

## Council – 12 December 2016

### Member Questions (15)

<b>1.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Tim Harman to the Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Flo Clucas</b>
	Will the Cabinet Member consider promoting an Open Air Ice Skating Rink at an appropriate location next year similar to those which are successful and popular in other Towns and Cities?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	In thanking the Councillor for his question, I am mindful that this is being discussed in other quarters. Until I know what the outcome of those discussions is, I feel I would be on a slippery slope; skating on thin ice indeed if I were - at this moment - to respond!
<b>2.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Dennis Parsons to the Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Flo Clucas</b>
	28 February 2017 marks the 75th anniversary of the birth of Brian Jones, founder of the Rolling Stones. I understand that the bust of Brian that was removed from the Beechwood Arcade has been due to be put back on public display for some time. Can we be told when and where this will happen; and can we be assured that plans are in place to celebrate on 28 February 2017, the birth and sadly short life of a man who, to many, is Cheltenham's most notable son.
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	The bust of the late Brian Jones is currently with The Cheltenham Trust. The Trust is looking into its display at the Town Hall during 2017; details are being finalised and will be publicised. I understand that the Trust is also considering how the anniversary of his birth can be marked.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Jon Walklett to the Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Peter Jeffries</b>
	Would the Cabinet Member please comment on early results being generated by the Private Rented Sector HMO survey of St Paul's ward currently being conducted by CBC's Private Housing team. I believe Interim figures as reported to O&S on 28th November seemingly substantiate the views of both St Paul's residents and cross-party members of this Council's Planning Committee that additional planning control by way of an Article 4 directive to remove permitted development rights in the ward will need to be sought early 2017 - does the Cabinet Member agree ?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	The full results of the survey will be available for analysis in January/February next year. Early indications suggest there are in the region of 300 HMO's (circa 10% of stock) in the St Pauls ward area, the majority of which are being managed satisfactorily.
	The survey is gathering evidence on the environmental impact of HMO's in the St Pauls area in addition to property safety and management. Refuse issues, amenity issues and parking requirements are being recorded as well as evidence of anti-social behaviour relating to the house. This will help inform any decision regarding the making of an article 4 direction in this ward.
	Government guidance states that Local Authorities should only consider making an article 4

	<p>direction in exceptional circumstances where the exercise of permitted development rights would harm local amenity or the proper planning of the area.</p> <p>Impact on visual amenity, damage to the historic environment, undermining local objectives to create or maintain mixed communities and social and economic impact directly related to the prevalence of HMO's, are all factors which would need to inform any decision. These factors should be benchmarked against other areas of the Borough where HMO's are less prevalent.</p> <p>It therefore follows that the use of an article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights in the St Pauls ward will need to be progressed if the community concern which has been raised is mirrored in the evaluated evidence.</p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman</b></p>
	<p>What were the estimated recycling levels and financial costs of the discounted long-list options from the waste &amp; recycling service redesign assessment?</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>The long-list of 20 options were reduced to a shorter list of 7, based on a combination of expert advice and common sense. The whole point of reducing the long-list to a shorter range of options was so that a more manageable list of options could then be worked on to consider and compare recycling levels and their respective financial costs. When whittling them down from 20 to 7, the options were discounted on any one of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The option could be perceived as a service reduction compared with what is offered to residents currently.</li> <li>· The option was a less comprehensive (and therefore less attractive) offer than the 3 weekly refuse collection offer that was subsequently consulted on.</li> <li>· The option offered what was likely to be a much more costly recycling collection service (because it was a weekly offer), and this was considered to be unaffordable unless a service reduction was offered elsewhere (hence the 3 weekly refuse option of 5b)</li> <li>· The option offered a comingling service that included glass. This option is considered no longer to be favoured by the industry and leads to higher gate fees/tonne to sort, with higher risks of non-compliance with Waste Regulations 2011 due to expected increases in recycle contamination levels.</li> </ul> <p>The shortlist of 7 then underwent some high level indicative modelling on the estimated financial costs and recycling levels. Of the two options that were subsequently discounted, both were found to be within the indicative cost range of all the options modelled, and indeed they fell within the cost range of the 3 options that were eventually put out to consultation. These 2 options both proposed a 3 weekly refuse collection service. It was therefore expected that recycling levels would be in line with those estimated for the 3 weekly refuse option, which was consulted on. The reason these 2 options were discounted was not for financial reasons, or for reasons to do with recycling levels. One of the options simply offered a less attractive service option than the 5b option (3 weekly refuse collection). The other option was discounted because it was decided instead to consult with residents on what they considered the most important enhancements should be (in terms of what additional recyclates could be collected from the kerbside) across <u>all 3</u> of the service options, rather than simply providing the enhancement option on the 3 weekly refuse collection service option alone.</p>

