

**MEMBER QUESTIONS
CABINET MEETING – 30 January 2019**

<p>Question 1: Cllr Kate Haigh</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Roger Wilson</p>
<p>Agenda item 8: Tendering of Services for Homelessness and People in Vulnerable Circumstances</p> <p>Vulnerable people need housing in places where they can access services and community support.</p> <p>What steps will be taken to ensure that placements under this scheme are in suitable locations and that local organisations from GP surgeries to community groups are aware of the levels of need of residents being placed there?</p>	<p>Weekly multiagency co-ordination groups take place to make placements across the county network of services, that will best meet the needs of the individual referred. Once a placement has been made the service supports the individual to connect to other relevant services whereby additional specialist needs assessments may be undertaken.</p> <p>A requirement of both Accommodation and Community Based Support Services tendered is to connect residents to relevant community groups, activities and services that support them to maintain independent living and achieve their personal goals.</p>
<p>Question 2: Cllr Kate Haigh</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Roger Wilson</p>
<p>Agenda item 8: Tendering of Services for Homelessness and People in Vulnerable Circumstances</p> <p>District councils have a duty to prevent homelessness and often have to resort to the private rented sector to meet that need.</p> <p>What steps are being take to prevent competition for suitable accommodation which may drive up prices or lead to displacement of residents as landlords are offered incentives to offer properties to these schemes?</p>	<p>The County Council works in close partnership with all district councils in seeking to address homelessness issues through the Homeless Implementation Group, and part of that joint working ensures that we monitor incentives for private landlords across the county and that we are not competing with each other when it comes to suitable housing for homeless people.</p>
<p>Question 3: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 9: High Needs</p> <p>Does the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People acknowledge that the change in High Needs support for schools with high numbers of</p>	<p>It's important to be clear the changes referred to in the question were proposed by headteachers and governors themselves, via the Schools Forum. They came about in response to significant funding changes from government, which moved further responsibilities and funding from councils</p>

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<p>SEND pupils, (from 1 in 75 to 1 in 40), may have a detrimental impact on diversity in Gloucestershire’s schools, with head teachers less likely to welcome SEND children where they will have to pay the initial £6,000?</p>	<p>to schools – including the expectation that they will meet the first £6,000 of support an individual student needs.</p> <p>I appreciate the concerns that exist around funding in this area – and I welcome the extra funding from government as a start in addressing it – but, from my conversations with headteachers, I do not believe it will lead them to be less welcoming to students with special needs.</p>
<p>Question 4: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 9: High Needs</p> <p>Schools are having to make extremely hard financing decisions every year, with roles such as school counsellors and teaching assistants particularly vulnerable.</p> <p>Does the cabinet member agree that these “non-essential” roles are critical for supporting children with higher needs and for keeping these children in schools, preventing them from joining the much more expensive spiral of exclusions?</p>	<p>All school staff, including teachers, school counsellors and teaching assistants, have a valuable role to play in a child’s education.</p>
<p>Question 5: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 9: High Needs</p> <p>Arguably, Gloucestershire’s special schools are even more stretched than the county’s other schools, due to the very high ratio of teaching staff to pupils, and that many are operating over-capacity.</p> <p>Does the cabinet member agree that being able to host SEND children in the county is far more cost-effective than having to send them to neighbouring authorities – and if so, what is he doing to plan for additional capacity in the future?</p>	<p>Local children being able to attend local schools is a key principle of our school commissioning strategy.</p> <p>Section 3.2 of the High Needs report sets out our strategic approach and includes building a new Gloucestershire special school for children with social, emotional and mental health needs - part of the Council’s £100 million investment in schools across the county.</p>

