

Council

23 July 2018

Member Questions (21)

1.	Question from Councillor Clucas to Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Coleman
	<p>What effect the proposed new incinerator is likely to have on Cheltenham's recycling collections?</p> <p>Though a County Council project, does the Cabinet member know what the likely cost will be to Cheltenham residents?</p> <p>Is the Cabinet member aware of the system for incineration that is being proposed and potential hazards?</p> <p>Further, the Cabinet member is requested to refer the issue to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, so that an in depth report can be prepared, which will look at a range of issues including those above, with a request that the County Cabinet member with responsibility for the scheme, be asked to attend to clarify issues raised.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>As you will know, I have always been and remain opposed to the County Council's incinerator. It is bad news for the environment and bad news for the tax payer.</p> <p>Undoubtedly there will be a cost to Cheltenham residents but in recent weeks a change in the County Council's plan has worsened the position. The County Council and the Joint Waste Team have consistently said that they would support the delivery of a Waste Transfer Station for Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council. This would allow both Authorities to collect waste from residents homes and take it to the Waste Transfer Station located in a convenient area to 'tip'. The County Council would then arrange for the waste to be transported down to their Incinerator.</p> <p>However they recently announced that they were considering Direct Delivery - forcing both Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council to take residents waste from their homes down the M5 to the Incinerator. Had I not been a County Councillor, the first that I would have heard of this plan would have been from the Echo.</p> <p>If they force us to direct deliver waste, we will need to almost double the vehicle fleet and find extra drivers. There will also have to be round changes. We estimate that the cost will run into millions of pounds - and that is before you add in the environmental damage caused by huge numbers of additional vehicle movements.</p> <p>Direct Delivery is a typically bonkers County Council idea. I am extremely angry that it is being considered because the Joint Waste Team, who appear to be advising the County Council on direct delivery, advised us during the recent</p>

	<p>service redesign that direct delivery was not an option. We designed our rounds and purchased our vehicles on the advice of the Joint Waste Team.</p> <p>I moved a motion opposing direct delivery at the recent Joint Waste Committee meeting and I'm pleased to say that all District Council representatives from across the County supported my motion. Ubico also provided professional advice explaining in detail that direct delivery is completely impractical. Regrettably, but unsurprisingly, the County Council representative voted against. I very much hope however that the County Council will see sense and follow the majority decision of the Joint Waste Committee.</p> <p>As a Cabinet Member, I do not think it is for me to refer matters to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is however my firm view that it would be beneficial for the Committee to review the County Council's Incinerator plans as well as the Joint Waste Teams' conflicted advice on the issue, as well as that given by all of the other professionals involved, and particularly around direct delivery.</p> <p>I have visited an incinerator to see how they work in practice. It was absolutely heartbreaking to see vehicles tip materials that could have easily been recycled into the fire. For the record, it is my view that we need to make it as easy as possible for Cheltenham residents to reduce, reuse and recycle so together we can keep what ends up in the County Council's wretched bonfire to an absolute minimum.</p>
2.	Question from Councillor Boyes to Leader, Councillor Jordan
	<p>According to the Government's own assessments, Brexit will leave the UK economy worse off in every scenario. Are there any measures that the Council can take to investigate the consequences of Brexit for Cheltenham's economy and jobs?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Clearly the impact of Brexit is a concern for Cheltenham as for everywhere else in the UK. Since the referendum we have consulted local businesses about Brexit to understand both their view of the opportunities and concerns. Their main issue has always been to understand the 'deal' for the UK leaving the EU in good time to plan ahead. The rising concern is that 2 years after the referendum details of the 'deal' are still not clear with the chance of the worst case scenario of a 'no deal' Brexit seemingly increasing as deadlines for decisions get closer.</p> <p>The uncertainty is a major concern for companies such as Airbus with complex supply chains that include many jobs based in our area. We are working with the County Council and LEP to understand the implications for the wider area including consequences of current EU funding programmes ceasing after 2020. For instance we have recently received over £600k EU funding which is contributing towards the environmental improvement in the High Street and we need to know whether such funding will exist in the future and how any replacement scheme will work. These issues are being reported to and discussed by the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee.</p>
3.	Question from Councillor Mason to Leader, Councillor Jordan
	<p>Given the increasing numbers of empty shops. What proactive support is the Borough Council giving to the town's struggling retailers?</p>

