footway from the Arle Court roundabout to the Lansdown Road/Gloucester Rd junction (by the Shell garage).</p> <p>There is work currently being undertaken exploring potential for extension of the Honeybourne Line both North and West. In terms the route north, the protected corridor is currently inaccessible, unused and unusable as a cycle path or</p>

	<p>pedestrian link. I have walked the line myself after a suggestion from a local resident.</p> <p>The path follows the former railway line and is not in the ownership of the Borough Council, nor is it highways land. A future northern extension could link to homes around the boundary of Swindon Village and Prestbury parishes, extending this important piece of cycle and walking infrastructure northwards and opening up more green areas to local residents.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Question from Mark Beaney to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</p>
	<p>Leckhampton Rovers Football Club (LRFC) is partnering with Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) to refit the pavilion at the Burrows Fields, Moorend Grove, Cheltenham. LRFC has secured the majority of the funding for this. The building is undergoing a complete refit and as part of this LRFC want to maximise sustainability/renewable energy options. The club has identified a possible grant that is available to CBC for this very purpose, "The Decarbonisation Grant Scheme" which is being administered by Salix (https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/PSDS).</p> <p>The club would like confirmation that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CBC will allocate resource to identify if it qualifies for the Grant. This needs to be committed quickly as the grant fund is running out. 2. If CBC does qualify for the Grant, an application will be made to try and secure it"
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>I am supportive of the efforts being made by LRFC and the Council to achieve a much improved facility at The Burrows. I welcome the Club's willingness to explore this scheme. The council will certainly support bids for this kind of initiative and we hope our bids to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund will allow us to do so.</p> <p>We are in the process of exploring our options to apply for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund. We will explore the opportunity to include this project within the bid, if it meets the fund criteria.</p>

Member Questions (28 total)

1.	Question from Councillor Karl Hobley to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	Residents are increasingly demanding more cycle infrastructure. I understand that the highways authority is Gloucestershire County Council. However, in the absence of any proposals from the County, what is Cheltenham Borough Council doing to develop proposals for consultation on segregated cycle schemes in line with the governments Gear Change report?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>During 2019 we worked on a transport plan for Cheltenham, working with key stakeholders, including the County Council. The Connecting Cheltenham report was submitted to Gloucestershire County Council as part of the Local Transport Plan review. We have received confirmation that the report, and its proposed local cycle improvements, has been considered. The LTP is due for publication in the new year.</p> <p>The West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme (WCTIS), led by GCC, has plans for Phase 3 and 4 to deliver segregated cycling and footway from the Arle Court roundabout to the Lansdown Road/Gloucester Rd junction (by the Shell garage).</p> <p>An action plan is currently being developed and finalised as a result of the Connecting Cheltenham report – which identified considerable funding needed to achieve aspirations. This action plan will help inform and develop “bid ready” projects in which to apply for funding should opportunities arise – including the mentioned government Gear Change report.</p> <p>The predicted cost of Cycle Cheltways, as identified within the Connecting Cheltenham report is estimated to be £5 to £20 million.</p>
2.	Question from Councillor Karl Hobley to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	The Honeybourne Line is the key piece of cycle infrastructure in our town and it runs to the edge of my ward in St Paul's. There is a protected corridor north of there which would make an ideal extension. Will the Cabinet member work with officers and other partners to investigate the ownership of the land and explore opportunities for developing it as a cycle path and pedestrian link?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The protected corridor is currently inaccessible, unused and unusable as a cycle path or pedestrian link. I have walked the line myself after a suggestion from a local resident.</p> <p>The path follows the former railway line and is not in the ownership of the Borough Council, nor is it highways land. A future northern extension could link to homes around the boundary of Swindon Village and Prestbury parishes, extending this important piece of cycle and walking infrastructure northwards and opening up more green areas to local residents.</p>
3.	Question from Councillor Iain Dobie to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson

	<p>Is CBC investigating where it can deliver cycle infrastructure - not necessarily on highways land. I ask this with particular reference to Bournside Green Corridor and the Honeybourne Line north of the Prince of Wales Stadium.</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>The Connecting Cheltenham report identified a cycle network 'Cycle Cheltways'. This report has been submitted to Gloucestershire County Council as part of the Local Transport Plan review. We have received confirmation that the report, and its proposed local cycle improvements, has been considered. The LTP is due for publication in the new year.</p> <p>I understand Gloucestershire County Council has undertaken a feasibility study looking at the Bournside Green Corridor and would be happy to discuss this further with Councillor Dobie. The area could become a sustainable transport path and linear park to enable quicker, healthier and safer journeys to school for local children, linking with existing paths in the area.</p> <p>See response to question 1.</p>
4.	<p>Question from Councillor Iain Dobie to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</p>
	<p>Is CBC intending to drive the agenda on delivering a properly segregated cycle infrastructure, in line with the Cheltways suggestion in the Connecting Cheltenham report?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>See response to questions 1 and 3.</p>
5.	<p>Question from Councillor Paul McCloskey to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</p>
	<p>At the start of lockdown I took up cycling after a gap of 50 years. So, I've being following Gloucestershire County Council's £10million Emergency Travel Fund Bid avidly.</p> <p>Was the Cabinet Member as disappointed as I was that GCC were only awarded a derisory amount of £864,750, particularly after the Government published its 'Gear Change' cycling and walking Strategy</p> <p>And could the Cabinet Member please tell me:</p> <p>a) What CBC is doing to drive a pro-cycling agenda from the bottom up to influence GCC and ensure that the views of local residents are reflected in anything that is proposed?</p> <p>b) What CBC is doing to investigate where we might deliver cycling infrastructure of our own on our own land, as it seems we may have to wait a long time for GCC to deliver?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>The latest funding was allocated nationally to Highways Authorities, which meant Cheltenham Borough Council was unable to bid directly. That was the responsibility of Gloucestershire County Council, as Cllr McCloskey notes in his question. According to the Transport Secretary the latest allocations were made based on the success of the implementation of previous schemes. I feel this was a missed</p>

