

Council

21st January 2019

Member Questions (14)

1.	Question from Councillor Klara Sudbury to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>In the overview and scrutiny meeting papers (14th January) it states that Gloucestershire county council has decided that they won't support the much needed refurbishment of paving on the Strand or Cambray Place because these are "shared spaces". This is because the government decided in July 2018 that work to create new shared spaces should be paused.</p> <p>Instead the Borough Council now appears to be working with the county council to improve/change areas of the High St impacted by or associated with the Cheltenham transport plan (the area High Street between Rodney Road and Winchcombe Street which has become a lot more congested since the transport plan and the planned Boots Corner shared space).</p> <p>What has CBC done to try to persuade Gloucestershire county council that the High Street between Cambray Place and Bath Road, and Cambray Place are existing and fully pedestrianised areas, that should not be considered to be new shared spaces so that work to improve paving in these areas can take place?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The issue was raised at an officer meeting on 8th January, 2019, with a request for an update on the Department for Transport moratorium on shared space.</p> <p>It was decided that both parties will now seek a legal opinion, as with no change to the relevant traffic regulation orders, there is growing doubt that the moratorium applies in this instance.</p>
2.	Question from Councillor Klara Sudbury to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>CBC wishes to create a new shared space at boots corner, where eventually the controlled crossing is removed, and pedestrians share the space with cyclists buses and taxis. Does the government moratorium on shared spaces apply to that area?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>As the road would remain highway, albeit reduced in width, the moratorium on shared space would seemingly not apply.</p> <p>For your information, no decision has been made on the controlled crossing other than it was to be retained during the trial at the request of the Disability Forum.</p> <p>One solution, should the trial be made permanent, would be to prioritise the lights in favour of pedestrians rather than vehicles.</p>
3.	Question from Councillor Klara Sudbury to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>I have previously requested (at a meeting overview and scrutiny committee and via email) that the straight part of Saint Luke's Road has pollution and traffic</p>

	<p>monitoring installed. This is because the location of the sensor on College Road does not pick up any displaced traffic from boots corner that travels west to east along Saint Luke's Road/Saint Lukes place and bath parade. Since there is also no traffic monitoring on Montpelier Terrace, it is possible that significant numbers of displaced vehicles travelling west to east are not captured at any point through the traffic monitoring. This issue is very important to Saint Luke's Road and Saint Lukes Place as they are very narrow and the impact of increased congestion and pollution is right by people's homes. If there are no plans for pollution monitoring on the straight part of Saint Luke's Road could I please request again that this is considered as soon as possible during the CTP trial? If there is no traffic monitoring planned for the straight part of Saint Luke's Road, please could the Cabinet member request that GCC to install traffic monitoring at this location during the trial and as soon as possible?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p> <p>Additional traffic monitoring has been undertaken in the St. Lukes area and is currently being reviewed.</p> <p>Air pollution (nitrogen-dioxide) is being monitored in the St Luke's Road area, but it has not been possible to monitor in every precise location requested, due to budgetary constraints. In addition, we believe it is unlikely that the straight part of St Luke's Road would generate significantly different results statistically from the nearest monitoring point, due to its close proximity. We will soon be in a position to share details of any exceedances of statutory air quality limits in 2018 for all monitoring locations, using the required 12 months of data. In the unlikely event that the St Luke's area does fail the annual limit for nitrogen-dioxide, an action plan of measures would be identified and implemented, to bring the area into compliance in the shortest possible time, thereby mitigating impacts on health.</p>
4.	<p>Question from Councillor David Willingham to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p> <p>A number of my constituents are concerned about traffic on the B4633 Gloucester Road, and the sequencing of the traffic signals along this corridor. I note from the report that the A4019 corridor has proposals for improvements. Can I get an assurance that the B4633 Gloucester Road corridor will have investment in its traffic management, and that the sequencing of traffic signals on this corridor and other traffic flow metrics will be looked at as this trial continues?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p> <p>GCC has completed a traffic signals study, looking at the key junctions across the whole of the network and will be making investment over the next three years to improve congestion hotspots, particularly where they are likely to be affected by the predicted housing growth development to the north-west of Cheltenham.</p>
5.	<p>Question from Councillor David Willingham to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay</p> <p>Can I get an assurance that the signal timings at the junction of the B4633 Gloucester Road with the A4019 Tewkesbury Road will be reviewed to get better traffic flows along Gloucester Road, which currently has excessive queues at peak times? As the disparity between the long flow times for the A4019 Tewkesbury Road and the excessively short flow times for the B4633 Gloucester Road, seem to be causing excessive queuing.</p>