	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p> <p>The main aim of the Council is to ensure that Cheltenham is an attractive place to shop and so support local retailers by ensuring a buoyant local economy.</p> <p>CBC was instrumental in the formation of the BID, and has regular direct access with levy payers, many of whom are retailers. Whilst we fully recognise the challenges facing town centre retailers, the work of the BID and other bodies such as the Task Force has encouraged new entrants – John Lewis, Oliver Bonas, Urban Outfitters and India Jane. Equally we take a pro-active stance where threats are imminent and I have recently been in correspondence with House of Fraser over how this Council may be able to assist in the future plans for Cavendish House.</p> <p>Beyond that CBC has taken the lead, working with GCC, on significant public realm improvements on the High Street and are also jointly trialling the restrictions at Boots Corner, supported by many retailers.</p> <p>The BID is leading the development of a new web page to support individuals and retailers seeking to operate in the town.</p> <p>Additionally Cheltenham has been singled out as one of the region's retail success stories by real estate advisor Colliers International at the launch of the Colliers International Midsummer Retail Report for the South West - a review of the UK shopping scene.</p> <p>Hal Clarke, senior surveyor, retail agency (south), said: "Polarisation between the 'best and the rest' retail locations is becoming increasingly apparent throughout the UK and this is no different for the South West.</p> <p>"The dominant centres in the region, such as Bristol, Bath, Cheltenham, Exeter and Plymouth, continue to benefit from good levels of demand and relatively low levels of vacancy.</p> <p>"An example is Cheltenham, where rents remain unchanged from 2017 and the town will welcome a new 115,000 sq ft John Lewis department store in October of this year."</p> <p>The report follows the publication of Knight Frank's Top 200 Retail Ranking last year, which had Cheltenham ninth in the UK outside London as best High Streets to invest in.</p> <p>That report said: "Affluent market towns' such as Guildford, Chichester, Winchester and Cheltenham generally have strong fundamentals that transcend wealth alone."</p> <p>In addition the Council provides support though Business Rate discounts for new and expanding businesses.</p>
4.	<p>Question from Councillor Harman to Cabinet Member Development and Safety , Councillor McKinlay</p>
	<p>Has the Cabinet met or is he planning to meet Town Centre Businesses who are</p>

	being disadvantaged by the closure of Boots Corner?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The BID and their ambassadors are pro-actively engaging with BID members across the town, many of whom are strong supporters of the trial. Equally they are reporting back on issues being raised and referring these through to either CBC or in most cases GCC.</p> <p>As the trial is in its infancy it is premature to assess impacts so we have encouraged all issues be reported back to GCC as part of the wider monitoring process.</p> <p>https://gloucestershire-consult.objective.co.uk/public/trp/phase4/phase4</p>
5.	Question from Councillor Harman to Cabinet Member Development and Safety , Councillor McKinlay
	Has the Cabinet Member met or is he planning to meet persons with disabilities or mobility issues who feel disadvantaged by the closure of Boots Corner?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>GCC has consulted with a disability forum enabled via CBC at every stage of the Cheltenham Transport Plan implementation. For this stage those conversations resulted in the retention of the Pelican crossing at Boots Corner and the provision of extra blue badge parking bays in the town centre.</p> <p>As the trial is in its infancy it is premature to assess impacts so we have encouraged all issues be reported back to GCC as part of the wider monitoring process.</p> <p>https://gloucestershire-consult.objective.co.uk/public/trp/phase4/phase4</p>
6.	Question from Councillor Harman to Cabinet Member Development and Safety , Councillor McKinlay
	What criteria will be used to judge whether the Boots corner reconfiguration has been successful?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>GCC have advised that the scheme will be assessed through consideration of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic data on flows and speeds gathered before and during the experiment at around 25 sites across Cheltenham • Journey time data on key routes. This will be undertaken at intervals throughout the trial period • Town Centre footfall including a count of pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchairs and the use of seating and bike stands • A survey of public and business perceptions • Data from air quality monitoring sites across Cheltenham • The numbers of passengers using public transport • Comments received regarding the scheme. • Observations and thoughts of GCC and Amey officers.