	<p>opportunity to drive change at a time when our communities were actively engaged in the walking and cycling agenda.</p> <p>Even if the County Council had received its full indicative allocation from the government, it would have been millions of pounds short of the amount needed to deliver the Cheltenham to Gloucester cycle path. While I would always welcome strategic cycle infrastructure linking the town and the city, Cheltenham will only be able to fully embrace cycling if there is suitable investment in segregated cycle schemes within the town. As we have made clear Cheltenham Borough Council is keen to work with the County Council on the delivery of schemes, starting with ensuring we have a pipeline of shovel-ready projects to deliver. I have met with the County cabinet member Nigel Moor and subsequently written to a senior officer and Councillor Moor to offer our support.</p> <p>Officers are awaiting announcement of funding opportunities outlined within the 'Gear Change' publication, which is a separate fund to the Emergency Travel Fund.</p> <p>See response to questions 1 and 3.</p>
6.	Question from Councillor Jo Stafford to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	<p>Cycling is a sustainable and COVID safe form of transport. Will Cheltenham Borough Council commit to driving the debate on cycling locally by beginning consultation on Cheltways, a fully segregated network of cycle routes as referenced in the 'Connecting Cheltenham' report which would support safer cycling across the town?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>In order to have an informed conversation more detailed work is needed on the Cheltways proposal. See response to question 1.</p>
7.	Question from Councillor Jo Stafford to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	<p>Cycling as a mode of transport and form of exercise is sustainable and COVID safe. Are CBC looking at ways to deliver non-highways cycling infrastructure, and is there any scope to extend the popular Honeybourne Line path further northwards?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>See response to question 2.</p>
8.	Question from Councillor Angie Boyes to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	<p>A number of residents have contacted me regarding what action we are taking to develop schemes for more cycle routes in Cheltenham, such as extensions of the Honeybourne Line. If we are serious about being net carbon zero by 2030, then we need to be working now to get more cycle routes implemented. Please can the Cabinet Member update the Council as to the progress being made regarding new and extensions of cycle routes in Cheltenham.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>See responses to questions 1 and 3.</p> <p>Additionally, we have for many years been working with partners on a southern extension of the Honeybourne Line to Lansdown Road. This information has been discussed publicly and I understand has been an ambition of local cycle campaigners for decades. Most recently, officers and cabinet members have been engaged in discussions with GWR and Network Rail about the project. I hope to be</p>

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9.	Question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Alex Hegenbarth																																																																																				
	<p>Since we have been broadcasting various Council committees to the general public for some time, can we please have the viewing figures for the following?</p> <p>Full Council Planning Licensing (all committees) Overview and Scrutiny.</p> <p>I appreciate that they will not all be of actual debates in the chamber.</p>																																																																																				
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	<p>The viewing figures for recent meetings of each committee are as follows. Please note that figures may include officers and Members watching live proceedings via YouTube and for Cabinet and Council may include subsequent views as the recordings of these meetings remain online for a specified period.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Committee</th> <th>YouTube views</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>22nd July</td><td>Audit</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>11th November</td><td>Audit</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>14th May</td><td>Cabinet</td><td>124</td></tr> <tr><td>9th June</td><td>Cabinet</td><td>67</td></tr> <tr><td>7th July</td><td>Cabinet</td><td>51</td></tr> <tr><td>28th July</td><td>Cabinet</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>15th September</td><td>Cabinet</td><td>47</td></tr> <tr><td>13th October</td><td>Cabinet</td><td>63</td></tr> <tr><td>10th November</td><td>Cabinet</td><td>34</td></tr> <tr><td>17th November</td><td>Cabinet</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>15th June</td><td>Council</td><td>169</td></tr> <tr><td>20th July</td><td>Council</td><td>181</td></tr> <tr><td>29th July</td><td>Council</td><td>66</td></tr> <tr><td>16th November</td><td>Council</td><td>66</td></tr> <tr><td>24th June</td><td>Licensing</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>2nd September</td><td>Licensing</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>2nd July</td><td>Licensing Sub</td><td>44</td></tr> <tr><td>21st July</td><td>Licensing Sub</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>5th August</td><td>Licensing Sub</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>11th August</td><td>Licensing Sub</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>24th September</td><td>Licensing Sub</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>4th November</td><td>Licensing Sub</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr><td>4th November</td><td>Licensing Sub</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>27th July</td><td>O&S</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>2nd November</td><td>O&S</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>28th May</td><td>Planning</td><td>70</td></tr> <tr><td>18th June</td><td>Planning</td><td>32</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Committee	YouTube views	22nd July	Audit	14	11th November	Audit	3	14th May	Cabinet	124	9th June	Cabinet	67	7th July	Cabinet	51	28th July	Cabinet	27	15th September	Cabinet	47	13th October	Cabinet	63	10th November	Cabinet	34	17th November	Cabinet	8	15th June	Council	169	20th July	Council	181	29th July	Council	66	16th November	Council	66	24th June	Licensing	18	2nd September	Licensing	8	2nd July	Licensing Sub	44	21st July	Licensing Sub	13	5th August	Licensing Sub	25	11th August	Licensing Sub	13	24th September	Licensing Sub	24	4th November	Licensing Sub	38	4th November	Licensing Sub	8	27th July	O&S	25	2nd November	O&S	12	28th May	Planning	70	18th June	Planning	32
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10.	Question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay		
	<p>From the last week in July to the first fortnight in September (60 days) and innocuous sounding outfit called Soul Circus operated in Montpellier Gardens. As well as Yoga it also included a bar, which broadcast loud music in the evenings, especially at the weekends, and it was this music (along with the taking of trade away from already struggling Montpellier bars) which generated more email correspondence for the Lansdown Councillors than normal.</p> <p>Can we hear please who sanctioned this use of the Gardens? The Chairman of the Licensing Committee knew nothing about it, and it was not referred to the newly formed Events Committee, and it appears there was no Member involvement. I understand that it took the place of the Literature Festival events planned, and so the 70 day maximum allowed on events in the Gardens was not breached, but the music element should have meant that the licensing committee was consulted.</p>		
	Response from Cabinet Member		
	<p>The event followed the approved CBC event consultative process including a meeting on 3 July 2020. In line with the normal process, ward councillors have a standing invite to the meeting. A separate meeting was arranged on site with local ward members, the Friends of Montpellier Gardens, event organiser, and members of the Council's green space team to discuss the event. The event was put in front of the Safety Advisory Group for discussion and advice. The organisers event plan was found to be satisfactory by the ECG and the organiser took on board advice from the SAG. A tenancy at will agreement was then entered into with the event organiser. The event organiser set up regular weekly meetings for local residents, the Friends of Montpellier Gardens, and ward members to attend and discuss any issues. The event operated under the existing premises licence for Montpellier Gardens. No breaches of either the licence, noise conditions, or social distancing rules were recorded, and the organiser paid for the full repair of the grass at the end of the event.</p>		
11.	Question from Councillor Louis Savage to Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Flo Clucas		
	<p>At the Council meeting on 15th December 2015, the Council voted unanimously to sign up to the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge.</p> <p>In so doing, it agreed to prioritise the mental health of the community, and to commit to parity of esteem between mental and physical health.</p> <p>Increasing evidence is emerging of the harm inflicted on mental health by COVID restrictions, with Professor Wendy Burn, President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, warning of an impending "tsunami" of mental health problems.</p>		

