

Council

20 June 2022

Member Questions (6 total)

1.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to the Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling & Street Services, Councillor Iain Dobie
	Can I welcome the recent works to the Bath Road Toilets . Can I maintain my long standing request however for a more significant upgrade including the Changing Places Option. Can this be included in the next capital programme.
	Response from Cabinet Member
	<p>I thank Cllr Harman for his question and for the opportunity to provide an update on the Changing Places work currently being undertaken by officers.</p> <p>Following the commitment in the 2020/21 outturn report to provide an additional £100k of funding for a refurbishment of the Montpellier toilets we have since been successful in securing Government funding which will enable a Changing Places option to be included. This is aligned to the feedback received from residents that another Changing Places facility would be preferred in a town centre location.</p> <p>An architect has been commissioned and we look forward to reviewing the concept designs for the space.</p> <p>More strategically, we are reviewing our public toilet provision across the town and Changing Places options are part of that review. Sandford Park toilets are already part of the Council's approved capital programme and following the review of remaining facilities it may be determined that a case for further capital funding is put through the budget approval process in future years.</p>
2.	Question from Councillor Tim Harman to the Cabinet Member Cyber, Regeneration & Commercial Income, Councillor Mike Collins
	The Civic Society published its manifesto for the Town Centre during the election Campaign. I understand via the County Council that constructive talks between themselves and Cheltenham Borough Council at Officer Level have been taking place on improvements to the Town Centre including the setting up of a Strategic Officers Group. With this in mind can I ask that a meeting arranged here with the Civic Society to get a better understanding of the issues and solutions.
	Response from Cabinet Member
	I thank Cllr Harman for his question and recognise his long-standing interest in the regeneration of the High Street and his engagement with Gloucestershire County Council. Cllr Harman is correct GCC and CBC directors met recently and agreed for a strategic group to be assembled to manage historic and future works on the High Street / Town Centre to enable a joined up approach to works happening in these areas. At present, this group is still being formed and it would not be appropriate to single out an individual interest group for engagement at this time in advance of the Strategic Group being

	<p>established and priorities assessed.</p> <p>Engagement across a variety of stakeholders is key, for example the Cheltenham BID and retail and wider properties affected by any future works alongside groups such as the Civic Society. Once the Strategic Group is up and running I will be requesting an engagement plan that will address engagement across relevant stakeholders.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Wendy Flynn to the Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Victoria Atherstone</p>
	<p>In 2017, CBH received a grant of £350,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to support a Master Planning exercise for West Cheltenham. Over the best part of a year, consultations and engagement took place with the local community and stakeholders in the form of information by post, public exhibitions, workshops and door to door interviews. No promises were made to residents while their views and aspirations were gathered but the expectation that something would happen at the end of a £350,000 consultation was a reasonable one. There was to be a focus on how the area could be improved and how CBH and CBC could make a positive difference then and in the future. Residents were assured that options would be looked at to see what could be achieved. Two mighty documents were produced.</p> <p>What progress has been made with the Cheltenham West Vision since publication of the masterplan?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>Thank you Cllr Flynn, I have liaised with Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) to provide you with an up-to-date response to your question regarding the 2017 funding outcomes.</p> <p>The £350,000 grant from the then Department for Communities and Local Government (now DLUHC) was used to support a master planning exercise for West Cheltenham predominantly focusing on PE Way. There was no direct cost to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) or the Council and as required by Central Government, CBH used this funding to explore potential opportunities to improve our housing offer.</p> <p>As you mentioned, over the course of the project CBH engaged with various stakeholders and residents to capture issues of importance or concern and where there may be opportunities for improvements.</p> <p>Initially 14 key areas in West Cheltenham were reviewed and the master planning exercise included an option analysis taking into account viability considerations, opportunities to diversify the tenure and improve properties, wider benefits for the community including public realm and security enhancements. Due to the already relatively dense nature of some of our blocks of flats, it was concluded there was very limited scope for providing significant additionality.</p>

	<p>It also became clear Government funding was not available to replace existing homes with new and that Government would only fund the provision of net additional new homes. This unfortunately still remains the case today which impacts our ability to realise larger scale improvements considered as part of this master planning exercise.</p> <p>That said, together with CBH we will continue to lobby Government via the NFA (National Federation of ALMOs) and NHF (National Housing Federation) to ensure regeneration opportunities for larger scale improvements to existing affordable housing stock are still on the radar. We remain hopeful that with the renewed focus on levelling up that there may be funding opportunities on the horizon for us to explore in the future.</p> <p>The HRA has a number of competing financial demands at present which include ensuring our existing homes remain fit for purpose and addressing the climate emergency, simultaneously providing benefits for residents. This is also balanced with the need to provide further new affordable homes (as supported by the Council's £180m Housing Investment Plan) during a period of high inflation and economic uncertainty.</p> <p>Without additional Central Government funding, larger scale investment in regeneration as suggested through the master planning exercise is not possible. Instead together with CBH we remain focused on prioritising and investing in our existing homes and communities, working with our partners to provide the required services and support our residents need, and value highly, to ensure our communities continue to thrive.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Emma Nelson to the Cabinet Member Cabinet Member Cyber, Regeneration & Commercial Income, Councillor Mike Collins</p>
	<p>I have received several comments from residents questioning the logic of the layout of the new parking arrangements at the railway station. Previously, it was possible to drop off passengers adjacent to the entrance to the station. This facility was much appreciated by all, including those giving elderly relatives and friends a lift to the train as well as by students with all their luggage for college.</p> <p>The revised layout prohibits drop off close to the entrance and is now situated at the far side of the station car park so anyone being dropped off must go right across the station car park in all weathers.</p> <p>To what extent were CBC consulted regarding this layout and what surveys were done prior to deciding on the existing layout?</p> <p>What studies have been made since the new car park became operational regarding actual usage of the various specific designated parking areas within the station car park?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>Thank Cllr Nelson for her question, as she will know the delivery of</p>

