

Council

21 February 2022

Member Questions (7 total)

1.	Question from Councillor Chris Mason to the Cabinet Member Climate Emergency, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	For each year 2019, 2020 and 2021. Could the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency please confirm how many trees the Borough Council has planted either on its own or in partnership?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	Year 19-20 2496 trees Year 20-21 1655 trees Year 21-22 1949 trees This reflects the number of trees in each planting season between October and February.
2.	Question from Councillor Chris Mason to the Cabinet Member Climate Emergency, Councillor Max Wilkinson
	On a number of occasions the Council has confirmed its desire to support local industry. Duku a Lansdown based product design agency is involved in several EV charging projects, including trials with Oxford, Plymouth and Dundee Councils. I believe the company has tried to contact the Borough Council but as yet have not received a reply. Would the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency agree to talk to Duka?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	Thank you to Councillor Mason for his question. He's right to raise this topic. In line with the recent announcement by the Borough Council, we are working towards setting up a process to identify a private sector provider to help install charging points in Borough Council car parks. The appointment of a private sector partner would need to follow the usual rules of the public sector. Notwithstanding this, and without prejudice to any other process, I would welcome an invitation from Duku to find out more about their local operations. For on-street EV charging matters, we would encourage all interested parties to contact the County Council as Highways Authority.
3.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to the Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services, Councillor Martin Horwood
	Gloucester City Council has sustained a serious cyber-attack, there is some suspicion that the origin may be from an overseas source. Can the Cabinet Member outline the steps that are being taken to protect Cheltenham Borough Council from a similar attack and thereby protect our services.
	Response from
	The Council takes the risks around cyber-attacks seriously. In conjunction with the Council's Chief Technology Officer, we regularly review the monitoring and prevention measures we have in place. I understand all group leaders have received a confidential cyber security briefing from the Council's CTO, which included preventive and security measures, resilience and business continuity.

	<p>Due to the sensitive nature of the work involved, it would not be appropriate to put that information in the public domain. The Council is also in the process of reviewing all of its business continuity arrangements, which Audit Committee have been briefed on. If group leaders would like a follow up meeting with the Council's CTO that can be arranged.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Paul McCloskey to the Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Mike Collins</p>
	<p>THE DIGITAL DIVIDE</p> <p>I was shocked during a visit to Coopers Court CBH Residential Home in Charlton Kings to discover that there was no Wi-Fi in the lounge.</p> <p>Discussion had turned to loneliness and how residents had managed to keep in contact with family and friends during lockdown. Very few had smartphones or tablets and those that did found the cost of data very expensive.</p> <p>Can I please ask the Cabinet Member:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How many CBH multi-occupancy buildings in Cheltenham have free Wi-Fi? 2) What plans there are for installing FREE Wi-Fi in Coopers Court and other similar homes? 3) Given the '<i>No Child Left Behind</i>' and '<i>Levelling Up</i>' Agenda, what plans are there to ensure that ALL CBH tenants have access to fast, reliable and affordable Wi-Fi, so that Digital Exclusion can become history?
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p><i>How many CBH multi-occupancy buildings in Cheltenham have free Wi-Fi?</i></p> <p>CBH's aspiration is to reduce digital exclusion through CBH customers being able to access digital services through provision of digital connectivity where feasible and support and training for customers. At present there are no CBH multi occupancy buildings in Cheltenham that have free wifi.</p> <p><i>What plans there are for installing FREE Wi-Fi in Coopers Court and other similar homes?</i></p> <p>A project is currently underway following a successful joint bid by CBC and CBH to the Better Care Fund to enhance communal spaces at two sheltered schemes, Coopers Court and Popes Close. This project will convert the current spaces into more dynamic and interactive places and support the aim of increasing independent living by improving health and wellbeing and reducing isolation of older people living at the schemes and the wider community. It is expected that the new hubs will offer a wide range of activities and events with IT equipment with free on-line access in the lounge included as part of the project. Learning from this pilot will support decisions around the installation of wifi across further sheltered schemes and the wider housing stock, as there are capital, revenue, procurement and ongoing management implications.</p> <p>CBH offers customers access to digital services through the CBH digi den where</p>

