

Council

21 March 2022

Motions (2 total)

Motion A	Proposed by: Councillor Alisha Lewis	Seconded by: Councillor Martin Horwood
	<p>Road Crossings in Cheltenham In supporting this motion, Cheltenham Borough Council recognises the public safety crisis created in communities across Cheltenham by Gloucestershire County Council's decision to not allocate sufficient funds to the Cheltenham highways budget to deliver the road crossings we need and our communities deserve.</p> <p>This chronic shortfall between funding levels and need has led to a perverse league-table priority system where communities only secure the funding they need to travel around their area safely by means of accumulating enough road traffic collisions and accidents to reach the top of the table. With an estimated cost (given by Gloucestershire County Council officers) on sites where crossings are needed of between £75,000 and £100,000 for installation alone the cost of these crossings cannot be met by the Highways Local allowances given to County Councillors.</p> <p>Council recognises the substantial financial pressures on local government due to inadequate funding from Central Government. We regret this, and the difficult choices we subsequently have to make to protect vital services. Nonetheless, Council calls on Gloucestershire County Council to recognise that the cost of failing to invest in these crossings is far higher than the additional investment needed.</p> <p>As such, council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Calls on Gloucestershire County Council to adopt a proactive - rather than reactive - approach to allocating funding for road crossings. Putting preventing harm from happening in the first place at the heart of funding policy by assessing need based on which roads currently lack accessible safe designated crossing points in addition to the number of collisions and accidents.- Calls for the convention of a cross-council meeting between senior highways officers and the relevant cabinet member (Vernon Smith) and Cheltenham Borough and County Councillors in wards with particular road crossing concerns (WARDS) to develop a working plan for delivering the additional road crossings Cheltenham needs by year-end 2024.- Calls on Gloucestershire County Council Cabinet Member for Highways (Vernon Smith) to meet with local representatives from communities particularly impacted by missing road crossings in Cheltenham, including the blind and partially sighted, wheelchair and	

	mobility aid users, and parent groups to understand the impact of underfunding this vital community infrastructure	
Motion B	Proposed by: Councillor Max Wilkinson	Seconded by: Councillor David Willingham
	<p>The public outcry over the discharging of sewage into rivers by water companies including Cheltenham's water supplier, Severn Trent.</p> <p>That the House of Commons had an opportunity to accept an amendment by the Duke of Wellington which could have phased out the practice, but that this proposal was opposed by the Government.</p> <p>That following the outcry over the initial vote, the Government amended the Environment Bill. However, this amendment is not as effective in stopping the practice as the Duke of Wellington's amendment would have been, had it been supported by MPs.</p> <p>The Government's amendment has consequently been criticised by the Rivers Trust* because it is weaker on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is confined to storm overflows and not the sewerage system as a whole • There's no specific duty on OFWAT or the EA to ensure compliance • It refers to 'adverse impacts' rather than 'reductions in harm' giving the water companies plenty of wriggle room to keep polluting • A fudge in the form of a few pilot projects could be construed as complying with the amendment • There is little prospect that the amendment will see anything other than minor improvements to some storm overflows <p>Council further notes:</p> <p>That the opportunity to impose a 'sewage tax', as proposed by the Liberal Democrats, of 16% of water companies' pre-tax profits, was missed.</p> <p>That Cheltenham's MP has told local residents that the practice of sewage dumping happens in the River Chelt.</p> <p>Council calls for:</p> <p>An end to the dumping of sewage in rivers, including the River Chelt.</p> <p>The introduction of a 'sewage tax' as outlined above to encourage water companies to end the practice of the dumping of sewage in rivers.</p> <p>Council instructs:</p> <p>An appropriate cabinet member to write to the MP for Cheltenham to ask him, as a Minister in the Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the introduction of a sewage tax on water companies • To explain why he did not vote for the Duke of Wellington's original amendment to the Environment Bill • To explain why the government's Environment Bill does not set firm 	

targets for an end to the dumping of sewage in rivers, including the River Chelt.

* <https://www.theriverstrust.org/about-us/news/parliamentary-briefing-environment-bill-lords-amendment-45b-on-sewage-pollution>