<p>https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/news-and-features/latest-news/detail/2020/05/15/psychiatrists-see-alarming-rise-in-patients-needing-urgent-and-emergency-care).</p> <p>Given the above:</p> <p>-What steps has CBC taken over the course of the pandemic to ensure it honours commitments made under the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge?</p> <p>-What steps can CBC and its partner organisations take to ensure that the adverse mental health impact of COVID restrictions are given the consideration they deserve?</p>
<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
<p>The commitment we made in 2015 to the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge remains a high priority for Cheltenham Borough Council.</p> <p>Over the course of the pandemic Cheltenham Borough Council has met frequently with its partners to identify and mitigate community risks via a community impact assessment process. Consistently through the different phases of the pandemic, CBC and its partners have identified mental health as one of the highest risks to our community. To mitigate this we have taken a number of steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have worked in partnership to promote self-help resources, existing support services, contact information and information about newly commissioned services to support people’s mental health during the pandemic through both our website and social media channels. • No Child Left Behind through its web presence and local school partners had a large push in July on mental health support for children and families • Through the Community Help Hub that our staff managed, we made contact with many people who were experiencing poor mental health. This could be anything from low mood to suicidal thoughts. To offer them the support, we formed close partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group’s lead safeguarding nurse, the local police team and Cheltenham Borough Homes tenancy management team. This enabled us to refer people to direct support through welfare checks, support to help with their individual living circumstances or direct clinical support. <p>I would like to acknowledge the fantastic support from partners we received at this time which enabled us to support our communities and also to thank the Council staff who managed the help hub supporting people in distressing situations with great kindness and empathy despite most having little experience in this area of work prior to the pandemic.</p> <p>At the most recent community impact assessment meeting partners continued to identify mental health as the greatest risk moving forward both for residents and staff.</p> <p>We will therefore propose at this month’s Communities Partnership that we focus on Mental Health as a priority for 2021 reinvigorating the successful Heads Up Cheltenham campaign. I would like to invite the Elected Member Mental Health Champions to meet with myself and relevant officers to update you about the</p>

	<p>discussion at the Communities Partnership and plan next steps for Cheltenham Borough Council.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Louis Savage to Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Flo Clucas</p>
	<p>In 2018 Cheltenham Borough Council's No Child Left Behind project (https://nclbcheltenham.org.uk/) identified that 4400 children and young people in our town are living in poverty, and at risk of poor mental and physical health.</p> <p>In her recent report 'Childhood in the time of COVID' (https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/childhood-in-the-time-of-covid/) Anne Longfield, the Children's Commissioner for England, highlights that children from disadvantaged backgrounds have suffered disproportionately from COVID restrictions.</p> <p>Given the emerging evidence of the harm suffered by disadvantaged children described in this report:</p> <p>-Can CBC ensure that it heeds the advice from the Children's Commissioner and keeps vital services for children open wherever and whenever possible, including children's centres and council-owned facilities used for children's groups and activities?</p> <p>-What steps can CBC and its partner organisations take to mitigate the harmful physical and mental health impacts of COVID restrictions on the most vulnerable children and young people in our Borough?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>As we approach Christmas with a bit more optimism that life may return to some kind of normality in 2021, we must not forget the very real impacts of Covid among the town's children and young people. This is something I will be working hard with a wide range of partners to address in 2021.</p> <p>In terms of the first question – although CBC does not directly provide services to children and young people, we will work with Gloucestershire County Council and children's services providers to assess the risks to any services and then do whatever we can to support their retention.</p> <p>In terms of the second question, the focus for our work to support the most vulnerable children and young people is through our No Child Left Behind programme – which has continued to be incredibly proactive during the course of the pandemic.</p> <p>In September NCLB launched the Community Agreement and to date 50 organisation from all sectors have formally signed up to the agreement. It promotes the importance of empathy, kindness and being trauma-informed along with a specific reference to the importance of valuing the wellbeing of children and their families.</p> <p>To help partners fulfil their commitments under the agreement, we are organising a programme of webinars for signatories. The first took place last week and gave frontline worker insight into trauma and helping children build resilience. Future</p>