	<p>the train station masterplan was in development for a significant period of time.</p> <p>GWR was in charge of the delivery of the station car park upgrades. Network Rail, Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucestershire County Council and GFirst LEP were consulted on design, among others. Numerous ‘design by enquiry’ workshops were held to develop and amend the design. However, the funding for the project offered by GFirst LEP was largely reliant on a minimum level of additional car parking spaces. That car parking figure was the key factor influencing the wider design of the car park. The forecourt design was largely impacted by the requirement for adequate and safe bus turning circles and accommodation for taxis (hackney carriages) close to the entrance.</p> <p>The focus at that time was on improving active travel and in particular helping to resolve the issues of vehicular conflict with pedestrians and cyclists and helping to drive the completion of the improved Honeybourne Line access.</p> <p>In respect of formal consultation, this was assessed in the context of development management. The works fall under permitted development rights for Railways, and allows development by railway undertakers on their operational land, required in connection with the movement of traffic by rail. As such planning consent was not required.</p> <p>I cannot confirm what surveys have been undertaken in respect of the layout as this is an issue for the operator. I can however ensure you have the appropriate contact details for Network Rail so that you may have the conversation direct with the operator of the train station car park on the issues you have raised. I have actioned the Townscape Project Manager to provide that information to you.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Emma Nelson to the Cabinet Member Economic Development, Culture, Tourism & Wellbeing, Councillor Max Wilkinson</p>
	<p>Many of us enjoyed various celebrations across Cheltenham over the Platinum Jubilee long weekend whether locally organised within our own communities and “Friends of” groups, or those put on by the The Cheltenham Trust, supported by Cheltenham Borough Council. Well done to all concerned.</p> <p>As publicised on CBC website, the highlight was the lighting of Cheltenham’s official beacon at 9.45pm on Thursday 2 June from the balcony of the Pump Room in Pitville Park.</p> <p>Was this event planned and executed as well as it might have been? Given that the crowd were to be invited to join the massed singing of ‘Sweet Caroline’, would it have been helpful to have the words handed out or shown on a big screen?</p>

	<p>In credit to the Trust and CBC, large numbers attended and, in many respects, it was a huge success. However, there are several who have commented that the evening lacked leadership and control, thus the strong sense of Community Spirit that was anticipated just wasn't there. And how come The National Anthem wasn't included on the official schedule? I gather a lone voice in the audience started to sing at the very end of proceedings and the compere then said "I have had a request for the National Anthem!"</p> <p>This was the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 2nd. Would you agree that, with the benefit of hindsight, the National Anthem should have been included from the outset?</p>
	<p>Response from Cabinet Member</p>
	<p>Thank you to Councillor Nelson for raising this important matter. I'd like to join Cllr Nelson in thanking all the organisations across Cheltenham that hosted Jubilee events to put on such an action-packed weekend full of fun. The residents of this borough can rightly be proud of the weekend of events. The Jubilee Beacon event at Pittville Pump Room was a stunning success, with approximately 5,000 people attending which was organised in line with the official guidance. I'd like to place on record my thanks to The Cheltenham Trust for managing and hosting that event and further family friendly activities on the Friday too. It was wonderful to see so many people enjoying themselves.</p> <p>As members will probably be aware, Sweet Caroline was chosen as the Platinum Jubilee anthem by listeners of BBC Radio 2. I have attended many events at which this song has been sung. The crowds at those events have been mixed but this song has always proven popular and I am yet to encounter a scenario in which the vast majority of people at any event are unable to belt out the key lyrics: "SWEET CAROLINE...BA BA BA. GOOD TIMES NEVER SEEMED SO GOOD (so good, so good, so good)." These lyrics have the advantage of being as easy to remember as Zadok the Priest or other songs favoured at Royal celebrations, but I recognise some will have found them much less stirring. With regard to the singing of the National Anthem, I am pleased you report that there was an impromptu rendition. As I understand it, there were plenty of opportunities for the anthem to be sung in tribute to Her Majesty over the Jubilee weekend. I was pleased to sing it at the start of the Test Match at Lord's on the Thursday morning and did so again at the end of the Jubilee parade on the Sunday evening, albeit in front of the television on that occasion. As a liberal, I would encourage people to sing the national anthem whenever they feel moved to do so. Finally, with regard to whether the Beacon event was a success or not, I'd note the comments on our local MP's Instagram page: "*Amazing* atmosphere here in #Cheltenham for the #jubilee Beacon lighting at 2145!" I'm sure the organisers of the event were pleased to read his fulsome praise.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Question from Councillor Matt Babbage to the Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services, Councillor Martin Horwood</p>
	<p>CIL and S106 funding</p> <p>a) What amount of CIL funding has been raised by CBC over each of the</p>

