

## Council

25 February 2016

### Member Questions

<b>1.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	<p>The Cheltenham Transport Plan report which the Council will consider this evening envisages a different phasing than originally outlined. Can the Cabinet Member specify what safeguards he has put in place to protect the council and Council Tax Payers should any phase of the scheme up to and including the Boots Corner be deemed to have failed?</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member Development and Safety</b>
	<p>The phasing approved by GCC cabinet was predicated upon the initial phase at Albion Street being implemented between October 2015 and February 2016, with the final phase, a trial at Boots Corner, to take place in Spring 2017.</p> <p>Given events associated with the Beechwood shopping centre and the complexities associated with its conversion to a John Lewis store, the start date has slipped to March 2016, although we understand that the target date for the final phase remains the same.</p> <p>The primary safeguard for Council tax payers, was to ensure that the majority of this scheme was funded through a Department for Transport grant (£4.95 million), which was successfully secured by GCC. However, CBC did offer £50k funding for mitigation (in November 2013) and is proposing the release of £100k of uncommitted funds to assist GCC with implementation.</p> <p>By making available this £100k and £50k funding CBC is demonstrating support for the success of the County Council's by seeking to ensure the lengthened implementation stage can be successfully accommodated.</p> <p>Clearly, if GCC determines that any phase is deemed to have failed, then the sums might be required to assist with the County Council's mitigation costs.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Tim Harman to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	<p>Can the Cabinet Member inform Council of the financial reporting arrangements that the Task Force will be required to undertake to Council and how this will be reported to Members?</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member Development and Safety</b>
	<p>The Task Force has no direct budgetary control. This is because the body is purely advisory. Whilst there is a Task Force budget, it is overseen by officers of CBC and subject to the usual scrutiny and audit controls. The majority of any spend associated with Task Force activity is linked to capital expenditure and this is bid for, allocated and accounted for in line with other budgets managed by CBC officers.</p>

<b>3.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor John Payne to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	This question was withdrawn at the request of Councillor Payne.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor John Payne to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
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<b>5.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor John Payne to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	<p>GCC is still unable to publish any details of precisely how the Winchcombe Street and Pittville junctions are to be implemented, e.g. the "zebra crossing". Local residents and road users should be allowed to comment in good time on the viability of these measures by studying a layout plan before expenditure is committed.</p> <p>At the same time as inserting a 'zebra crossing' (and turning off the traffic lights?) are you also intending to reverse the general traffic flow direction in Portland Street (as is marked on the TRO plan)? And will the Traffic lanes approaching the zebra-crossing from North Street be reduced to two, with a central island; and will general traffic still be allowed to turn right into Pittville Street?</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member Development and Safety</b>
	<p>As far as I am aware, the proposed traffic management arrangements on Albion Street are as discussed at the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) stage of this scheme.</p> <p>I believe that GCC has notified members of pedestrian crossing elements of detailed design, not changes to the scheme, so would suggest that these specific questions are posed to the County Council as highways authority.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Adam Lillywhite to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	<p>CBC have finally admitted in the officer's report that the "marketability" and "subsequent disposal and redevelopment of the Municipal Offices" is the driver of this unworkable nonsense of closing Cheltenham's sole Ring Road.</p> <p>What are and how can you justify imposing Phase-3, Royal Well changes, which are necessarily permanent if they are the 'land grab' of Royal Well Road, before Phase-4, Boots Corner trial, has been completed and most probably been demonstrated unfit to become permanent when it has already received £2M of irreversible "public realm" capital spend?</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The aim of the CTP is to improve traffic flow around the town. As a result of these programmed transport works there are many opportunities to improve public realm and wider place making objectives.</p> <p>A development brief for the future of the Municipal offices and Royal Well identifies the ability to utilise space should it become available. This development brief has been approved by council. The utilisation of the space is a potential opportunity that would contribute to the wider place making and economic</p>

	<p>development agenda for Cheltenham.</p> <p>I don't think that the phrase "land grab" is appropriate in terms of the Council's intention to deliver a place-making agenda.</p> <p>The £2m in question for Boots Corner is CBC money, held in a CBC reserve, available for use should GCC determine that Boots Corner can reasonably be closed to most through-traffic beyond the trial period. The money has been allocated for this future purpose, but has not been spent and will not be spent on "irreversible" public realm capital expenditure, until the Boots Corner trial has been assessed by GCC as highways authority.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Adam Lillywhite to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b></p>
	<p>In view of Cheltenham's peculiarly unique road network for a large town for which there is no longer any road-building money to remedy and in view of the lengthy controversy over CTP, is it not irresponsible to be restricting all subsequent CTP implementation decisions to one in consultation with one Cabinet Member and in discussion with the MD of the CDTF, rather than take the decision back to all elected Councillors. Can the Cabinet Member assure me that the officer will be fully briefed and have all the relevant information to enable him to make an informed decision?</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>The officer concerned is responsible for the Directorate which has had primary responsibility for development and delivery of CBC's input into the Cheltenham Transport Plan and consequently, I believe that he is fully briefed. The suggestion of liaison with the MD of the Task Force, is because he is the Officer of the Council responsible for the Task Force which itself has a number of groups advising on the CTP project and includes a co-ordination group which links together developers and contractors to ensure that operational issues that could impact upon the town centre are dealt with effectively e.g. the delivery of tower cranes; utility connections etc.</p> <p>It is this group that has assisted in developing the proposed timetable for the Albion Street implementation, as we potentially have 3 major projects operational in the same street simultaneously - works for the CTP and works at Regency Place and Beechwood shopping centre.</p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Adam Lillywhite to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b></p>
	<p>How can Councillors make a decision over a zebra crossing when they have no idea what is happening to the traffic on Albion Street? How long will it be between announcing the changes to the public for the rest of Albion Street and them being implemented?</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>As far as I am aware, the traffic management on Albion Street is as discussed at the TRO stage of this scheme.</p> <p>I believe that GCC has notified Members of the pedestrian crossing element of detailed design, which I understand is a requirement of the relevant Highway</p>

legislation, it is not fundamental changes to the scheme.

So, the timing between decision (GCC cabinet 22/07/15) and planned start of implementation (21/03/16) is 8 months.