	Bear in mind that some of the measures are subject to random factors (for example, air quality monitoring can be heavily influenced by the season and the weather) so we will need to review several months of data once initial disruption has settled down before reaching valid conclusions.
7.	Question from Councillor Willingham to Cabinet Member Development and Safety , Councillor McKinlay
	Recognising that the primary responsibility for traffic signal sequencing is with Gloucestershire County Council, could at Cabinet Member give me an assurance that pressure will be put onto the County Council to review the timing and sequencing of the traffic signals on the B4633 Gloucester Road, to ensure that these signals are optimised to deal with traffic displaced following the closure of Boots Corner?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>GCC have collected data pre-trial from c25 sites across the town as a benchmark and are currently collecting data post-trial implementation, but would wish initial disruption to settle before reaching any valid conclusions.</p> <p>That data will inform any interventions or mitigation deemed necessary including the timing and sequencing of traffic lights.</p>
8.	Question from Councillor Willingham to Cabinet Member Development and Safety , Councillor McKinlay
	Recognising that the primary responsibility for communications about Traffic Regulation Orders is with Gloucestershire County Council, could the Cabinet Member give me an assurance that pressure will be put onto the County Council to ensure that the closure of Boots Corner is updated to the providers of vehicle SatNav services, such as Google and TomTom so that drivers are less likely to be routed through the closure by GPS technology?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>We have informed Google Maps about the restrictions introduced by the trial but we do not know when they will update their mapping. The national body that communicates map changes to SatNav companies (GeoPlace) does not pick up on any temporary or experimental closures. They will only do this if the closure becomes permanent at some point in the future.</p> <p>We strongly recommend that road users do not rely on their digital devices alone and instead observe and take note of the road signs in place, in line with the highway code.</p>
9.	Question from Councillor Willingham to Cabinet Member Development and Safety , Councillor McKinlay
	Recognising that the primary responsibility for signage and road markings is with Gloucestershire County Council, could the Cabinet Member give me an assurance that pressure will be put onto the County Council to enhance the signage about the closure of Boots Corner for example with the addition of large “no motor vehicles” signs painted on the road?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>For enforcement to be effective, all signs must accord with Dept for Transport regulations and as the trial restricts what traffic may still enter Boots Corner care has to be taken to ensure that messages are transparent.</p> <p>CBC and GCC have recognised that some motorists are not complying with the new restrictions so GCC have advised that they will be implementing further</p>

	"advisory" signage imminently prior to enforcement action being implemented.
10.	Question from Councillor Willingham to Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles, Councillor Clucas
	I recently visited the Local Government Association Conference in Birmingham, and attended a presentation given by "The Silver Line", which is a free, confidential, 24-hour helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people. Would the Cabinet Member be willing to investigate if this Council can promote those services in Cheltenham?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	In thanking Cllr Willingham for his question, I am mindful that the organisation of which he writes, has recently spoken of its reliance on Lottery funding, which is currently not secured. Given that concern, I do know of the organisation and would be happy to look at how we might look at working with it, once its future funding is agreed.
11.	Question from Councillor Willingham to Leader, Councillor Jordan
	Earlier in July the Police launched a murder investigation following a very serious incident in St Peter's ward and I am sure that the Leader of the Council would join me in expressing our condolences to the family and friends of the victim. This level of serious crime is fortunately very rare in Cheltenham, but as well as the devastating consequences for the victim and their family, it is very unsettling for the wider community, could I get an assurance that this council will work with the Police, and other agencies to provide reassurance to the local community that policing and other community cohesion work will be targetted at this area?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>I would indeed join Councillor Willingham in expressing our condolences to the family and friends of the victim in this incident.</p> <p>Through project Solace, the Council is working much more closely with the police than ever before and indeed, we are sharing office accommodation within the Municipal Offices.</p> <p>Work is also being done to collate a shared data picture of crime and anti-social behaviour, to inform our priorities for targeting resources to best effect.</p>
12.	Question from Councillor Willingham to Leader, Councillor Jordan
	Recognising that the primary political responsibility for Policing is now with the Police and Crime Commissioner, does the Leader of the Council know how many Police that should have otherwise been on the streets of Cheltenham were diverted to London and other parts of the UK to cover the US presidential visit and the significant protests against it?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	No I currently don't have that information but will update Cllr Willingham if/when I do.
13.	Question from Councillor Cooke to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor McKinlay
	The closure of Boots corner is likely to disperse traffic into neighbouring residential areas. Have the air quality levels in these areas been established prior to the closure of Boots Corner and by what methodology?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	Air quality is measured for nitrogen dioxide (NO2) levels. The CBC interactive