	<p>past ten years (split by year)?</p> <p>b) What amount of S106 funding has been raised by CBC over each of the past ten years (split by year)?</p> <p>c) Which organisations/third parties have received CIL funding from CBC over the past ten years, and the amounts given to each?</p> <p>d) Which organisations/third parties have received S106 funding from CBC over the past ten years, and the amounts given to each?</p> <p>e) What amount of CIL funding has currently been raised by CBC but not yet allocated and provided to relevant organisations/third parties?</p>
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Response from Cabinet Member

	<p>I thank Cllr Babbage for his interest in the detail of CIL and Section 106 revenue and spending. I can also refer him to recent published reports to cabinet and council which contain much of this information and which set out my clear ambition for increased transparency on all aspects of CIL and section 106:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure Funding Statement 2021 (Cabinet report 21 December 2021), • Community Infrastructure Levy Governance & Section 106 engagement (Cabinet 5th April 2022) and, • the subsequent report to this Council 20th June 2022. <p>He should however note that the government is now planning to change the system once again.</p> <p>In the meantime, all members will be pleased to know that we are putting in place IT software that will enable comprehensive information relating to both CIL and S106 to be more easily and publicly available. This will enable data such as that sought by this question to be retrievable easily by councillors, members of the public and other interested parties.</p> <p>In response to his specific questions:</p> <p>A. Cheltenham Borough Council adopted the CIL Charging Schedule (thereby becoming a Charging Authority) in October 2018 and commenced charging on planning permissions granted on or after the 01 January 2019. Income is therefore from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019/20 £73,982.72 • 2020/21 £212,051.82 • 2021/22 £939,447.71 • Since 01 April 2022 £1,031.06. <p>B. As reported in December, section 106 receipts in the reporting year 2020-21 were £39,637.20. I have asked officers to provide the year by year</p>
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breakdown of the previous years he has requested.

C. In respect of CIL funding, there has been no direct spend by CBC outside that passed directly to parish councils (currently 15%), this being as follows:

- **Charlton Kings Parish Council – £8,658.00 on 28OCT20 and £5,848.94 on 28APR22**
- **Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council– £2,908.20 on 28APR20 and £14,873.44 on 28APR22, and**
- **Prestbury Parish Council – £268.63 on 28APR21 and £10,821.33 on 28OCT21 and £65,183.20 on 28APR22**

Further spend relates to the administration of CIL which is capped at 5%.

As set out in the report, CIL funds are being built up so that we can then focus on clear deliverables that make a difference to the communities impacted by the development from which the levy is generated. Again as reported in December, the county council’s road infrastructure requests alone total £68m so it can be seen that the current CIL funds held by CBC are comparatively modest for meaningful infrastructure spending. Governance arrangements for the transparent and accountable spending of Cheltenham’s CIL revenue are proposed in my report to this council and these include arrangements for the spending of the 15% allocated for neighbourhood funds in unparished areas under the guidance of a neighbourhood panel.

D. In respect of Section 106 funding, and as detailed in the December report, section 106 spending and non-monetary contributions in the reporting year 2020-21 included non-monetary contributions in the form of 62 units of affordable housing but also county educational and highways spending detailed separately by GCC, sports and play equipment in Prestbury, Cheltenham’s own affordable housing and support for the Golden Valley development.

Section 106 spending and contributions relate to legally-binding agreements that can be put in place with a landowner as part of the granting of planning permission to mitigate the impact of unacceptable development thereby making a scheme acceptable in planning terms. The terms of these agreements are therefore closely linked to the planning application themselves and can contain both financial and written obligations relating to proposed development. Cllr Babbage will note from the report today that we are now reporting section 106 spending in detail each year and actively pursuing greater transparency in the future reporting of Section 106. I have asked officers to provide detail of past section 106 spending and non-monetary contributions over 10 years as requested which I’m sure will be of interest to many members but may be a complex task for officers to complete.

E. As of 17 June 2022, CIL funding raised by CBC but not yet allocated and provided to relevant organisations/third parties is as follows:

	<p>Regulation 59F CBC Neighbourhood Funding = £77,613.19 Regulation 59(i) Strategic Infrastructure Funding = £1,003,636.41</p>
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