

Council
7 December 2020

Public Questions (8 total)

1.	Question from Izaak Tailford to the Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	Given the increased public debate on active travel, what is the council doing to bring forward the proposals for the Cheltways scheme outlined in the Connecting Cheltenham report?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>The Connecting Cheltenham report was submitted to Gloucestershire County Council as part of the Local Transport Plan review. We have received confirmation that the report, and its proposed local cycle improvements, has been considered. The LTP is due for publication in the new year.</p> <p>We are engaging with Gloucestershire County Council as the Highways Authority, highlighting the importance of investment in cycle schemes in the most urban centres which will benefit the most people.</p> <p>An action plan is currently being developed and finalised as a result of the Connecting Cheltenham report – which identified considerable funding needed to achieve aspirations. This action plan will help inform and develop “bid ready” projects in which to apply for funding should opportunities arise. The predicted cost of Cycle Cheltways, as identified within the Connecting Cheltenham report is estimated to be £5 to £20 million.</p>
2.	Question from Izaak Tailford to the Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	Given the lack of formal proposals for cycle infrastructure in Cheltenham from Gloucestershire County Council, the highways authority, is the council looking at any other ways to deliver off-road cycle paths like the Honeybourne line?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>See response to question 1.</p> <p>Officers are working with relevant teams within Gloucestershire County Council to agree priorities of cycle infrastructure; this will include exploring opportunities for off road cycle paths.</p>
3.	Question from Dan Harte to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	Cycling is my primary means of transport for short journeys around Cheltenham. And my 5-year-old son has just started riding to school. But many of the roads around our town can feel dangerous. What is the Council doing to provide high quality, segregated cycling infrastructure to keep myself, my son and other cyclists safe?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Gloucestershire County Council is the Highways Authority and therefore responsible for undertaking any segregated cycling related works on the public highway.</p> <p>In 2019, CBC developed the ‘Connecting Cheltenham’ report this was informed by key stakeholders, including the County Council. This is being considered in</p>

	<p>GCC's Local Transport Plan due for release in the new year.</p> <p>Additionally, we have for many years been working with partners on a southern extension of the Honeybourne Line to Lansdown Road. This information has been discussed publicly and I understand has been an ambition of local cycle campaigners for decades. Most recently, officers and cabinet members have been engaged in discussions with GWR and Network Rail about the project. I hope to be able to announce positive news soon.</p> <p>See response to question 1.</p>
4.	Question from Sarah Pineger to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	<p>I've noticed a significant increase in families out cycling together during lockdown and, having participated, saw how popular the last critical mass cycle ride (along the A40 and into town) was. Cheltenham is a great town for cycling, being relatively flat and not too big. Would the Borough council consider supporting regular family cycling days with traffic reduction measures along key roads to encourage more families to try out cycling together and to gain experience of cycling around the town? One of the biggest barriers to people (especially women) cycling is traffic, this of course, becomes a self-perpetuating problem.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Both the Think Travel team and the Highways Authority in Gloucestershire County Council would be responsible for running events of this nature. They are running three 'School Street' trials one each in Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury. This may lead to further initiatives of this nature.</p> <p>Within the Connecting Cheltenham report, community led projects were identified as a priority, with the community playing a key role in the delivery of key events such as play streets and parklets. A mechanism for establishing a pot of money and bidding process for communities needs to be developed.</p> <p>In 2019 the Borough Council led on 2 cycling events, both well received and very much aimed at the audience you have highlighted. We were planning a further cycling event for 2020 which unfortunately had to be cancelled due to Covid-19.</p>
5.	Question from Tom Godsmark to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	<p>Do you have any information on the increase in numbers of cyclists in Cheltenham during lockdown? It would be a good indicator of those with a propensity to cycle if infrastructure and highway safety were improved and the car was less dominant.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>According to pedestrian and cycle data collected in June over the last three years, there has been an increase in cycle movements by 14% from 2018 to 2020 and 46% from 2019 to 2020.</p> <p>Whilst this does show a positive increase in cyclist from last year, 2019 did see a drop in movements by 22% on 2018 data. This data is only collected from one section of the high street and over one week at the same time each year. This therefore cannot be seen as a complete and accurate representation of the overall increase in cycling due to Covid-19 and the lockdown measures.</p>