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<p>Question 6: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 9: High Needs</p> <p>The Head Teacher of Belmont School, quite astonishingly, showed how one class had to work with rainwater seeping through into the classroom.</p> <p>Can the cabinet member confirm what capital investment that school will receive to both patch up the roof and ensure there is sufficient space as demand forces the school to grow further?</p>	<p>We have already allocated over £50,000 to reroof Belmont school.</p> <p>I am somewhat surprised Cllr Hodgkinson raises this school in particular, which I believe does an excellent job. The Liberal Democrats lead a campaign to close Belmont, and Alderman Knight special schools, which was only stopped when the Conservatives took control of this council. At that point, the Liberal Democrat cabinet member had already succeeded in closing special schools in Stroud and in the Forest of Dean.</p>
<p>Question 7: Cllr Iain Dobie</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Roger Wilson</p>
<p>Agenda item 8: Tendering of Services for Homelessness and People in Vulnerable Circumstances</p> <p>I am pleased to see Gloucestershire County Council discussing the matter of homelessness at Cabinet.</p> <p>However, the first step in tackling an issue is to recognise the scale of the problem. In December, Alex Chalk MP, celebrated Cheltenham having only two homeless adults, yet anyone who has even visited the town will know that many more have been driven to the streets. The situation is the same across the county.</p> <p>Will Gloucestershire County Council be undertaking any further research to ensure it is fully aware of the scale of the challenge rather than operating off dodgy stats?</p>	<p>I understand these figures were provided by Cheltenham Borough Council to MHCLG. I'd suggest that, if Cllr Dobie is concerned about their accuracy, that he might wish to raise his concerns with CBC in the first instance. I would think his CBC colleague Peter Jefferies would be the best person to approach – but CBC officers would be able to advise him.</p>

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<p>Question 8: Cllr Iain Dobie</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Roger Wilson</p>
<p>Agenda item 8: Tendering of Services for Homelessness and People in Vulnerable Circumstances</p> <p>Does the cabinet member agree with James Brokenshire MP, Communities Secretary, that efforts by the national government to tackle homelessness have not been good enough, and does he believe that £100m over 4 years is sufficient to “eradicate rough sleeping” as the Prime Minister pledged last year?</p>	<p>I certainly welcome the additional government support to addressing the issue of homelessness and look forward to working in partnership with district colleagues to address the issue.</p>
<p>Question 9: Cllr Lesley Williams</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 7: Sufficiency Strategy – Children’s Services</p> <p>Please could you define whether or not the Sufficiency Strategy is aimed at all children (1.1 of the report) or only Children in Care (1.3 of the report)? Consultation with only 48 young people seems limited.</p> <p>Why was the process limited to only children in care and care leavers?</p>	<p>There is a duty of “sufficiency” that requires Local Authorities and partners to ensure that, through direct provision or commissioned services, a range of placements sufficient to meet the needs of all children are available locally, or that there is plan in place to move towards that position. This requires a strategy that describes how a Local Authority intends to provide sufficient care placements for its children in care.</p> <p>To ensure we have undertaken our duty, we have quite rightly focussed on children in care, however the strategy acknowledges that we also need to consider the whole pathway including prevention and early intervention. We focussed on consultation with children in care and care leavers. They informed us of their whole journey, including their experience before being in care, to consider their whole pathway. Those that have been through the whole pathway can give us the whole picture.</p> <p>We undertook a really focussed workshop with 48 young people, and to obtain rich, qualitative information, this was felt to be a sufficient number of young people. Our young people will of course continue to participate in the implementation of the strategy.</p>

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<p>Question 10: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 6: Financial Monitoring Report</p> <p>Paragraph 24:</p> <p>Can the relevant cabinet member provide up to date figures for the turnover of permanent social workers, with details of the direction of travel, as well as comparable figures for neighbouring authorities?</p>	<p>As Cllr Hodgkinson will recall from the recent Children’s Improvement Board meeting, the latest data shows permanent social worker turnover at 20.5% compared to 17.7% at the same time last year. Given the sample size, this is broadly comparable. Increasing recruitment activity of permanent social workers and the anticipated strategy of over recruiting newly-qualified social workers with a view to developing them within the service, will further stabilise our workforce in future. The current published data from the DfE shows national turnover at 14.7% and regional turnover at 15.7% however that data was from September 2017, where as GCC’s is from this month.</p>
<p>Question 11: Cllr Colin Hay</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 7: Sufficiency Strategy – Children’s Services</p> <p>Has the cabinet member revisited the way in which Children’s Centres now target their services and no longer offer a universal service?</p> <p>At scrutiny, in relation to the very high level of exclusions in Gloucestershire schools, it was suggested that Children’s Centres could help if they had a wider group of children and families accessing the service?</p>	<p>The current specification and delivery model for Children and Family Centres is commissioned until 2022, with a break clause in 2020, work is currently being undertaken as part of the wider redesign of 0-19 services, to identify any possible service change in line with the break clause date.</p> <p>Children and Family Centres now offer services to children and families 0-11yrs. There has been a greater emphasis on work with schools and whole family working where children are of school age. We have only reviewed year 1 of the contracts so far so it is too early to say if the service has made much impact on these figures.</p>
<p>Question 12: Cllr Colin Hay</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 11: Options for Youth Support Service 2020</p> <p>The current Youth Support Service has a budget of £5.4 million per annum.</p>	<p>Due to the changing format and make up of Children’s Services it is not possible to give a meaningful comparison of funding over the last 20 years. What can be identified is the net extra investment in Children’s services budget each year over the last 4 years:</p>