	<p>sessions will focus on topics such as restorative practice, kindness and strengths based approaches.</p> <p>Through its web presence, NCLB has also promoted resources to support children's and young people's mental health as well as opportunities for families to get out and about together and take part in activities that are Covid secure.</p> <p>NCLB has also supported the holiday hunger scheme and supported local food banks by collecting donations from CBC allotments to ensure children and young people were getting appropriate nutrition during the pandemic</p> <p>As Covid restrictions ease NCLB will work again with its partners on initiatives to promote physical activity and physical health among Cheltenham's families.</p> <p>I would also like to update council on two other important strands of work that I participated in last week that are relevant to the question:</p> <p>The Cheltenham Change conference, held last Monday, was organised by local community leaders in response to the motion agreed by council that committed us to work more closely with partners to challenge bias, both deliberate and unconscious and racism in all its forms.</p> <p>I was really pleased to listen to partners talk about the importance of supporting young people of colour in the town, and there was a commitment to work with local schools to achieve this.</p> <p>Secondly, the council and its partners are in the process of developing a culture strategy for Cheltenham. We held two stakeholder workshops on Thursday as part of our commitment to engage partners in the process. The draft strategy highlights the importance of empowering young people through culture.</p> <p>There was widespread agreement among the workshop attendees that young people are absolutely critical and there is a strong commitment to do more to ensure that all our young people can not only benefit from cultural activities but be cultural leaders in their own right.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Louis Savage to Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p>
	<p>I thank the Cabinet Member for circulating the guidance issued by CBC to Community Protection Officers, also referred in this document as 'Covid Ambassadors' (email 17/11/2020).</p> <p>The description of the role of 'Covid Ambassadors' includes "<i>checks on the reasons people are out and about</i>" and "<i>to see if trips really are essential</i>".</p> <p>This guidance document does leave several questions unanswered, and I would be grateful for his clarification on the following points:</p> <p>-Other than the document circulated, have Covid Ambassadors been given any formal training or additional guidance?</p>

	<p>-What oversight and governance arrangements has CBC put in place for Covid Ambassadors?</p> <p>-Will audit-able data be kept on the number of interactions Covid Ambassadors have with members of the public, including reasons for approaching a given individual?</p> <p>-Will data be kept on the characteristics of the people being approached, including age, gender and ethnicity, to ensure that vulnerable and minority groups are not being disproportionately targeted?</p> <p>-Is there a formal complaint process for members of the public who feel they have been subject to an inappropriate, disrespectful, discriminatory or unlawful interaction with a Covid Ambassador?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>The Council has entered into a partnership arrangement with three of the other Gloucestershire local authorities (Gloucester City, Tewkesbury Borough and Stroud District Councils) and CBC is contributing £30,000 from its Covid-related surge funding allocation received from central government, for the period up until the 31st March 2021, for additional staffing resources to help reassure and advise the public about the ever changing rules concerning Covid-19. These staff are trained and experienced Community Protection Officers, normally operating as part of the Gloucester City Safe scheme. The staff concerned do not have formal enforcement powers delegated to them and are working in close co-operation with the police and local authority authorised officers, to whom issues are escalated if enforcement is being considered.</p> <p>The activities of Gloucester City Safe staff and of local authority Covid Compliance and Neighbourhood Officers are being collated on a weekly basis and reported through the Tactical Enforcement Group, which has been established by the Health Protection Board to help coordinate Covid-related enforcement activity.</p> <p>The collation of characteristics data for all interactions with the public would be disproportionate and its collection would itself be likely to give rise to concerns from members of the public about what that data would be used for.</p> <p>Any complaint relating to the activities of Gloucester City Safe or CBC staff operating in Cheltenham can be reported through the Council's own complaints' process and will be investigated.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor David Willingham to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman</p>
	<p>The mature trees on streets like Gloucester Road, are attractive and good for our town's environment, but during autumn they drop a lot of leaves which can become a hazard and can block drains. Efficient mechanical street cleansing can only happen when streets (or sections of streets) are free of parked cars, but both parking and drains are the responsibility of Gloucestershire County Council.</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member please advise whether any progress has been made on getting Gloucestershire County Council to agree to support Cheltenham's work and coordinate it's parking and drain cleaning efforts with the street cleansing efforts of Ubico to allow this important work to occur?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>

