

COUNTY COUNCIL – 19 March 2014
PUBLIC QUESTIONS

<p>1. Questioner's name: Amber Powell</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith</p>
<p>I am making this request on behalf of the users of the number 23 Gloucester-Lydney-Coleford stagecoach bus. The last bus was 7:10pm and from the 30th March will be 5:40pm. Those people who work until late or attend college or visit Gloucester royal hospital will be unable to get home. As GCC subsidise a number of bus routes please can the council consider requesting stagecoach to put on a later bus?</p>	<p>We do understand the problems this decision has caused people, although our funds to help are limited. The council's Integrated Transport Unit has invited tenders from bus companies and community transport operators to provide a later journey from Gloucester for communities between Elton Corner and Lydney. Post-tender negotiations are underway to ensure an affordable later departure can be offered, possibly by connection with a Gloucester – Coleford service departing after 6pm. I hope this will be of assistance.</p>
<p>2. Questioner's name: Bill O'Dell</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith</p>
<p>I am writing as a concerned resident of Twyning, which is facing 3 planning applications (two housing applications and one mineral extraction), and who has seen the response to Cllr Sztymiak's question from the last Council meeting where it was stated that each planning application will be treated on its own merits. Can you explain to me how Gloucestershire County Council, as a Lead Local Flood Authority, whom one might presume will take a Lead on Flooding matters, can avoid carrying out an in-depth investigation into the combined effect of multiple planning applications all of which will have a predictable and significant impact on local flooding ?</p>	<p>All planning applications need to be considered on their merits. Doing otherwise is only likely to result in the decision being made by an inspector on appeal, with limited input from local people.</p>
<p>3. Questioner's name: Marguerite Ball</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Will Windsor-Clive</p>
<p>In Twyning we are facing 3 planning applications 2 of which could adversely affect my property by probable flooding. Cllr Windsor-Clive said that the 3 applications will be considered individually. To a simple mind such as mine it would seem sensible for GCC as a</p>	<p>Please see Cllr Smith's answer to the question above. If you wish to take legal action, you should consult a solicitor.</p>

Lead Local Flooding Authority to consider the 3 applications together and way the water from each site will impact on the others and the village as a whole, which brings me to the question I have been asking for weeks. Therefore will you please ask the Council:

Who do I sue when my property floods?

COUNTY COUNCIL – 19 March 2014
Members' Questions

<p>1. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith</p>
<p>To: Cllr Vernon Smith</p> <p>How much income has this Council generated in parking fines from on-street parking in the current financial year and how much has been spent so far this financial year in parking-related expenditure?</p>	<p>From 1st April 2013 to 28th February 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income from fines/Penalty Charge Notices £482,874 • Parking related expenditure: £1,370,119
<p>2. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Guyton</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>During the debate on political assistants on 26th February a Lib-Dem member seemed to state that political assistants were not "party" political and you referred to the political assistants as being a cost of democracy. Would you please confirm that in order to address the democratic deficit at Shire Hall UKIP, Independents and Green should be entitled between them to 7/30ths of the time of your political assistant, 7/21sts of the Lib-Dem's and 7/16ths of Labour's and if not why not?</p>	<p>Given the motion in Cllr Guyton's name later in the agenda, I'm a little surprised that he hasn't sought to raise this issue with me prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The rules on the appointment of political assistants were set out in law under Mrs Thatcher, in s.9 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The law restricts political assistants to the three largest political groups on the council, provided they achieve at least 10% of the seats on the council.</p> <p>The law ensures that the same rules are applied across the country. For example, in Norfolk and Suffolk, UKIP, as the third largest groups on those councils, were entitled to political assistants, which they have appointed, and, as a result, the Liberal Democrats, who were previously the third largest groups, ceased to be entitled to one.</p>

3. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain
<p>To: Cllr Paul McLain</p> <p>In March 2013, a Lead Cabinet Member decision was approved to enter into a contract with a provider that offered the Council best value for money for the delivery of specialist domestic abuse services. We believe the contract, which was entered into is a consortium of organisations consisting of the GreenSquare Group operating as 'Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service' (GDASS).</p> <p>Firstly, I'd be grateful if the Cabinet Member could clarify whether the above is an accurate description of how specialist domestic abuse services are currently being delivered in Gloucestershire?</p>	<p>Yes this is the commissioned service. You will be aware that victims of domestic abuse receive a range of support services from us through social care as well as other partners such as Health and the police.</p> <p>Supporting victims is necessarily a multi agency activity, the GDASS service is an important element of this. The new Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will play an important role in ensuring a coordinated response is made to families.</p>
4. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain
<p>To: Cllr Paul McLain</p> <p>What is the total amount of funding that 'Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service' (GDASS) has received from this Council since 2012?</p>	<p>The contract value for the GDASS service is £920k per annum</p>
5. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain
<p>To: Cllr Paul McLain</p> <p>Please could the Cabinet Member tell me in what ways since the commencement of the contract back in July 2013 has 'Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service' (GDASS) ensured that victims of domestic abuse continue to be supported appropriately?</p>	<p>The GDASS service continues to work in partnership and provide a range of interventions to identify and respond to victims of domestic abuse at the earliest possible level to prevent escalation of risk and harm.</p> <p>The service supports individuals and families affected by domestic abuse through a help line, one to one support and specialist IDVA support to those victims at greatest risk. The service also delivers</p>

	<p>group work where appropriate.</p> <p>The service looks to support families to remain in their own home wherever safe to do so and oversees the delivery of the Sanctuary Scheme. The service supports victims to access places of safety in crisis where necessary, with a focus on supporting families back into communities following crisis and to linking them into other local services and networks.</p> <p>The service contributes to safeguarding children by supporting stability in families and offering specialist advice to other professionals.</p>
6. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain
<p>To: Cllr Paul McLain</p> <p>Please could the Cabinet Member provide members with statistics on how many individual victims of domestic violence have used the services being provided by 'Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service' (GDASS)?</p>	<p>During the period of 22nd July 2013 to 5th January 2014 GDASS supported a total number of 730 individual victims.</p>
7. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain
<p>To: Cllr Paul McLain</p> <p>The website for 'Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service' (GDASS) - http://www.gdass.org.uk/index.html - clearly states that the services provided is "designed to reduce the level of domestic abuse and improve the safety of victims and their families" – Please could the Cabinet Member inform me how this is being measured?</p>	<p>The provider is required to present GCC with KPI information. This is made up of a quarterly statistical and narrative return to evidence performance and achievements. Quarterly contract management meetings are held with the provider. A multi agency contract monitoring group has also been established to monitor the delivery of the contract. Performance information is then reported to the Supporting People Partnership Core Strategy Group.</p> <p>The provider is also required to submit statistical information regarding individuals' outcomes to St Andrews.</p>

8. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain
<p>To: Cllr Paul McLain</p> <p>Has any government funding been made available for additional specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs)?</p>	<p>The court IDVA working at GDASS is funded by the MOJ and is funded until at least September 2014 when funding transfers to the PCC.</p> <p>IDVAs are provided as part of GDASS' model of GCC's commissioned services to support victims at greatest risk.</p>
9. Questioner's name: Cllr Barry Kirby	Respondent's name: Cllr Will Windsor-Clive
<p>How many RDS firefighters were employed by GFRS in the period 1 July 2000 to 5 April 2006 and how many of these are still employed?</p>	<p>As at 01/07/2000 - 273 employees As at 01/07/2001 - 283 employees As at 01/07/2002 - 278 employees As at 01/07/2003 - 280 employees As at 01/07/2004 - 270 employees As at 01/07/2005 - 276 employees As at 01/04/2006 - 298 employees</p> <p>As at 13/03/2014 - 290 employees</p>
10. Questioner's name: Cllr Barry Kirby	Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne
<p>Will the Cabinet member update the Council regarding the implementation of an Apprentice Travel Card in Gloucestershire?</p>	<p>The availability of the Apprentice Travel Card is linked to the introduction of a public transport 'smart card' in Gloucestershire.</p> <p>Current actions involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiations with Stagecoach, as the largest public transport operator in Gloucestershire, to ensure they support the Travel Card and introduce the necessary technology that recognises the type of travel card that will be offered to apprentices. Most other operators run bus services under contract to GCC and the necessary changes are more straightforward. • Engagement with, ITSO, the national organisation that sets minimum standards for smart cards across the wider public