	<p>map can be found on the CBC website under air quality.</p> <p>Some sites were discontinued at the end of 2015 to save money, where results were consistently below legal limits. Monitoring locations at 7 sites around the town are being started to assess compliance with legal limits, including at 3 previously used sites.</p> <p>The main collection tool is diffusion tubes and data is measured long term in accordance with Environment Agency advice.</p> <p>Additionally I note that you attended the recent members seminar established to provide additional information and understanding on this complex matter</p>
14.	Question from Councillor Cooke to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor McKinlay
	<p>Given that assessing air quality using diffusion tubes yields only an average measurement over time (including at night), how will you reassure residents in the affected areas that there has been no significant increase in levels of particulates and oxides of nitrogen in the air to which residents are exposed during peak periods, in the rush hour and when children are walking to school?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Yes, diffusion tubes measure long term, average levels. Research has shown there is a correlation between short term, peak levels and long-term levels as follows: Where long term (annual) levels do not rise above 60ug/m3, the short term (1hour) level is very unlikely to breach the 200ug/m3 limit. The highest annual level monitored in Cheltenham is 48.5 ug/m3, so there is very unlikely to be breach of the 1-hour limit at this location. Initial results using new monitoring equipment at this location have confirmed this.</p>
15.	Question from Councillor Savage to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor McKinlay
	<p>I have been contacted by residents concerned that the closure of Boots Corner will disadvantage elderly and disabled people, reducing their ability to access town centre retailers.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member assure us that any adverse impact on people with mobility difficulties has been fully considered, and that appropriate mitigating steps have been taken?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>GCC received and responded to issues raised by the CBC led disability forum - see Q5. In addition to more blue badge parking bays for private motor vehicles consideration has been given to alternatives for those with accessibility challenges. Every Stagecoach bus deployed in the town has low floor capability and earlier this year CBC made a commitment to ensure that over time there will be a greater number of disabled friendly taxis operating in the town.</p>
16.	Question from Councillor Seacome to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor McKinlay
	<p>Boots corner and residents' delivery.</p> <p>The Boots Corner development has thrown up a problem for residents (there are about 28 of them) who live within the new one way system that is Boots Corner. Delivery companies are unable to guarantee delivery before 10.00 and after 18.00, because they can't work to that narrow timetable, which includes most of</p>