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<p>Can the cabinet member please provide a history of how funding for Children’s Services from Gloucestershire County Council has changed over the last 20 years?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016/17 £4.1m • 2017/18 £4.3m • 2018/19 £16.6m • 2019/20 £10.9m (proposed) <p style="text-align: right;">Total £35.9m</p>
<p>Question 13: Cllr Colin Hay</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 11: Options for Youth Support Service 2020</p> <p>Can the cabinet member confirm that, with insourcing the management of the 11-24 children-in-care and care-leaver function, there will be no reduction in the budget for the Youth Support Service?</p>	<p>There will be no reduction in the total funding going into youth support services with only the cost of the staff and their expenses which relate to the 11-24 service transferring back to GCC.</p>
<p>Question 14: Cllr Colin Hay</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 11: Options for Youth Support Service 2020</p> <p>Can the cabinet member confirm that any redesign of Youth Support and wrap-around services in 2021 will be not reduce the budget for these services?</p>	<p>That will be a matter for the council in 2021. I have no plans to reduce funding for Children’s Services, however.</p>
<p>Question 15: Cllr Colin Hay</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 11: Options for Youth Support Service 2020</p> <p>Will Cabinet ensure that the county’s youth facilities are available for other community use as long as it doesn’t interfere with youth service delivery? i.e. Can the buildings be used for community use?</p>	<p>This seems like good practice where feasible. If Cllr Hay has a specific example in mind, I would be very happy to look into it outside the meeting.</p>

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<p>Question 16: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Ray Theodoulou</p>
<p>Agenda item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>Can the relevant cabinet member confirm how much was spent on external legal advice by Gloucestershire County Council on the, ultimately abandoned, FOI tribunal on the Ernst and Young Report?</p>	<p>It is expected that there will be no cost to the taxpayer.</p>
<p>Question 17: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Ray Theodoulou</p>
<p>Agenda item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>Can the relevant cabinet member confirm how much was spent (time spent by legal services) on internal legal advice by Gloucestershire County Council on the, ultimately abandoned, FOI tribunal on the Ernst and Young Report.</p>	<p>£506.</p>
<p>Question 18: Cllr Colin Hay</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 7: Sufficiency Strategy – Children’s Services</p> <p>To Cabinet Member for Children and Families – it was recently revealed in the local media that last year, 27 children were identified as having been potentially trafficked within the county, as well as up to four who had gone missing from the council’s care.</p> <p>Clearly this is extremely concerning. As such, can the cabinet member please confirm how the 27 children are supported by the council immediately after being identified, and what strategies are put in place to support these children long-term, including methods to ensure they are not drawn back to their abusers?”</p>	<p>The trafficking of children and young people can take place in various forms. This can include sexual exploitation, being forced to work, being bought or sold, forced marriage and being induced into criminal activities linked to serious organised crime. Given that traffickers often promise children benefits or threaten children into co-operation, the key task is to engage children and young people and to divert them from these threats and promises. In the early stages of children’s services involvement, it is symptomatic of trafficking that some children will be drawn back to their traffickers and have gone missing on occasion.</p> <p>Keeping children and young people safe and well is our top priority. We work in conjunction with the Police and other partner agencies to gather and use intelligence to safeguard the children and young people concerned.</p>

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	<p>Our support services include diversionary outreach work, alternative care placements and a range of therapeutic interventions. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is also used to ensure that victims of trafficking are not in themselves criminalised and we have made 27 referrals to this mechanism in the last 12 months, primarily in relation to children subject to criminal exploitation.</p> <p>Following the local authority making recent representations to the local press, a revised article has been printed on this issue putting the above information into context and without quoting any statistics.</p>
<p>Question 19: Cllr Colin Hay</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Tim Harman</p>
<p>Agenda item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>Can the relevant cabinet member detail how they are mitigating the cuts to the Public Health budget in order to ensure that efforts to decrease child poverty are not effected?</p>	<p>Public Health works hard to mitigate budget pressures through efficiencies, smart commissioning and by focusing carefully on those areas that will make most difference to Gloucestershire residents.</p>
<p>Question 20: Cllr Colin Hay</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Agenda item 7: Sufficiency Strategy – Children’s Services</p> <p>The National Audit Office has stated that the Conservative government has an "appalling" lack of understanding of the growing pressures on England's child protection services.</p> <p>Following the discussions the cabinet member has undoubtedly had with members of the government, would he agree with this assessment and why?"</p>	<p>I have found the government and our local MPs to be supportive of our children’s services and our work to improve them. I particularly welcome the extra £4m shared between children’s and adults which was announced before Christmas.</p>