	<p>transport industry.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the Apprentice Travel Card will be available from autumn (quarter 3) 2014/15. This is in line with the funding made available by council in the budget.</p>
<p>11. Questioner's name: Cllr Barry Kirby</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Will Windsor-Clive</p>
<p>In 2013/14, 17 children have been killed or seriously injured on Gloucestershire's road. In 2012/13 9 children were killed or seriously injured. What assessment has GCC undertaken to explain the increase of child fatalities and serious injuries on Gloucestershire's roads?</p>	<p>Anyone killed on our roads is one person too many – and that is particularly the case when it is a child. Initial analysis of reported incidents shows that the majority of incidents related to child pedestrians. We are actively targeting this area through the SkillZONE experience along with other aspects of road safety such as passenger behaviour. The promotion of safe cycling continues through the Bikeability scheme.</p> <p>This year's casualty data is in the process of being finalised. Once that has been completed, the Road Safety Partnership will be undertaking an in-depth analysis of the data to determine other factors such as age and time of incidents to ensure that we can be as effective as possible in our efforts to reduce casualties on our roads.</p>
<p>12. Questioner's name: Cllr Barry Kirby</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain</p>
<p>The number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) increased from 596 to 639 in 2013/14. What assessment has GCC undertaken to explain the increase of NEETs in Gloucestershire?</p>	<p>I'm not quite sure where Cllr Kirby has got his figures from? He refers to the figure 639, presumably from December 2013. However the published Dec 2012 NEET figure (adjusted to include the Not Knowns) was: 721.</p> <p>To respond to his question - in January 2013, we had 689 NEETs in Gloucestershire. By January 2014, this had fallen to 626. That's a rate of 4.3%, which is lower than both the UK and the South West average. I think that reflects the priority this council has given to helping young people find work and training. We mustn't be complacent on this - it remains an important priority for me, as I know it is for many councillors across the chamber.</p>

13. Questioner's name: Cllr Steve Lydon	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
<p>With reference to the recent publicity by local Conservative MPs and Cllr Windsor -Clive calling for a new bridge across the Severn. It has been a long held aspiration of some of our districts to have a new crossing. However I note as a County we have a £85m shortfall in our roads and highways budget, we also have an all party agreement on the urgent need to resolve the continuing problems with the A417 . Where does the bridge proposal fit in versus these pressing priorities?</p>	<p>Any third Severn crossing could only happen with government funding. It has been something that this council has supported in principle for many years.</p> <p>Mark Harper's recent suggestion is that some of the money from tolls on the second Severn crossing could help fund a third crossing once those funds return to the government in 2017. This is an alternative funding stream to those we are pursuing both for road improvements and for the A417 loop, which remains our priority for infrastructure funding.</p> <p>However, decisions about the future of tolls on the second Severn crossing are likely to be made in the near future, so now is the right time for us to support Mark Harper and Neil Carmichael in seeking a share of that money to support infrastructure in Gloucestershire.</p>
14. Questioner's name: Cllr Steve Lydon	Respondent's name: Cllr Will Windsor-Clive
<p>What revenue is lost to the Tri-Service centre as a result of the move of the Ambulance Service?</p>	<p>There has been and will be no revenue lost as SWAS are still occupying the building on the same terms. The control room itself is only one part of the Tri-Service arrangement and will be utilised a training establishment, HQ staff, Standby control room and out of hours call centre.</p>
15. Questioner's name: Cllr Steve Lydon	Respondent's name: Cllr Will Windsor-Clive
<p>Did the cabinet member work with local members of Parliament to try to prevent this move and what briefings did GCC give to those MPs over this matter?</p>	<p>Cabinet lobbied on this issue, including my writing a letter to the Chief Executive of the South West Ambulance Trust, expressing concern. I know that the Leader has mentioned this to some of our Members of Parliament, as part of his general updates to them on county issues.</p> <p>Of course, as the Chairman of Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny committee, Cllr Lydon is probably the councillor in the strongest position to highlight concerns with the ambulance trust, and also to highlight any concerns that he might have to local parliamentarians.</p>

16. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
<p>Labour welcomes the announcement of a Rural SUDS scheme in the Stroud Valleys, supported by the EA, GCC and SDC to seek solutions to flooding throughout the Frome catchment by the use of upstream storage and natural land management and give it our wholehearted support. Council will appreciate that water is no respecter of county borders, indeed the European Union recommends a catchment wide approach to water management. With this in mind can the council give assurances that it is seeking working partnerships with other county councils and stakeholders to seek further upstream storage solutions to the county's flooding problems?</p>	<p>GCC has good working relationships with surrounding LLFAs and the Environment Agency. Upstream storage remains an option that will always be considered where alleviation is sought. It will not be appropriate in every case and to this end the main funding bodies will apply rigorous value for money test to all possible options. Where appropriate the Council continues to work with local promoters of in-County upstream storage solutions. No cross (County) border upstream storage schemes are currently being considered for Gloucestershire.</p>
17. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
<p>Given that GCC have asked the EA to look at increasing dredging work to main rivers, will GCC likewise look at dredging the ordinary watercourses in the county which it has responsibility for under the 2010 flood and water management act, and if so, from what budget will that money come from?</p>	<p>We already remove silt, mud etc from the watercourses we're responsible for when it's needed. What we want is for the Environment Agency to take the same approach with main rivers. It's worth noting that many of the "main rivers" in Gloucestershire for which the EA is responsible are actually quite small indeed.</p>
18. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams	Respondent's name: Cllr Will Windsor-Clive
<p>What part has GCC played in the shoreline management plan, and what part is GCC playing in the possible realignment of sea defences in response to sea level rise in the Severn Estuary?</p>	<p>The Severn Estuary Shoreline Management Plan is the responsibility of the Environment Agency and GCC Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee has been actively engaged in ensuring a thorough and robust consultation process has taken place with affected communities around the Estuary. Realignment of sea defences around the Estuary has been part of the consultation process.</p>
19. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
<p>How is GCC helping landowners and local communities to adapt to increase flood risk from sea level rise in the Severn Estuary?</p>	<p>Whilst flooding from the estuary is the responsibility of the Environment Agency, GCC has played an active part in ensuring those affected communities have had their say in the consultation process. As a</p>

	result there is now a better understanding of the issue and where assistance can be gained from the E.A. by local landowners.										
20. Questioner's name: Cllr Brian Oosthuysen	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain										
Will the Cabinet member tell the Council how many Parent Champions Gloucestershire's Children Centres are expected to train and could he outline the key roles and responsibilities of Parent Champions?	<p>It may be helpful to clarify two different programmes that we are currently running. The first is a programme run by GRRC aimed at increasing parental involvement in children's centres generally which is having a good impact.</p> <p>Parent champions are being recruited in our most disadvantaged areas where we need to increase take up of the Government's new 2 year old offer. So far we have recruited 12 champions in Gloucester North, their role will be to encourage parents to use the available places and spread the news by word of mouth which we know is what parents value most.</p>										
21. Questioner's name: Cllr Brian Oosthuysen	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain										
How many primary school children in Gloucestershire were received free school meals in 2013, 2012, 2011 and 2010?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2010</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Primary Schools FSM</td> <td>4882</td> <td>5383</td> <td>5395</td> <td>5334</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2010	2011	2012	2013	Primary Schools FSM	4882	5383	5395	5334
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Primary Schools FSM	4882	5383	5395	5334							
22. Questioner's name: Cllr Tracy Millard	Respondent's name: Cllr Dorcas Binns										
What is the County Council doing to help Gloucester Food Bank find alternative premises in the City Centre?	The County Council has been working to help Gloucester Food Bank find a new home. Their long term aim is to move to the Old Methodist Chapel on Seymour Road, which is an ex-County Council building, protected by covenants for community use which we control. Officers have been working with the food bank to help them through the purchase process. We understand that's now complete and they own the chapel, but that there will need to be between 10-12 months of refurbishment before they can move in.										

