

Council

26 March 2018

Public Questions (5)

1.	Question from Mr Michael Ramstedt to the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	<p>As one of those affected by the shutdown of the crematorium on February 12th 2018.</p> <p>Can the council guarantee that when the repairs are carried out that the cremators will be fit for purpose during the interim until the new crematorium is on line and that in the interim there will not be any ongoing maintenance issues going forward. And is the council getting value for money from the expensive service contract ?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>It is well known and a matter of public record that the Council has been experiencing problems with its cremator plant for several years, during which time many families have nevertheless received an acceptable quality service from our bereavement services team.</p> <p>No authority or private crematorium can give a 100% guarantee that it will not have any technical issues with its plant, or that it will not have future maintenance problems. However, our maintenance provider has strongly advised the Council that our cremators are now safe to use and that they can be kept in a serviceable condition up until our new crematorium is ready to operate.</p> <p>The current maintenance contract which the authority has with the company ATI was subject to our normal procurement arrangements which have been designed to secure value for money to the public purse. We will be assessing the performance of our contractor and may seek compensation if there is sufficient evidence to indicate a service failure under the terms of the contract.</p>
2.	Question from Mr Michael Ramstedt to the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	<p>Despite a complaint being raised, families affected during the disruption were not offered any support and the complaint not properly investigated. Are the Cheltenham and Tewkesbury bereavement services therefore fit for purpose and does the council have a robust and fair complaint customer service and carries out such investigations without bias?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Mr Ramstedt made a complaint to the Council via his ward councillor, which has been fully investigated and responded to in accordance with our corporate complaints' procedure and at each stage, replies have been provided within 10 working days. Unfortunately, statements were made by Mr Ramstedt on social media regarding the processing of his complaint, which was not the appropriate or advised means of escalation. However, Council officers did nevertheless pick up on these comments and dealt with them as a request for review of the complaint at the next stage of the process.</p> <p>The Director of Environment investigated and responded to the complaint at</p>

	<p>Stage 2 and subsequently spoken at length to Mr Ramstedt by telephone, explaining that Stage 3 would be dealt with independently of his department.</p> <p>The final Stage 3 response was sent out on Monday 19th March and Mr Ramstedt has the option of approaching the Local Government Ombudsman if he remains dissatisfied with the outcome.</p>
3.	Question from Mr Jonny Brownsteen to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Chris Coleman
	<p>The recent severe weather has caused some disruption to and some uncertainty around bin collections. Will the council consider introducing a text message service which residents can opt in to, to inform residents of when to expect their bins to be collected during times of disruption?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The Council and Ubico are currently looking at future investment in technology which may include text messaging. The Council appreciates residents' understanding in times of service disruption, particularly this winter due to the frequency of snow falls. Every effort is made to ensure as much up to date information as possible is available on the website for residents.</p>
4.	Question from Ms Jo Stafford to Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Flo Clucas
	<p>How can residents make their voices heard when applications such as the one for "Picnic in the Park" at Pittville Park, are made? While a family event is always welcome residents living close to the park felt they were not given adequate opportunity to comment on a live music event so close to their homes.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Large scale events such as the "Picnic in the Park" will require formal licences for putting on entertainment and selling alcohol. The statutory process for determining these types of applications includes the requirement to consult with, amongst others, affected people such as residents. The statutory consultation period is for 28 days and the regulations prescribe that an applicant must put up public notices and advertise the application in a local newspaper.</p> <p>In addition to the statutory process, the council's informal events process includes the ability for local ward Councillors to be engaged at an early stage in the council's engagement with event organisers. This creates an opportunity for Members to engage with their constituents and vice versa.</p>
5.	Question from Ms Jo Stafford to Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Flo Clucas
	<p>In light of the decision of the County Council to limit and means test assistance aimed at tackling period poverty, could the Cabinet Member for Healthy Lifestyles please consider what Cheltenham Borough Council and its partners can do to mitigate the effects of period poverty for girls attending Cheltenham schools?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>First, I wish to thank the questioner for raising such an important issue. It is regretful that the decision of the County Council in relation to period poverty does not reflect the needs of many girls or women in Gloucestershire today. While the money that has now been allocated is welcome, it isn't enough. Sanitary products are vital to the health and well-being of girls and women. The inability to afford sanitary protection means that, in Gloucestershire, 1 in 10 girls misses school.</p>

	<p>We want to ensure that every child is able to attend school, without the embarrassment that period poverty can inflict. However, to do so means that this Council, which is not responsible for Education in our town, needs to understand the full extent of the problem in our schools. I will therefore be coming forward with a proposal to survey all schools in Cheltenham, to identify the likely numbers of those who are affected by period poverty and to come forward with options to alleviate the problem.</p>
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