	<p>the working day, and they don't want to leave the area by the only route, i.e. via the penalty-ridden Boots Corner. The two solutions offered to me by officers are impractical and unworkable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Viz, park by Yates and walk down Post Office Lane, for a residential block next door to Kath Kidston. In the rain, and with anything bigger than a small parcel?? Ludicrous!! How will the Sat Nav correlate to the two destinations required? - And secondly, stick to the timetable, unworkable, as stated. <p>What is the administration going to do, to sort out this anomaly? (Apart from revoking the Boots Corner experiment.)</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>I understand that advice was provided to you and a concerned resident by email on 09/07/18 and that subsequently the resident was advising both their delivery driver of options and their landlord over maintenance.</p> <p>As the trial is in its infancy it is premature to access full impacts so we have encouraged that all issues be reported back to GCC as part of the wider monitoring process.</p> <p>https://gloucestershire-consult.objective.co.uk/public/trp/phase4/phase4</p>
17.	Question from Councillor Payne to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>On 14th June following a member's request the location of the 26 traffic monitoring locations was published. Could I please request that the data associated with these survey points be published? In addition could you please confirm the details of the survey, i.e., times and method of recording?</p> <p>I make this request in order that Members can better assess the impact of Boots Corner closure on traffic flow within Cheltenham.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>I will gladly request this from colleagues at GCC but my current understanding is that the majority of the data collecting sites collect data 24/7</p>
18.	Question from Councillor Wilkinson to Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Jeffries
	<p>Cheltenham has been identified as an area with challenges of housing affordability. Can the Cabinet Member for housing detail current activities around council investment in homes in the town. Could he also comment on any potential bids for funding to deliver new housing within Cheltenham - for example via the Housing Revenue Account Additional Borrowing programme to fund new council houses?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Set out in our recently approved Housing & Homelessness Strategy are our plans to launch a £100m investment programme to provide around 500 homes, with the needs of families and young people especially in mind. This will not only enable a step change in the delivery of social and affordable housing, it will also create opportunities for the council, in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH), to provide excellent quality private rented homes to young people and families which can be let on a long term let basis, thereby providing much valued security of tenure.</p>

	<p>Currently CBH has plans to supply 25 affordable homes within the HRA during 2018/19 with schemes already on site at two former garage areas. Hester's Way Road will generate 4 new homes and Newton Road will create 6 new flats. These were due to complete December 2018 but will complete 2 months ahead of programme to provide new homes by Autumn 2018.</p> <p>Looking strategically at CBC and HRA landholdings, and assessing their housing suitability, there is the potential for some larger sites to come forward – however undoubtedly the larger the site, the longer the lead-in time. In the shorter term there are number of smaller sites which are being appraised and progressed: a further 6 garage sites, 2 non-garage sites and the development of the Monkscroft Villas site. It is hoped that the first of these schemes will be on site by March 2019 and together these sites will deliver more than 50 new homes. Funding is already identified, using HRA reserves and utilising Right To Buy receipts. The pipeline also identifies a further 12 garage sites which should also produce more than 50 homes.</p> <p>In addition, Homes England have recently announced an opportunity for a number of councils, including Cheltenham, to bid for a share of £1billion extra borrowing to build these much-needed homes. I can confirm that we will be putting in a bid for a share of this funding. We will also bid for grant funding for more social rented homes to be provided as part of our new build aspirations.</p> <p>All of this will complement our existing new supply programme and runs alongside our current activities in considering potential regeneration opportunities to the west of Cheltenham.</p>
19.	Question from Councillor Wilkinson to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor McKinlay
	Will the Cabinet Member for development and safety take advantage of the new air quality monitoring technology to, in due course, publish live, real-time air quality data as part of a public awareness campaign on the harm to air quality caused by car journeys?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	Yes. This is currently being considered by CBC Environmental Health as part of a range of wider initiatives. In particular we are working with a major local employer to provide data for their staff relating to air quality immediately outside their premises. We are also working towards linking data from new equipment in the town centre to real-time information on the CBC website. More information will be provided as this project develops.
20.	Question from Councillor Wilkinson to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor McKinlay
	In light of the 2050 big conversation, which rightly highlights the flight of younger people from the county, can the Cabinet Member for development and safety provide details on the average age of participants in some recent example council consultations? How does this compare to the average age of a Cheltenham resident?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	While CBC doesn't routinely capture the age of participants in consultations, there is an on-going effort to make sure the views of younger people are included. For instance the Wilson Collective in Cheltenham have been actively involved in the

	2050 process. However, it is interesting to note that the organisers of the 2050 consultation have been disappointed with the overall level of response from young people so it is clear there is still work to be done on this.
21.	Question from Councillor Mason to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor McKinlay
	Is there any form of compensation for a business that can show drop in profit due to the closure of Boots corner? If so how do they make a claim? If businesses are entitled to compensation has a sum to cover it been included in the project's budget?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	No funding has been identified for such a compensation scheme. This scheme is a trial and consequently no decision over implementation will be made for many months.