	<p>The Propensity to Cycle Tool is being used by GCC to assist transportation planners and policy makers to prioritise investments and interventions to promote cycling. It has also been used to develop our Cycle Cheltways aspirations within the Connecting Cheltenham Strategy report.</p>
6.	Question from Tom Godsmark to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	<p>Are you able to share any insight on the plans for the Active Travel Fund allocated to Gloucestershire. How much is allocated for Cheltenham and what schemes?</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Gloucestershire County Council applied for a Tranche 2 DfT Emergency Active Travel Fund of £10.5million. A priority within the bid was the progression of a cycle route between Cheltenham and Gloucester, via the B4063. The County Council received £864,750. That amount falls some way short of the figure needed for the County's priority project. We have contacted the County Council to ask how it plans to spend the money it has received, and whether it might be allocated to Cheltenham projects such as the Cheltways scheme.</p>
7.	Question from Hamish Breach to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	<p>I am a Parish Councillor in Prestbury and wanted to ask what the plans are from CBC to enhance the number off-road cycling networks throughout the town, to improve uptake of cycling as an alternative to car driving? Several local residents have stated to me that they would cycle more if they felt safe in doing so, but worry about narrow main roads, and the risk of injury from cycling alongside motor vehicles.</p> <p>In addition, I understand there is a possibility that the Honeybourne Line could be extended north of its current termination point, near the Prince of Wales stadium, up towards Swindon Lane and the racecourse, which would increase connectivity for residents within Prestbury Parish. Would you be able to comment on whether this would be a viable option?</p> <p>Prestbury Parish Council have just launched a Climate and Environment committee, of which I am a member, and we are very keen to work together with CBC to embrace carbon neutral policies, to tackle the climate emergency. Encouraging walking and cycling would seem a sensible first step, and expanding current networks such as the Honeybourne Line would strike me as potentially a cost-effective solution.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>See response to question 1.</p> <p>The West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme (WCTIS, led by GCC, has plans for Phase 3 and 4 to deliver segregated cycling and footway from the Arle Court roundabout to the Lansdown Road/Gloucester Rd junction (by the Shell garage).</p> <p>There is work currently being undertaken exploring potential for extension of the Honeybourne Line both North and West. In terms the route north, the protected corridor is currently inaccessible, unused and unusable as a cycle path or</p>

	<p>pedestrian link. I have walked the line myself after a suggestion from a local resident.</p> <p>The path follows the former railway line and is not in the ownership of the Borough Council, nor is it highways land. A future northern extension could link to homes around the boundary of Swindon Village and Prestbury parishes, extending this important piece of cycle and walking infrastructure northwards and opening up more green areas to local residents.</p>
8.	<p>Question from Mark Beaney to Cabinet Member Climate and Communities, Councillor Max Wilkinson</p>
	<p>Leckhampton Rovers Football Club (LRFC) is partnering with Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) to refit the pavilion at the Burrows Fields, Moorend Grove, Cheltenham. LRFC has secured the majority of the funding for this. The building is undergoing a complete refit and as part of this LRFC want to maximise sustainability/renewable energy options. The club has identified a possible grant that is available to CBC for this very purpose, "The Decarbonisation Grant Scheme" which is being administered by Salix (https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/PSDS).</p> <p>The club would like confirmation that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CBC will allocate resource to identify if it qualifies for the Grant. This needs to be committed quickly as the grant fund is running out. 2. If CBC does qualify for the Grant, an application will be made to try and secure it"
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>I am supportive of the efforts being made by LRFC and the Council to achieve a much improved facility at The Burrows. I welcome the Club's willingness to explore this scheme. The council will certainly support bids for this kind of initiative and we hope our bids to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund will allow us to do so.</p> <p>We are in the process of exploring our options to apply for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund. We will explore the opportunity to include this project within the bid, if it meets the fund criteria.</p>