5.	<b>Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to the Cabinet Member Built Environment, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	What are the latest air pollution statistics for Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in Cheltenham? How does this compare to previous years?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The published 2015 air pollution data is the most recent available (i.e. up to December 2015).</p> <p>The Council, on a monthly basis, places passive monitoring devices (commonly known as NOx tubes) at various locations within the Borough in order to monitor Nitrogen Dioxide. These tubes are used to assess whether that particular location, over a calendar year, passes or fails the air quality objective for Nitrogen Dioxide.</p> <p>It will not be possible to fully assess 2016 air quality levels until the readings for December are received, around the middle of January. However, Cheltenham has experienced only a slight movement in Nitrogen Dioxide readings over the past 5 years and there are still several distinct town centre locations which are likely to continue to fail the relevant objective, due almost solely to vehicular traffic. Any downward trend is invariably offset by year-on-year increases in the use of motor vehicles for the expanding population.</p> <p>Only radical measures to address congestion, such as those set out in the Cheltenham Transport Plan are likely to have a significant impact on the distribution of air quality impacts.</p>
6.	<b>Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to the Cabinet Member Built Environment, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	What steps have the council taken in the last year to address the issue of air pollution in Cheltenham generally, and in AQMA areas specifically?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The Council decides, at year end, whether it is necessary to continue monitoring for Nitrogen Dioxide at current locations, or whether to discontinue this if the past 4 years indicates that the location in question always comes below the limit values. We also look at putting monitoring devices at locations where new or increased residential areas are in existing poor air quality locations.</p> <p>The authority is involved in a range of projects which will impact on air quality and has set out specific actions in its Air Quality Action Plan. The first phase of the Cheltenham Transport Plan which the authority has championed has been implemented, improving the access to car parks from vehicles approaching the town from the west and saving them from having to circle the ring road.</p> <p>We have worked with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) to formulate a joint bid under the Air Quality Grant Scheme 2016-17, which has since been submitted to the Department for Transport. This bid asks for funding to commission specific electronic traffic signage, directing visitors to the town centre to the nearest vacant car parking spaces, hence avoiding vehicles taking longer than normal routes and thereby helping to reduce vehicle emissions.</p> <p>The Council has also worked with GCC with regard to another initiative, the 'Air Quality School Pilot Project', which is incorporated into the Thinktravel Schools Programme. The County are funding the project through the Thinktravel grant. The project looks to supply schoolchildren with personal Carbon Monoxide monitors, so that levels of that pollutant can be assessed at the</p>

time students arrive at the school gate. The Thinktravel Schools Engagement programme aims to reduce car travel and increase levels of active travel, through an accredited travel plan scheme. This will examine issues and solutions raised through the AQ School Pilot Project as part of the evidence for schools' travel plans. This study is ongoing.

The Council recently also contacted a local bus company about vehicle idling, which has led to that company reminding their drivers to switch off their engines when at all possible. This is already taking place and such a measure is likely to have a direct result in improving local air quality.

**7. Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to the Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Peter Jeffries**

How many families/individuals are currently on the housing waiting list in Cheltenham? How does this compare with previous years? How long on average have these families/individuals been on the list?

**Response from Cabinet Member**

Currently there are 2823 individuals or families on the Housing list.  
In terms of how this compares with previous years please see below:

Nov 2016	2805
April 2016	2755
Nov 2015	2500
April 2015	2469
Nov 2014	2534

The average length of time families or individuals have spent on the Housing list is not recorded, as part of the Review of the Housing Options service this may be subject to change.

**8. Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to the Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Peter Jeffries**

How many families/individuals on the housing waiting list were allocated a home in the last year? How does this compare with previous years? How long on average had these families/individuals been on the list?

**Response from Cabinet Member**

Applicants housed:

2016 / 17 (till end of Nov)	258
2015/ 16	486
2014 / 15	506

The average length of time families or individuals had spent on the Housing list is not recorded, as part of the Review of the Housing Options service this may be subject to change.