	<p>Cheltenham Borough Council and Ubico have been working closely with Gloucestershire County Council to co-ordinate street clearance works to ensure that a joined up approach delivers higher quality standards across the borough.</p> <p>This year, despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, Ubico have delivered a number of different street clearances, some of which have been in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council and we have had positive feedback from residents.</p> <p>Street clearance activity to October 2020 excluding normal mechanical sweeping activity and leafing works:</p> <p>09.06.20 Evesham Rd (Clarence Rd – Central Cross) – Street Clearance & Weeding 02.07.20 Old Station Drive – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 13.07.20 Church Road – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 30.07.20 St Lukes Rd – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 06.08.20 Naunton Lane – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 18.08.20 Orrisdale Terrace – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 20.08.20 Fairfield Park Rd – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 25.08.20 Langdon Rd – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 27.08.20 Fairfield Av – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 17.09.20 Fairfield Rd – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 17.09.20 Fairhaven St - Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 24.09.20 College Rd (St Lukes – London Rd) – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 24.09.20 London Rd (Keynsham Rd – College Rd) - Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 01.10.20 College Rd (London Rd – St Lukes) – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 06.10.20 Dinas Close – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 08.10.20 Moorend St – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 08.10.20 Moorend Crescent – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 08.10.20 Battledown Approach – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 13.10.20 Upper Norwood St – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 13.10.20 Croft St – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 15.10.20 Francis St – Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 27.10.20 Fairfield Parade - Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding 29.10.20 Naunton Lane (Revisit) - Street Clearance, Drains & Weeding</p> <p>As more people work from home during lockdown, the amount of parked cars on the sides of roads has increased. This has worsened the situation with parked cars preventing access for kerbside collections as well as street clearances and there is perhaps more we need to do with Gloucestershire County Council to help us with this.</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</p>
	<p>Can the Cabinet Member inform the Council of Cheltenham Borough Councils CO2 emissions last year and for the previous 5 years?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>Thank you to Councillor Harman for asking this important question. The matter of monitoring carbon output in response to our ambitious carbon neutral target has been mentioned on several occasions since I started my role as cabinet member in</p>

September.

Cheltenham Borough Council's CO2 emissions in 2019/20 were 5,622 tonnes, which represents an increase of 562 tonnes from 2018/19. Three quarters of this increase is attributed to UBICO. And much of that appears to be a result of an improved data-gathering process, which has revealed a higher level of fuel consumption by the Ubico waste & recycling fleet. The remainder can be attributed largely to a change in the calculation method for CBH fuel consumption and a minor calculation error found in the 2018/19 figures.

Data capture and accuracy since 2018/19 has improved considerably and Ubico has done a lot of work ensuring the correct allocation of fuel to the correct fuel cards as well as investing in better systems for capturing the information, therefore it is likely that we have a more accurate picture now. It is also possible that the information previously drawn from fuel invoices crosses over two financial years, masking the true in year usage and emissions. This highlights the importance of having the right data recording methods.

Ubico changed most of its waste and recycling fleet in October 2017 and the new vehicles have euro 6 diesel engines however there are still some older vehicles on the fleet and efficiency of hired vehicles is out of our control. All vehicles are gradually being fitted with telematics to help increase efficiency of fuel use.

In 2018/19, additional vehicles were added to the fleet. This is the cumulative effect of increased volumes of all waste streams presented at kerbside and bring banks as a result of successful public awareness campaigns and housing growth. Clearly, the more vehicles that are being used, the more fuel is used and the more emissions will increase. Ubico is currently buying an average of 9337 litres of fuel per week (486,831 litres p.a.) which is very similar to 2019/20, taking into account the previous comments regarding vehicle numbers and mileage.

Coming back to our carbon neutral target, the adoption of it means that the next time we are procuring a new fleet of waste collection vehicles it will have to be low or zero carbon emission – whether electric or hydrogen-powered. This demonstrates the value of having a higher commitment to the environment, when compared with other levels of government. The new fleet is due in 2024.


Work is already underway to investigate how the Council can achieve a sustainable operations depot and heavy goods fleet, powered by alternative green fuels, ahead of our ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030 and this is a priority for both the Council and Ubico.

In the meantime, we recognise that people want us to move faster, so measures have been put in place this year with the aim of reducing emissions. A review of the garden waste service has optimised the rounds to ensure that we only need 3 vehicles to service our increased customer base (as well as extra tonnage presented at kerbside) and some residents may have noticed a change to their collection day in the summer. This has prevented a 4th vehicle being required.

Refuse and recycling, along with food waste, is also being reviewed and these optimised rounds will be rolled out next year as soon as the work is complete.

	<p>Optimising the rounds results in more efficient collections and ultimately less unnecessary miles driven keeping emissions as low as possible with as few vehicles as possible too. More vehicles will also be fitted with telematics to improve efficiency and data availability in the next few months.</p> <p>We hope to have our first zero emission vehicles in 2021 – these are unrelated to waste collection activities.</p> <p>Looking to the future, we are looking at various projects to reduce our carbon output. This will inevitably include discussions around the future of the Municipal Offices and an exploration of carbon-efficient accommodation for the council – a project which ought to also save money in the longer run.</p>
<p>16.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p>
	<p>When will all Council owned Car Parks have Electric Vehicle charging points?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>I have asked officers to look at feasible options for the delivery of up to 40 Electric Vehicle charging points in appropriate locations across the Council’s car parks.</p> <p>This would compare favourably with the GCC proposal to provide 200 on-street charging points across the county, which in percentage terms will be considerably lower. Whilst there are 2 EV charging points at the Arle Court Park and Ride site, GCC has so far provided only two on-street charging points in Cheltenham at Montpellier Street.</p> <p>Cllr Harman will be aware that there are already four EV charging points located in our multi-storey car parks, but these are often viewed as less visible and convenient than those located on-street.</p> <p>We are currently exploring procurement options and in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of preferred charging points i.e. standard, fast or ultra fast; • Optimal locations; • Lining and signing; • Options for payback – e.g. charging for parking, electricity consumption and offsetting capital cost • Any challenges around sufficiency of the local power supply (via Western Power Distribution). <p>Officers have recommended that we look to phase the installation to help gauge demand, as if the spaces are not fully utilised, there is a risk of income loss (although not an issue whilst demand is suppressed due to the pandemic). This would mean installing 10-20 charging points next financial year at a cost of up to £50,000.</p> <p>We will look to offset some of our costs through any government grants that may be made available and through the charging arrangements. In theory, this could cover our installation/running costs, even if this does not cover lost parking revenue (due to space turnover downtime).</p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Martin Horwood to Cabinet Member Climate and</p>

	Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	Will the Cabinet Member with responsibility for tackling the climate emergency support Leckhampton Rovers Football Club's ambitious plans for the improvement of Burrow's sports field and its pavilion, developed in partnership with this council, by making an application for funding under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) launched by the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) which could fund solar photovoltaic panels, air source heat pump, new windows and insulation, solar heating and/or battery storage for the pavilion, helping to reduce future costs and fight climate change for the benefit of the club, the town and the planet?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>I have heard about this project and it is exactly the sort of community-led sustainability scheme that the council wants to promote. I welcome the Club's willingness to explore this scheme. The council will certainly support bids for this kind of initiative and we hope our bids to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund will allow us to do so.</p> <p>We are in the process of exploring our options to apply for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund. We will explore the opportunity to include this project within the bid, if it meets the fund parameters.</p>
18.	Question from Councillor Victoria Atherstone to the Chair of Licensing, Councillor David Willingham
	In the Council meeting of 29th July 2020, the Chair of Licensing said that he would write to Ministers about the "exemption loophole" in SEV licensing. Could he please provide details of any responses he has had from them on this issue?
	Response from Chair of Licensing
	<p>I would like to thank Cllr Atherstone for her question about this important public safety issue which affects our town. On 30th July 2020, I wrote to The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government; Kit Malthouse MP, the Minister for Crime and Policing; and Victoria Atkins MP, Minister for Safeguarding. In my letter, I raised issues relating to the lack of any licensing protections to performers, customers and the public when the exemption is used, and I also requested that government should consider a National Register of Refusals and Revocations for those involved in operating Sexual Entertainment Venues. My representations to the MHCLG were transferred to the Home Office, and a reply was provided by Victoria Atkins MP. I have provided a copy of my original letter, and copies of the replies to be included supplementary to this written answer. In response to our concerns about the exemption, the Minister stated that "The intent of the legislation is to strike a balance between nuisance to the community and the reduction of onerous regulation being placed on small businesses." Furthermore, while the Minister noted our concerns, her reply regrettably stated that the Home Office "have no immediate plans to amend the legislation surrounding the licensing of Sexual Entertainment Venues".</p>
19.	Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	What consideration has been given to reducing council car parking charges to help support town centre shops, restaurants, pubs and other businesses?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	This option has been considered, but was rejected due to the financial pressures on the authority arising from the pandemic and the fact that the government has not

	<p>underwritten all of our lost income.</p> <p>The Council continues to support businesses during the pandemic, during the first wave of the pandemic, £23.1m support was paid out to 1,836 businesses in the Government grants scheme - plus £1.1m to 191 businesses for the discretionary scheme, making a total of £24.3m to 2,027 businesses. Further grant support is being administered in relation to the second lockdown.</p>
20.	Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	What consideration has been given to introducing free parking after 6pm in the run up to Christmas, to help support town centre shops, restaurants, pubs and other businesses?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	See answer to Q19.
21.	Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	What consideration has been given to issuing annual/seasonal fishing licences for Pittville park lake?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	The Council has no plans to introduce an annual fishing licence for its Pittville Park Lake. The current system allows for anglers to purchase a day ticket from the boat house where a check can be made that they possess a rod licence and are made aware of the rules. It also allows the Council to keep a record of how many people are using the lake for angling.
22.	Question from Councillor Chris Mason to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	<p>The borough council has committed to working with partner organisations towards planting 1,000,000 trees or equivalent by 2030. On average, this would planting 100,000 trees or equivalent pa from 1st January 2020.</p> <p>How many trees have been planted by the borough council or its partners, on the council's behalf from 1st January 2020 to 30th November 2020?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	 <p>Tree and Biodiversity Projects.xlsx</p> <p>Thank you to Councillor Mason for asking this question. It's an important subject and one he has raised with me before in O&S meetings. I'm sure he will acknowledged that however we approach this issue, a partnership approach is needed involving other councils, the private sector and the charitable/third sector.</p> <p>Having joined the Gloucestershire County Council-endorsed conference with Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership, my own understanding of this topic is much better. Indeed, we ought to all be aware that planting trees is not the quick-and-easy solution to environmental problems that is sometimes suggested. It is one of a number of things we should do, but other workstreams will ultimately be more valuable and more access to carbon footprint measuring will help us make the case for the behavioural change we will all need to undertake.</p> <p>The attached spreadsheet outlines where we are this year with planting projects;</p>

	<p>numbers, approximate costs, partners, event details and more information besides. It's a working document and we will keep it updated as we progress. Most of the trees are small: 60-90cm whips or similar. Whips are a cost effective way to plant lots of trees, and logistically easier especially when planting with schools. It's a well-established fact that a small tree will, given time and care, establish quicker and outgrow a standard. Standards are used on streets and in parks as specimen plantings where a more robust individual plant is required. The traditional tree planting season runs from around mid-October through to mid-March, so it is not easily possible to state tree planting figures for any particular calendar year.</p> <p>Clearly the council's alone will not amount to one million trees by 2030 or hit KPI's to that effect. However it is a positive contribution to a wider objective to increase tree cover across the borough and wider county that engages with schools and the local community.</p> <p>Last year CBC planted approximately 2,500 trees through similar projects.</p> <p>The Council has not explicitly committed to planting 1,000,000 trees itself, but it was a suggestion in the Carbon Neutral Cheltenham report that this could contribute to our carbon neutrality.</p> <p>As part of its work, the Council has noted the county-level target of planting 35 million trees in the next decade. We are engaging with the County Council and Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership to find out what role we will be asked to play and are keen to play a role in partnership working, including public sector, private sector and the third sector.</p> <p>It is noted that Gloucestershire County Council's street tree planting for the upcoming winter planting season has been published and includes 70 new trees on the highway in Cheltenham.</p>
<p>23.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Chris Mason to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</p>
	<p>Having regard to the question above could the cabinet member please provide some examples of "equivalent"?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>"Equivalent" will mean hedgerows. These are maples, hazel, holly, hawthorn or blackthorn planted as trees with the intention to maintain them as a hedge.</p> <p>"Equivalent" could also mean shrubs and other woody species. The definition of a tree is rather an academic question, because many shrubs and bushes are bigger than trees and can class as trees, for example: privet, Portugal laurel, lilac. Some trees could be viewed as bushes, for example: spindle, box and others.</p> <p>The common denominator would be "woody plants". This describes plants lasting more than one year, unlike annual bedding or hanging baskets. They all lock up carbon when they are alive.</p>
<p>24.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Chris Mason to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</p>
	<p>The planting of 1,000,000 trees over a 10 year period should be a major project for this council. In order to meet this target, it is necessary to formulate a plan with a KPI on the number of trees to be planted each year until 2030. How many trees</p>