	Response from Cabinet Member
	See answer to Q4. GCC officers have also informed me that the operation of this junction has been adjusted following feedback received during the trial and are continuing to assess what traffic control system upgrades need to be made to improve the flow of traffic in this area of Cheltenham.
6.	Question from Councillor David Willingham to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Can I get an assurance that a review of parking restrictions and active peak-time parking enforcement, will be considered for the lower High Street, as obstructive parking near the junction with Ambrose Street impedes the flow of buses, seems to cause rat-running and seems to exacerbate peak-time congestion in this area?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	Parking restrictions have only recently been reviewed by GCC, so the key will be to achieve effective enforcement. I have asked what resources can be deployed in light of this question and the information has been passed onto the GCC on-street parking team, who will investigate the issue and determine if additional enforcement is required in the area.
7.	Question from Councillor David Willingham to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Can I get an assurance that a review of rat-running affecting residential streets such as New Street, Grove Street, Devonshire Street and Burton Street, will be looked at as part of the review of this trial, as these residential streets are not suitable for the volume of traffic now trying to avoid the High Street / Ambrose Street junction?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	This is again an issue I have raised with GCC and may well be linked to your observation about obstructive parking at the Ambrose Street/ Lower High Street junction, increasing the likelihood of drivers seeking to use alternative routes. GCC advises that the trial is monitoring traffic across a wide area of the Cheltenham road network to determine the impact and whether any mitigation measures need to be considered.
8.	Question from Councillor Max Wilkinson to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Can the Cabinet Member report back on the increase in pedestrian movements along the High Street, across Clarence Street, through the area known as Boots Corner since the latest phase of the transport plan was implemented?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	Data on movements (other than vehicles which is collected by GCC) has been collected and independently verified by G John Surveys Ltd. This has shown that for the week commencing 11/06/18, prior to the trial, pedestrian numbers were 14,657; for the week commencing 02/07/18, pedestrian numbers were 27,008 and for the week commencing 08/10/18, pedestrian numbers were 31,695. Growth in excess of 100% between June and October. Growth has also been identified for cyclists, wheelchair users and those sitting down within the space.

9.	Question from Councillor Max Wilkinson to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Can the Cabinet Member report on the increase or decrease in cycling through the area known as Boots Corner since the latest phase of the transport plan was implemented?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	Based upon the survey cited in Q8, cycle movements for the same period have increased from a pre-trial figure of 220, to 674 and 694 in July and October respectively. Again, significant growth, illustrating the impact of the scheme on modal travel shift.
10.	Question from Councillor Max Wilkinson to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Has footfall across the length of the High Street increased or decreased since the latest phase of the transport plan was implemented?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	The footfall cameras operated by the Business Improvement District (BID) have not been fully operational, because of the disruption caused by the significant works on the High Street. The only comparable data is that for the Brewery Quarter, which cites 15% growth since the trial began in June 2018.
11.	Question from Councillor Max Wilkinson to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Has there been evidence of an upturn in sales in town centre shops since the latest phase of the transport plan was implemented?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	Commercial confidentiality prevents us from having access to such data, so everything is anecdotal. However, with evidence of greater footfall and extended dwell times around Boots' Corner, it is hoped that traders of all sorts have benefited from the changed circumstances.
12.	Question from Councillor Jonny Brownsteen to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	St Paul's has welcomed many new businesses to the Brewery Quarter in the past few months. What kind of trading and footfall figures are the Brewery reporting since the trial closure began, and how does that compare to the same period last year?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	The last publicly quoted data from the Brewery was on 15 th October, 2018, prior to the opening of several units. That briefing noted that almost five million people have visited the Spa town's new retail and leisure centre on the former Brewery site off the lower High Street during the last year - an increase of 15 per cent.
13.	Question from Councillor Jonny Brownsteen to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	What information do we have about how businesses along the Lower High Street are faring since the trial began?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	It is difficult to gauge the impact on the lower High Street, as there is no unified body representing the commercial interests there, and it is outside of the BID zone.

	We will seek feedback from the West End Partnership.
14.	Question from Councillor Karl Hobley to Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Traffic is often backed up down St George's Street, causing delays and frustration for drivers. The lights allowing access to Swindon Road are either poorly synchronized, or not at all. Whilst this problem predates the Boots Corner trail, it has been exacerbated by it. Will the Borough Council work with Gloucestershire County Council highways to address this problem?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	It is pleasing to report that the recent GCC lead cabinet member briefing, identifies the completion of a separate review of the traffic signals on the A4019 corridor, with funding identified to tackle the challenge. It also notes that this corridor was a 'congestion hotspot' prior to the implementation of the Cheltenham Transport Plan. Hopefully this intervention will assist in addressing the issues at that location.