

Council

14 October 2019

Member Questions (6)

1.	Question from Councillor Mason to the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Coleman
	<p>In the past few months numerous Lansdown residents have complained about missed collections both wheelie bin and recycling.</p> <p>They demand better, or at the very least that the standard of service meets those of any contract agreed with UBICO.</p> <p>Is there a penalty clause within the contract that provides a refund if standards are not meet?</p> <p>If so could the cabinet member confirm whether such discussions have started?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Ubico Limited, our service provider, has experienced driver shortages over the summer period, as have other local authorities and service providers across the country, due to the national shortage in appropriately qualified HGV drivers.</p> <p>Unfortunately, this has resulted in some incomplete rounds and more properties missed by inexperienced agency drivers, who may not stay with Ubico for very long and do not become familiar with the rounds. Ubico is working with the Council to recruit more drivers and in fact, is looking to train up an internal pool of agency drivers themselves, to overcome this difficulty in the longer term. In the meantime, measures have been put in place to try and reduce the impact on collections for residents in the short term and hopefully this will secure an improvement.</p> <p>If any residents are experiencing regularly difficulties with missed collections, these should be reported to cleansing@cheltenham.gov.uk</p> <p>Ubico Limited is a teckal company, wholly owned by local authorities. Cheltenham Borough Council pays a contract sum, agreed each year with Ubico, to deliver environmental maintenance services across the borough. Therefore, there is a more flexible partnership arrangement in place than a private sector contractor relationship, where penalty clauses might be more appropriate.</p>
2.	Question from Councillor Harman to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor McKinlay
	<p>The Economic, infrastructure and skills Committee of the Welsh Assembly has called upon the Welsh Government to ensure that new housing development should include provision for electric vehicle charging.</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member consider how Cheltenham Borough Council can use its powers to promote similar provision for new housing developments?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages planning applications to be designed to enable charging of electric vehicles and JCS Policy SD4 requires development to "Incorporate, where feasible, facilities for charging</p>

	<p>plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles”.</p> <p>Local planning policy has to take its lead from national policy and guidance. In this context, the council can encourage, but not compel applicants, to include provision for electric vehicle charging. Officers will monitor national policy and look to strengthen the council’s position when the opportunity arises. In any case we will be lobbying government on issues such as this to allow us to strengthen policy where appropriate.</p>
3.	Question from Councillor Harman to the Cabinet Member Development and Safety, Councillor McKinlay
	When will Cheltenham Borough Council require Taxis and Private Hire vehicles that it licences to be carbon neutral?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>CBC introduced tighter environmental standards for taxis and private hire vehicles in 2018 and these must now meet a minimum Euro 5 emission standard for new licences, or when vehicle are replaced. The policy is next scheduled for updating in 2021 and we will start consultation with stakeholders, including the taxi trade next year in relation to this.</p> <p>I can confirm that we will be taking account of commitments in relation to the climate emergency and our aspirations for carbon neutrality for the borough by 2030, as part of that policy review.</p>
4.	Question from Councillor Britter to Cabinet Member, Development & Safety, Councillor McKinlay
	<p>Overgrown grass verges and central reservations along the busy A40 are “an accident waiting to happen” because they haven’t been cut. That is the claim from residents in Benhall. Some say the verges have grown so high that this situation could create a safety hazard.</p> <p>I appreciate that this authority is not responsible for roadside verges but with no cutting taking place this season is this residents and visitors have to expect on this main gateway into our town.</p> <p>Does this mean we have to accept a second class service from now on?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>I understand that grass cutting did not take place as scheduled by GCC as a result of the Highways England works on the Golden Valley.</p> <p>Grass cutting works were ‘suspended’ to facilitate the wider Highways England (HE) delivery strategy. Full grass cutting would have necessitated lane closures on routes already heavily impacted by the HE closures so over the summer grass cutting was restricted to roundabouts and visibility splays, which were cut for safety reasons. Now that HE has concluded that phase of the maintenance project, GCC will be re-instating the usual grass cutting regime this autumn.</p>
5.	Question from Councillor Cooke to Cabinet Member, Development & Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	Given changes in shopping habits and the decline of the high street, what plans does Cheltenham Borough Council have to recategorise retail space in

	Cheltenham town centre for residential use?
	Response from Cabinet member
	<p>Changes in retail habits and the associated impacts on Town Centres are well documented. CBC does not categorise land uses as such – rather, the land use is determined by existing uses and relevant permissions. There are a number of initiatives underway to proactively manage change on the high street including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The emerging Joint Core Strategy (JCS) will contain new policy on retail and town centres; - Ongoing proactive work is taking place with the Cheltenham BID, Landlords and other interested parties, to enable mixed use developments on the high street where appropriate and reduce vacancy rates; - Investments in the public realm in the Town Centre will enhance the experience for visitors, residents and the wider public; - Supporting development/redevelopment in the town centre through the development management process (recent examples include Metrobank, redevelopment at the rear of Regent Arcade, redevelopment of the Quadrangle, Oriel House change of use from business to residential). <p>Importantly, the work above and other initiatives are likely to encourage mixed use on the high street (a component of which will be residential) rather than conversion of retail to residential alone.</p> <p>The General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) already allows for a range of changes of use on high streets (for example retail to residential, in principle) without the need for planning permission.</p>
6.	Question from Councillor Cooke to Cabinet Member, Development & Safety, Councillor Andrew McKinlay
	<p>Although not as good for personal fitness or the environment as walking or cycling, electric powered scooters are being used as a means of reducing private car use in continental cities including Paris, Madrid and Lisbon.</p> <p>What is Cheltenham Borough Council's position on the use of electric scooters in Cheltenham?</p>
	Response from Cabinet member
	<p>On the face of it, any form of transport which helps reduce private car use and the associated carbon emissions is to be welcomed. Provided they are ridden with care and at a sensible speed within pedestrianised areas, scooters should not give rise to a significant risk, but my understanding is that they cannot be used legally on the highway. Enforcement in relation to this matter rests with the police.</p> <p>In future, it is my ambition that we will have better segregated cycle-ways within the town and CBC has been lobbying for these through its consultancy work with transport specialist 'Systra' and associated discussions with the Highways Authority, Gloucestershire County Council.</p>