

COUNTY COUNCIL – 4 September 2013
PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Questioner's name: Hannah Basson	Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne
<p>I am alarmed by the number of organisations and companies practicing poor work ethics and treating their staff below the standard expected at public sector level. In particular, I have been surprised that so many companies do not practice within the guidelines of the Equalities Act (2010), practice 'blacklisting', avoid meeting tax and NI obligations and do not keep to EU legislation.</p> <p>For this reason, I would like the cabinet to consider avoiding contracting with and outsourcing to companies that are not good employers and not good for the public they are paid to serve.</p> <p>I ask that a motion is passed to only undertake new contracts or re-contract with companies that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Have accessible equality and diversity policies for all employees which meet the standard for the public sector2) Have no record of either tax evasion or aggressive tax avoidance3) Have no record of avoidance of EU legislation that protects employees> from poor work practice, especially Health and Safety law4) Are not on the list of 'blacklisting' companies - http://www.ico.org.uk/news/current_topics/consulting_association	<p>One of the most important parts of a council procurement process is the assessment and short-listing of bidders against certain specified selection criteria.</p> <p>To this end, the council issues a provider assessment questionnaire ("PAQ") to prospective tenderers before inviting them to submit bids for its contracts. The said PAQ contains questions relating to specified mandatory and discretionary grounds for the de-selection of bidders.</p> <p>These questions are used to determine, amongst other things, whether the bidder has been convicted of a criminal offence (including the offences of cheating the revenue and fraud), or if it has committed acts of grave professional misconduct, Bidders are also requested to provide details of their health and safety policy (a business is required by law to have a health and safety policy for 5 employees or more) and to confirm that they meet their obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 (UK or otherwise) and are able to evidence this.</p> <p>The council does not check bidders against the blacklist referred to in the attached web-link, but rather it relies on the information it elicits from responses to its above-mentioned PAQ.</p>

2. Questioner's name: Mrs S Hilliker	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
<p>The Cirencester cpz action group would like to ask a direct question to you regarding the breakdown in expenditure from the Cirencester Parking Permits revenue. I can not come to your meeting in person as the time of day is in working hours.</p> <p>We have asked the Parking Manager time and time again to justify the increase from £40 to £80 for the first permit and £40 to £100 for the second permit and to provide a breakdown in detail of what our money has been spent on to no avail.</p> <p>In the light of the Barnet County Council court case, we feel the time is right to ask again for the breakdown.</p> <p>Please could the Council provide a breakdown to explain what our money has been spent on over the last year?</p>	<p>Background</p> <p>In 2010 the County Council's cabinet agreed a new policy for residents parking http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s705/agenda%20item%205.pdf.</p> <p>This sought to establish a financially sustainable and fair basis for the council to respond to growing public demand for new residents parking schemes. Permit charges are the same across the county, and charges are set to ensure schemes are not a financial burden on the council.</p> <p>The running costs of permit schemes and income from enforcement were assessed and the net cost to the council was calculated at an average of £80 per permit. This recognised that schemes near existing patrol beats are cheaper to enforce and those in remote areas are more expensive. However it did not take account of the capital set up costs of new schemes.</p> <p>We cannot find any record of a permit costing £40 in 2009, when the policy was agreed. At that time a zone 1 permit in Cirencester cost £57. This was increased annually to £62, then £72 before reaching £80 in April 2012.</p> <p>Gloucestershire bases the cost of residents parking permits on the cost of providing the service, in a way that's fair to all residents, which is exactly in line with the judgement in the Barnet case.</p>