<b>9.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to the Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Peter Jeffries</b>
	How many families/individuals withdrew or were taken off the housing waiting list in the last year? How does this compare with previous years? How long on average had these families/individuals been on the list?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	The number of applicants coming off the list was not something previously recorded so information is very limited as part of the Review of the Housing Options service this will be subject to change.
<b>10.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Chris Mason to the Cabinet Member Finance, Councillor Rowena Hay</b>
	Would the Cabinet Member for finance please confirm the cost of the 2011 Tourism and marketing strategy report, and the 2015 tourism strategy report?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The 2011 tourism and marketing strategy report was carried out by a joint scrutiny time limited working group. There were no external costs attached to producing it, the internal and member costs, as far as I am aware were never separately identified, what I do know is that a member namely John Rawson wrote the final report.</p> <p>The cost of the 2015 strategy report carried out by Creative Tourist Limited was £22, 750.</p>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor Chris Mason to the Leader, Councillor Steve Jordan</b>
	Earlier this year the Leader of the council said that he was delighted with the 2015 tourism annual growth figure. Would he agree that unfortunately the liberal democrat led council can take no credit in achieving this and that ignoring all the recommendations in the 2011 tourism and marketing strategy report it commissioned was a mistake?
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The Liberal Democrat administration recognises that developing a tourism offer is very much a partnership activity and have always worked to ensure we have a town that people can enjoy living and working in and well as visiting. We have set up a Tourism Partnership to ensure close working with those involved in the tourism industry locally. In addition we support the work done by the Cheltenham Business Improvement District and the Cheltenham Development Task Force among others as we recognise that they contribute to making Cheltenham an attractive place to visit</p> <p>I am mystified why Cllr Mason claims the previous recommendations were ignored since it isn't the case. It is true that in the intervening 5 years circumstances have changed not least that the Cheltenham Trust now run the Cheltenham Tourism Information Centre and the LEP have withdrawn from funding tourism support activities at a county level. However we are working</p>

	<p>closely with the LEP on initiatives such as the Digital High Street. Based on the work of Creative Tourist Limited we have agreed and are implementing an action plan with the Tourism Partnership.</p>
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>Question from Councillor John Payne to the Cabinet Member for Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman.</b></p>
	<p>In the quarterly progress report it stated that the Crematorium was now not expected to be completed until early 2019.</p> <p>I would be obliged if the Cabinet Member could outline the cause of this delay, and if possible quantify the impact on the budget.</p>
	<p><b>Response from Cabinet Member</b></p>
	<p>As Councillor Payne is on the Member working group which has been acting as a sounding board for the project, he will be aware that the authority has not yet contracted for the construction of the new crematorium, but is proceeding with the pre-construction phase, which will result in the submission of a detailed planning application.</p> <p>In light of the above, the timetable for delivery of the new facility is not yet fixed and there has never been a definitive date given for project completion. The cross-party member working group has always been supportive of the need to deliver this project to an acceptable quality and has been made fully aware of the range of risks relating to the project, including those which may impact on costs and/or the delivery timetable.</p> <p>The timetable remains an important consideration due to the limited life expectancy of the existing cremation plant and Spring 2019 is the current best estimate of the likely completion date.</p> <p>I am pleased to advise that the project is still currently within the Council approved budget. Recent pressures on the project timetable have related to procurement procedures and the commissioning of study reports which will support the design and planning application process. It is hoped that the extensive preparatory work undertaken will have a positive impact on the project plan timetable further down the line.</p>
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>Question from Councillor John Payne to the Cabinet Member for Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b></p>
	<p>The 2015 report on air quality in Cheltenham provided some interesting comments observations. Firstly according to the report the annual level of Nitrogen Dioxide had remained fairly constant, which suggests that either remedial action had not taken place, or if it had it had been effective. However, may main concern, and I would appreciate some clarification on the issue. The report states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are continued exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective within the AQMA.</li> <li>• There are no other pollutants of concern within Cheltenham Borough Council.</li> </ul> <p>The first statement is clearly of concern, but the second is confusing. How do we know there are no pollutants of concern if we have not tested for them? The argument that the levels when last tested were within the accepted limits does not in my view justify suspension of monitoring. Monitoring should be continuous in order to provide a level of confidence and to detect trends</p>