	That leaves their short term needs. They've told us that they've found warehouse and storage space, but that they're still looking for a city centre site for distribution. Officers from our property team have agreed to let them know if we come across anything suitable. We're in contact with them on an ongoing basis.
23. Questioner's name: Cllr Joe Harris	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain
Could Cllr McLain please tell me how many parents in Gloucestershire have been fined for taking their children out of school during term time for a holiday?	The number of penalty notices issued during autumn term (terms 1-2) for unauthorised holiday absence are: 2012/13 = 28 2013/14 = 34
24. Questioner's name: Cllr Joe Harris	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain
Cllr McLain will no doubt be aware of the government's plans to give all Reception, Year 1 and 2 pupils free school meals. Is this a step that he welcomes here in Gloucestershire?	I am all in favour of well thought through, well planned policies that deliver improvements for children.
25. Questioner's name: Cllr Joe Harris	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain
Does Cllr McLain agree that all pupils in Gloucestershire should be allowed to attend their local primary schools regardless of their religious or social background?	All primary schools within Gloucestershire make provision for their local community and consider local pupils as a priority for places. No school is able to consider a pupils social background when allocating places but some voluntary aided faith schools and academies do give priority for places to pupils of that faith when they are oversubscribed which helps maintain the schools ethos. Whilst voluntary aided schools and academies are able to set their own policy for allocating places they must consider equality issues and the council does ensure that these policies comply with legislation and treats all families in a fair, transparent and consistent manner.
26. Questioner's name: Cllr Joe Harris	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
Cllr Smith will no doubt be aware of the controversy new on-street parking proposals, which are currently under consultation, are	Yes.

<p>causing among local residents in Cirencester. The main reason for the public outcry is the introduction of on-street Pay and Display. Will the cabinet member give me his assurance, that should the majority of respondents to the consultation reject the idea of on-street Pay and Display meters, they won't be introduced?</p>	
<p>27. Questioner's name: Cllr Mike Sztymiak</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Will Windsor-Clive</p>
<p>It is quite clear to me that there is public expectation that, as Lead Local Flood Authority, Gloucestershire County Council will be accountable for producing a local flood strategy. With 3 planning applications now on the table (two for housing and one for mineral extraction) will the Cabinet Member please commit to undertake a full flooding impact assessment as part of the local flood strategy for Twyning and Churchend that incorporates the impact of all three submitted planning applications?</p>	<p>GCC has produced a local flood strategy which was adopted by Cabinet on 5th February this year. (A copy of the strategy is available on the GCC website).</p> <p>The production of a Flood Risk Assessment for any new development is the responsibility of the developer and should be submitted to the relevant planning authority with the planning application. The impact of any development on flooding and the mitigation measures proposed are assessed (after relevant consultations) by the planning authority which will determine their effectiveness or otherwise.</p> <p>It would not be appropriate to re-visit the local flood strategy for each proposed development. The Strategy will be reviewed periodically, taking into account changing circumstances, and an annual implementation plan produced.</p>
<p>28. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Ray Theodoulou</p>
<p>To: Cllr Ray Theodoulou</p> <p>In line with local government employees who receive a 1% pay rise, the children's centres are also paying a 1% pay rise to their staff too - Is it therefore not the case that children centre's are in fact having to find 4% of savings this year and not 3% as published in the 2014/2015 Budget?</p>	<p>Children's centres are run by contractors. Staff pay is therefore a matter for them, I would expect any provider to manage moderate efficiencies and determine priorities within the budget.</p>