	does the council or its partners (on the council's behalf) plan to plant in 2021 and 2022? What is the expected cost to the council for each year and where will the trees be planted?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The 2021 planting will take place from January to March and October to Nov. The October to November planting has not yet been planned. However, it is fair to say that projected numbers of trees to be planted is increasing dramatically to the extent that it may become logistically difficult to achieve with the current resource.</p> <p>The Green Spaces Team and the Trees Officer have been seeking external sources of trees and resource. This includes the Woodland Trust planting bundles of trees, government grants, Cheltenham Tree Group and others. Trees are to be planted in parks, gardens, open spaces, CBH land, Highway verges and other areas.</p> <p>The Council facilitates and manages, where appropriate, self-seeding trees. There is anticipated natural regeneration of trees in woodlands and other peripheral land around the Borough.</p> <p>See also response to question 22.</p>
25.	Question from Councillor Chris Mason to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	Will the council or its partners be selecting indigenous trees that meet the regular standard (girth 8-10 cm, height 2:50 – 3:00 m)? If not could the cabinet member please give some guidance as to what will be planted?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>It is easier and more cost effective to establish small trees than larger ones. Certainly, less CO2 is created whilst establishing small trees, when one considers the cost of the reduced after care and maintenance of larger trees until establishment.</p> <p>In terms of carbon footprint for the life of the tree, it is important to select the most appropriate species for each location. Regular tree surgery throughout the life of the tree is expensive in terms of financial and human resource as well as carbon footprint. Ideally, one plants a tree and walks away until it is time to fell it after it has died. This is rarely the case, but minimal tree surgery can be undertaken if an appropriate species is planted at an appropriate location.</p> <p>In forthcoming years it is hoped to plant a wide variety of tree species. This means native and exotic, small and large trees, long and short lived. Best practice informs strategies that prevent the planting of a large percentage of any particular tree species. This helps ensure as good as possible continuous canopy cover in times of significant and devastating new pests and diseases, such as ash die back, Sudden Oak Death, Acute Oak Decline, Plane Wilt, horse chestnut bleeding canker and leaf miner. This approach also protects against hotter, drier summers, milder winters, increased property subsidence claims and storms.</p>
26.	Question from Councillor Chris Mason to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	Who are our partner organisations and what agreements have been made with them?
	Response from Cabinet Member

	<p>CBC are working with Gloucestershire Highways, Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership towards the goal of 35,000,000 trees by 2030.</p>
<p>27.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Angie Boyes to Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Peter Jeffries</p>
	<p>Many people, including children, are dying in their attempts to get to the UK to find safe sanctuary. As a town, it is vital, especially post-Brexit, to welcome refugees with open arms. Given the recent vote in Parliament, where MPs, including Cheltenham's, for a second time voted down an amendment to ensure that child refugees could be reunited with their families after Brexit, can Cllr Pete Jeffries, Cabinet Member for Housing please provide an update on the status of Cheltenham's Town of Sanctuary application?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>Cheltenham has a history of welcoming refugees who have contributed to and shaped our town and Cheltenham Borough Council are proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution through assisting refugees with homes and opportunities as well as supporting people seeking asylum.</p> <p>In 2015 in response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis the UK government launched the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme (VPR) with a pledge to rehouse 20,000 Syrian Refugees across the UK over a 5 year period. Cheltenham Borough Council quickly supported this initiative and since the scheme started more than 122 refugees have been successfully housed in Cheltenham.</p> <p>This has been as a result of close collaborative working with a range of partners, and our thanks go to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue service for co-ordinating this support, • Cheltenham Borough Homes in their commitment in sourcing accommodation and making a significant difference to people resettling in Cheltenham, • and to our local voluntary groups, in particular from GARAS (Gloucestershire action for refugees and asylum seekers), Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees and Cheltenham Volunteer Teachers, who have been instrumental in providing a warm welcome and ongoing support to people making Cheltenham their new home. <p>The Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme will continue to run until the 20,000th person has been accepted into the UK by the Home Office and this scheme will then be superseded by the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) which will then rehouse refugees throughout the UK from all over the world.</p> <p>Cheltenham Borough Council has committed to support the new UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) when it commences with a commitment in the first year to rehouse approximately 24 refugees which will contribute to the countywide commitment to rehouse 45 refugees across Gloucestershire. (Please see link to cabinet member report - https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1341)</p>

In addition, Cheltenham Borough Council are also committed to working with Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees and GARAS (Gloucestershire action for refugees and asylum seekers) to explore opportunities for larger properties for refugees in the private rented sector within the borough.