	<p>equipment, training and support are provided to use the equipment and access online services, in addition to providing training on the CBH Portal to increase the confidence in using and transition to digital services.</p> <p><i>Given the 'No Child Left Behind' and 'Levelling Up' Agenda, what plans are there to ensure that ALL CBH tenants have access to fast, reliable and affordable Wi-Fi, so that Digital Exclusion can become history?</i></p> <p>Any funding opportunities available to reduce digital exclusion through provision of equipment and/or training and support will be actively followed up. Data indicates that 95% of CBH general needs homes have access to digital services, with occupants accessing digital services and using digital services for varying technical purposes. The risks of digital exclusion were heightened during lockdown when children were unable to attend school. Of the families identified as being at risk of digital exclusion in CBH homes only three were found to not have access to a digital service and device and these were supported as needed. Families were also supported during the pandemic through the CBC led Laptops for Learning initiative.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to the Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing and Business Councillor Victoria Atherstone</p>
	<p>Can the Cabinet member give us an update of the Wilson refurbishment, along with a potential opening date?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>Thank you for your question Cllr Seacome, as you know the Wilson Art Gallery and Museum is managed by the Cheltenham Trust and was closed in March 2020 by the Covid19 pandemic. The council has worked with the Trust to bring forward plans for a major refurbishment to create a new community arts gallery, vibrant arts café and ancillary spaces, and artists' studios.</p> <p>The scheme has been made possible by a significant bequest from the Sir Charles Irving Trust and matched funding from Cheltenham Borough Council.</p> <p>I am pleased that the new Wilson will create a dynamic cultural hub for the whole community and visitors to Cheltenham. It will offer café culture complemented by a comprehensive cultural programme featuring talks, workshops, creative events, local and national exhibitions and shows.</p> <p>The plan is for the Wilson to reopen in conjunction with The Minster Exchange in summer 2022.</p> <p>The investment will enable the blend of culture and commercial to assist the future financial sustainability and credibility of the venue as a major visitor destination. It has been vital that to deliver this vision the refurbishment focused on delivering the right design and functionality and flexible use of all spaces. As is the case with almost all major investment projects, the process has been iterative to ensure that stakeholders and users have had the opportunity to influence the designs and functionality.</p> <p>Delivering a capital investment project during the pandemic has added challenges</p>

	<p>and has inevitably affected timescales for resource, supplies and works.</p> <p>Pre-works have commenced and as The Wilson is a Grade II listed building it requires planning consent. The planning application is in process and will hopefully be considered at the next planning committee on March 24th.</p> <p>This is a significant project and, combined with the new Minster Exchange and regeneration of the Minster grounds, will create a new and exciting cultural destination zone for the town embracing and promoting culture, arts and history for all to enjoy and participate in.</p>
6.	Question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to the Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing and Business Councillor Victoria Atherstone
	What are the plans for finding a suitable venue for the Tourist information Centre, and re-instating it?
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Thank you for your question Councillor Seacome. The specification and requirements of the Tourist Information service in Cheltenham has and continues to be reviewed as part of the management agreement between the Council and The Cheltenham Trust.</p> <p>Due to the continued closure and remodelling of the Wilson Art Gallery and Museum and the reopening of our high street since the pandemic, Marketing Cheltenham has been working on a new pilot that seeks to test a new approach to the provision of visitor and community information in Cheltenham. This pilot is being funded through the Council's Welcome Back funding. The new facility in the town centre is scheduled to launch early March ahead of some of the town's major events getting underway. The results of this pilot will then inform our plans going forward for visitor information services.</p>
7.	Question from Councillor Diggory Seacome to the Cabinet Member Culture, Wellbeing and Business Councillor Victoria Atherstone
	<p>Can the Cabinet Member provide us with un-massaged figures for the ice rink in Imperial Square this winter.</p> <p><u>Details should include, please:-</u> Initial Set up/derigging Costs Extra costs in sorting out the generators' hum to the satisfaction (almost) of the residents. Paid attendances, week by week. Comments/figures on the amount of carbon created by the generators would also be appreciated.</p>
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>Thank you again for your question Councillor Seacome.</p> <p>A full report on the Christmas ice rink is to be tabled at the Cabinet meeting on 1st March, which includes a full evaluation of the ice rink's performance and impact.</p> <p>I can confirm however that total costs for the build, operation and de-rigging of the ice rink amounted to £378,822, of which £10,005 was attributable to the scoping</p>

and installation of noise mitigation measures.

The ice rink welcomed a total of 43,563 skaters over its 45 days of operation, generating net revenues of £360,900. When combined with additional advertising and sponsorship, total net revenue came to £384,200, resulting in a modest surplus of £5,377.

The use of the generator to provide sufficient power to maintain the ice rink was, as we know, unavoidable due to the insufficient supply of mains power into Imperial Gardens. Whilst the levels of power and usage of the generator varied daily due to the fluctuating temperatures and conditions of the ice, inevitably, there would have been a greater level of carbon emissions as a result of its use.

We do not yet have the information required on the environmental impact of the generators over that 45 day period. The council will however be calculating the environmental impact from the use of generators across all event activities in our town centre parks as part of our interim events strategy and business case for the provision of greener power. This information will be shared in due course.

In 2019 Cheltenham Borough Council pledged to become net zero by 2030 and acknowledges generators are not suitable for powering events in our parks. This is why the aforementioned Cabinet report also puts forward a recommendation for the installation of sufficient mains power supply.