	early.
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The 2015 Air Quality Assessment did indicate a fairly static situation with regard to poor air quality in certain central areas of the town.</p> <p>It is difficult to assess whether specific air quality improvement measures outlined in the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) have contributed to an improvement in air quality in the town centre, as there is invariably a corresponding increase in vehicle usage annually. Despite concerted efforts to encourage modal shift, it is difficult to persuade car drivers to leave their cars at home and use public transport, bike, or walk into the town centre, or to walk their children to school.</p> <p>There will continue to be exceedences of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective at a small number of town centre locations until traffic issues are addressed and the Borough Council can only seek to influence how highways are managed by the County Council.</p> <p>With regard to “other pollutants of concern” CBC undertook a Stage 1 review of air quality in 1999, which indicated that only two pollutants, nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulates (PM<sub>10</sub>) required more detailed consideration. A Stage 2 assessment was undertaken in 2000, which concluded that a Stage 3 assessment would be required for NO<sub>2</sub> only. The ‘Cheltenham Borough Council Progress Report 2003’ sets this out in more detail by pollutant, including the reasons why Nitrogen Dioxide was the only pollutant which needed to be monitored annually.</p> <p>This report can be found here</p> <p><a href="https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/66/environmental_protection_and_pollution/288/air_quality/2">https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/66/environmental_protection_and_pollution/288/air_quality/2</a></p> <p>Although several locations fail the limit values for Nitrogen Dioxide, the readings show only marginal exceedences. These compare favourably to larger conurbations where measured values can be around double the limit values. Some areas of London for example experience readings for Nitrogen Dioxide of the order of 90 microgrammes per cubic metre, way above the limit value of 40 microgrammes per cubic metre.</p> <p>There is a very close correlation between particulate matter and Nitrogen Dioxide. Where NO<sub>2</sub> levels are around the limit values, the levels for particulate matter are very much below the limit value for that pollutant. This is the basic premise for discontinuing the monitoring of particulates.</p>
<b>14.</b>	<b>Question from Councillor John Payne to the Cabinet Member for Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</b>
	<p>In the Athey Report, January 2015 it noted that the Cheltenham workforce was well educated and skilled, but that productivity was lower than expected. The Council were encouraged to focus upon attracting and supporting businesses which add high value GVA (Gross Value Added) into the economy.</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member outline what progress has been made in attracting and supporting businesses?</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	This administration commissioned the Athey Report which identified some negative economic

trends that had developed over a significant time period. In response, the Council’s senior management team was restructured providing a strong focus on Place-shaping and economic growth. Over the last 12 months, considerable progress has been made driving this growth agenda forward, of which increasing productivity levels is an important element. We have been putting significant focus on the delivery of an employment growth area at West Cheltenham and the JCS inspector has indicated support for bringing this site forward.

Officers, with the support of the Cheltenham Development Task Force, are now working in collaboration with Government departments, GCHQ, the LEP, County Council, the local MP and other stakeholders, to deliver a hi-tech cyber business park with the GCHQ innovation centre for national cyber security as the anchor. To assist with and accelerate the delivery of this hi-tech business park, the LEP has supported a Growth Bid submission for infrastructure and a bid has been submitted to HCA to increase resource capacity. In addition, we are developing other strands of innovation to support existing businesses to grow and to attract and nurture those looking to relocate or start-up. For example, we recently announced the launch of an ultra-fast broadband pilot, introducing a fibre network in Cheltenham, putting us at the forefront of the digital agenda nationally.

These and other developments are enshrined in the emerging place strategy – strengthening Cheltenham’s economy and positioning ourselves as a market leader in digital and cyber industries.

**15. Question from Councillor John Payne to the Cabinet Member for Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay**

Could the Cabinet Member please affirm that all the CCTV cameras in Cheltenham are now fully operational?

**Response from Cabinet Member**

The Council is not responsible for *all* CCTV cameras in Cheltenham, but does have an extensive network of cameras in our car parks and also owns and maintains public realm cameras operated by Gloucestershire constabulary.

For obvious reasons, the Council avoids providing a running commentary on whether or not particular cameras are operational. However, the authority has a very productive relationship with Gloucestershire constabulary in relation to public realm CCTV, which is now being actively monitored from Waterwells in Gloucester.

New equipment in the CCTV control room means that coverage is much improved and the authority is in the process of procuring new high definition cameras to replace the analogue technology which is now coming to the end of its useful life.

Officers visited the new police CCTV control room during week commencing 5<sup>th</sup> December and have confirmed that they are now happy with the CCTV coverage in Cheltenham town centre, following the relocation of the facility from Lansdown Road.

A review of public realm CCTV provision and the associated implementation programme for upgrading is a significant corporate project, which is now subject to regular progress reporting through the Senior Leadership Team.