Unfortunately due to the unprecedented effects of the global coronavirus pandemic, resettlement arrivals have been paused since March 2020. This has delayed the arrival of the remaining families through the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement programme and the start of the new UK Resettlement scheme. However the government has reiterated its commitment to resettle 20,000 refugees affected by the conflict in Syria under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and recent announcements have confirmed that the Syrian Resettlement scheme is now restarting with plans for the majority of the cases to arrive from January 2021 and any urgent cases will be prioritised where possible.

In addition to the refugee resettlement programmes a cabinet member decision was made in February 2019 to enter into a collaborative arrangement with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to source private rented accommodation in Cheltenham for households seeking asylum and for Cheltenham to become an asylum dispersal area. This decision estimated that the number of homes that will be sourced by UKVI in the first 12 months across Cheltenham will be around 10 properties or around 25 people and as of December 2020 there are currently 18 people residing across 4 properties in Cheltenham with a further property to accommodate an additional 4 people due to come on board shortly.

Due to the pandemic decisions on cases were halted for an extended period of time and the majority of clients remain in properties awaiting decisions on claims. However a high level of support continues to be provided for people seeking asylum who are residing in Cheltenham from the voluntary sector and strong working relationships have been brokered between Cheltenham Borough Council and the UKVI with regular partnership meetings and updates taking place.

Following a recent review of the Asylum Dispersal Scheme in Cheltenham, Cheltenham Borough Council were approached by UKVI with a request to increase the number of homes that they can source in Cheltenham for households seeking asylum - this is in line with a request to local authorities across the southwest to increase the supply of housing that can be made available for people claiming asylum.

To support this request, a decision has been made to increase the number of homes that will be sourced by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to double our commitment and accommodate approx. 50 people within Cheltenham. This commitment will be reviewed again in a further 12 months (please see link to officer decision - <https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1426>). The South West Strategic Migration Partnership has thanked Cheltenham Borough Council for our ongoing support and for being a good practice example for other local authorities of how widening dispersal areas can work.

The work of resettlement is complex and Cheltenham Borough Council are privileged to have the dedicated support from a range of local voluntary groups in

	<p>particular from GARAS (Gloucestershire action for refugees and asylum seekers) and Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees who provide a range of support including advocacy & advice on health, housing, benefits, immigration, law, education, counselling provision for those suffering the effects of trauma; access to food, toys, furniture, household items & bedding and community events to help families to meet up with one another and adjust to their new homes together.</p> <p>We are also really pleased that Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees were able to take part in the Cheltenham Change Conference held on Monday 30 November. This conference brought community and agency leaders together to listen and to discuss ways that we can move forward in tackling some of the inequalities that culturally diverse communities experience locally.</p> <p>Organised by Cheltenham residents and organisations from a variety of backgrounds, and working with Cheltenham Borough Council, the conference will lead to a range of positive actions being undertaken that will benefit Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities including refugees.</p> <p>Going forward, this seems like an opportune time for the council to work with Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees and GARAS to consider what additional steps we can take to more formally recognise Cheltenham as a Town of Sanctuary. We will pick this up with them in the near future.</p> <p>Cheltenham Borough Council is extremely grateful for the commitment of our local community groups and charities to helping families settle in the community and we look forward to continuing welcoming people to Cheltenham and providing ongoing sanctuary, safety and support.</p>
<p>28.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor David Willingham to Cabinet Member Cyber and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p>
	<p>As part of our town's drive to improve the environment and air quality, could I ask whether it would be possible to consider starting a cabinet member lead review our town's smoke control zones, with a view to examining the feasibility of whether it is possible to extend them to cover our town's entire urban area and planned urban extensions; and if so, looking at what would need to be done and how it could be funded and delivered?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>The requirements of Smoke Control Zones (SCZ's) apply to fixed appliances in residential properties and require that residents use either an "authorised fuel" or an "exempt appliance" to ensure that smoke emissions are minimised. Both fuels and appliances are tested, approved and publicly listed by the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).</p> <p>In practice, the enforcement of these requirements is just about impossible. The officer needs to prove that smoke was emitted for longer than an unspecified start-up period and what appliance or fuel was in use at the time, without having access to the premises.</p> <p>SCZ's cover large areas of the borough and were introduced in stages many years ago. The areas covered don't seem to follow any particular logic and in places, boundaries pass through houses, so what is legal at the front is illegal at the rear. I</p>

understand that as they were introduced, grant funding was available to encourage the replacement of open fires with suitable appliances, but when funding ran out, no further SCZ's were declared.

The declaration process for a SCZ appears quite simple – the Council can declare all or part of the borough to be a SCZ. The simplest way of making this happen would be to revoke the existing list of SCZ's (I think there are 18 covering different areas) and declare one, new borough-wide zone.

Central government has consulted on abolishing the SCZ provisions, most recently in 2018. This contributed to the following report:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/air-quality-using-cleaner-fuels-for-domestic-burning/outcome/summary-of-responses-and-government-response>

This report contains various intentions relating to the sale and supply of solid fuel products, which are aimed at improving air quality. That seems to be the government's preferred approach, rather than encouraging a further expansion of SCZ's, or making enforcement more straightforward.

The potential downsides of declaring a town wide SCZ would include:

- The up-front officer resourcing of the process, which is likely to divert resources from more impactful air quality related work;
- increasing public expectations that the council will take enforcement action, when this is widely considered to be impractical; and
- that the measure would be unlikely to demonstrate a related impact on local air quality.

On this basis, I am not persuaded that setting up a 'cabinet member-led review' is necessary, or that extending current SCZ arrangements to cover the whole borough would be sufficiently beneficial to make the action worthwhile.