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<p>Question 21: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>Agenda item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>What changes have been made to the draft MTFS and the council strategy document as a result of recent public consultations?</p>	<p>Proposed changes to the budget are set out in the papers before Cabinet today.</p>
<p>Question 22: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>What funding does this budget provide for air pollution monitoring in or near areas of planned road schemes?</p>	<p>Air pollution monitoring is a district council function and this question is probably best directed to them. Many of these improvements are designed to improve the flow of traffic, in response to both existing and planned growth which should improve air quality.</p>
<p>Question 23: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>How will the road building and expansion plans in this budget e.g. West Cheltenham, A417, Llanthony Road enable Gloucestershire as a whole to cut its carbon emissions in line with IPCC recommendations to cut carbon emissions to zero by 2030?</p>	<p>All of the GFirst LEP Growth Fund schemes that the County Council are project sponsor/promoter for have the aim of cutting carbon emissions. Many of the schemes (such as the GSWB Llanthony Road and West Cheltenham Transport Improvements) are designed to improve traffic flows and lessen congestion. Another aim of the County Council schemes is to encourage walking and cycling. This includes the proposed cycleway improvements in Lydney, the ongoing work on the A435 connecting Bishops Cleeve to Cheltenham and the continued co-development of the £3.6m package of cycle improvements infrastructure for the Gloucester to Cheltenham (B4063) scheme. Away from the highway network, GCC continue to work alongside other county partners such as the Canal and River Trust, to deliver the canal towpath improvements scheme along the Gloucester to Sharpness section.</p>

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<p>Question 24: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>Agenda item 5 Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>What measures have you taken to seek the expert advice found within our own think travel team, and stakeholders such as found in the cycling liaison group to assess the standard and quality of proposed new cycle infrastructure (as mentioned under Infrastructure Delivery on page 95, and detailed on page 134 in the Highway Capital Programme) when considering budget funding allocations to ensure it removes barriers to cycling, and helps to achieve a modal shift.</p>	<p>Our Think Travel Coordinator and Active Travel Coordinator have been closely involved in the development of our future cycling network (the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan). They have also carried out user audits of some schemes in our highway programme to identify ways of making the designs more cycle friendly.</p> <p>Local stakeholders on the Cycling Liaison Group are normally briefed in advance on major projects and larger cycling schemes. However, following the merger of this group with the members' Cycling Advisory Group we have committed to more early engagement with them at the formative stages of the design process.</p>
<p>Question 25: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>Agenda item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>In the council strategy you say you will 'work with local people and communities to understand what they want to achieve.... and help them to improve the places they live and work.'</p> <p>As a representative of Brimscombe, Thrupp, Chalford, Bussage and Minchinhampton, I know that a huge concern for many residents is road safety, traffic speeds and congestion, as well as a reduction in bus services.</p> <p>What can we expect in this budget that will help to take cars off the road and give people choices about transport that will minimise some of these concerns?</p>	<p>Last year we invested an extra £390,000 to protect important road safety work in this county following the Police and Crime Commissioner's decision to pull out of the Road Safety Partnership. Our budget next year will protect this funding.</p> <p>Given the extraordinary cost pressures on our subsidised bus services, we recognise people's concerns and we propose to invest a further £273,000 in community transport, public bus services and concessionary fares. Between them these account for around 7 million journeys a year.</p> <p>Next year we will be investing £100,000 of our own capital funding in cycling infrastructure and we have secured more than £1million of external funding from developers, the European Structural Investment Fund and Gloucestershire Environmental Trust to upgrade and improve the canal towpath between Gloucester City Centre and the Pilot Inn at Quedgeley.</p>

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	<p>In addition to having the right infrastructure, we also need the skills to cycle with confidence. This year over 5,500 school age pupils will learn to ride safely through our Bikeability programme, and we will work with Active Gloucestershire on ways to increase physical activity in our daily lives by promoting walking and cycling.</p>
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