

COUNTY COUNCIL – 23 March 2016
Members' Questions

<p>1. Questioner's name: Cllr Iain Dobie</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith</p>
<p>In addition to setting a target for FY 16/17 to reduce the carbon footprint of the GCC Highways Service, will the cabinet member also be setting a similar environmental target to reduce the level of harmful diesel emissions (NO2 and particulates) produced by the vehicle fleet of the GCC Highways Service, including contractors working on the county's roads?</p>	<p>The existing contract key performance indicators will encourage our highways contractor to invest in a modern fleet with cleaner engines. It is important to remember that for many of the lorries and mechanical equipment in the fleet, there are currently no, or very few, viable alternatives to diesel. Of course, the county will continue to examine electric and low emission alternatives as they become more readily available.</p>
<p>2. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>Do you agree with Lynden Stowe that residents across the County should not have a say over how the budget is spread across the five districts and city.</p>	<p>I'm not sure I've seen the comments that Cllr Williams is referring to.</p>
<p>3. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>Is a unitary council split between West Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds feasible?</p>	<p>The feasibility study is being commissioned by Cotswolds and West Oxfordshire. We won't see the outcome for several months. Feasibility is not the only consideration. I would want to understand the implications for public services, outcomes for local people and value for money for Council Tax payers.</p>
<p>4. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>The leader of CDC, Lynden Stowe claims that the newly formed unitary council would have access to GFRS, the Police force and</p>	<p>We've not seen detailed proposals from Cotswold District Council as yet. I struggle to see how the proposals would work in practice</p>

healthcare. Please detail how this could work.	in a number of areas. I believe it is in the best interests of Cotswold and of Gloucestershire for Cotswold to remain as a full part of our county.
5. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams	Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne
Where does this leave Gloucestershire's Devolution bid?	I met with the the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government earlier this month. He confirmed that Gloucestershire's devolution deal is still very much alive and well.
6. Questioner's name: Cllr Barry Kirby	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
Please detail how it is possible for GCC services, such as fire and social care, could be delivered to the Cotswolds if they are a part of their own separate unitary authority.	We have not seen any detailed proposals about how this might work. We do know that we could not provide services the way we do today.
7. Questioner's name: Cllr Barry Kirby	Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne
Please detail which services the Cotswolds would lose if it merged with West Oxfordshire	We have not seen any detailed proposals about how this might work. We know that we could not provide services the way we do today.
8. Questioner's name: Cllr Barry Kirby	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
Would the cabinet member comment on Lynden Stowe's radio statement (February 25 th , 2016) where it was stated that the Cotswolds gets a poor deal on Highways repair.	At present Cotswold raises 17.7% of Gloucestershire's Council Tax but receives well over 30% of Gloucestershire's highways funding. The rest of Gloucestershire subsidises Cotswold because it has a larger length of rural road, compared to its population. Merging with West Oxfordshire would cut funding for road repairs in Cotswold by over £3m per annum.

<p>9. Questioner's name: Cllr Barry Kirby</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>By what proportion would GFRS fall by if the Cotswolds left the County?</p>	<p>Gloucestershire currently has its own fire and rescue service and it is unclear who would provide this service to the Cotswolds if the proposal goes ahead.</p> <p>There are a number of permutations that could occur if the proposal goes ahead:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oxfordshire could form a stand-alone fire and rescue authority to replace their current county council-run service and take over fire and rescue service delivery in the Cotswolds. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Given recent government changes and expectations that would be likely to come under the control of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner. 1b. This could mean that Cotswold residents have no say at all on the fire and rescue service in their area. 2. There is also a suggestion that the fire and rescue service could still be provided by Gloucestershire however, this could no longer legally be part of the county council, requiring a new stand-alone fire and rescue authority to be created (this would be a traditional stand alone fire and rescue authority or subject to a business case, under the control of the police and crime commissioner. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2a. All of this would clearly add to costs and undermine the unique role that our fire and rescue service has developed by working with health and social care in supporting and safeguarding very vulnerable people on a daily basis in their own homes. <p>Finally, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service has 22 fire stations, 7 are within the Cotswold District area and in addition to providing community safety and emergency response services to their own area they also effectively contribute to the safety of the</p>

	<p>whole county of Gloucestershire.</p> <p>Removal of these 7 fire stations would result in a fall of c.32% and a c.19% reduction in staff (firefighters).</p>
10. Questioner's name: Cllr Steve Lydon	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
<p>What proportion of the highways budget does the Cotswolds get, and what is the value of this investment?</p>	<p>See answer to question 8. On average since 2007 it amounts to £5.2m of capital investment each year in Cotswold roads.</p>
11. Questioner's name: Cllr Steve Lydon	Respondent's name: Cllr Ray Theodoulou
<p>If CDC decided to merge with West Oxfordshire by how much would Council Tax have to change to meet this level of investment?</p>	<p>It is not possible to say for certain what the impact on council tax levels will be. However, when councils join together, their council tax levels are harmonised, so that the whole area pays the same. Today, residents in Band D West Oxfordshire pay £1,332.23 pa in district and county council tax. Residents of Cotswolds pay £1,216.90 pa. As a result, harmonisation alone would lead to an increase in Cotswold bills of £57.67 and a decrease in West Oxfordshire bills of the same amount. There would likely be a range of other costs of transition, which would also affect council tax levels in the area.</p>
12. Questioner's name: Cllr Steve Lydon	Respondent's name: Cllr Ray Theodoulou
<p>Please detail what proportion of the County Council's budget is spent in the Cotswolds.</p>	<p>The Council's budget is not automatically divided into district areas. Work is continuing to determine exactly what proportion of the overall budget is spent in the Cotswold District.</p>

13. Questioner's name: Cllr Steve Lydon	Respondent's name: Cllr Ray Theodoulou
Please detail how GCC subsidises CDC due to having fewer homes	See question 12.
14. Questioner's name: Cllr Steve Lydon	Respondent's name: Cllr Ray Theodoulou
Please detail how much residents from the Cotswolds contribute to the GCC budget as a proportion to the other areas of the County.	In 2016/17 the amount raised from Gloucestershire council tax payers is £250.7 million, of which £44.4 million (17.7%) is raised from Cotswold council tax payers. In terms of business rates, 15% of Gloucestershire's business rates are raised in the Cotswolds.
15. Questioner's name: Cllr Iain Dobie	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain
How many children from the "Leckhampton Corridor" (which covers Leckhampton, College and Charlton Park wards) were this year not offered a place at their choice of local South Cheltenham secondary school (ie Balcarras/Bouraside)?	Three.
16. Questioner's name: Cllr Iain Dobie	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain
<p>According to the February 2016 update of the Cabinet-approved GCC Disposals Programme, the County Council is engaged in selling valuable land at Kidnappers Lane in Leckhampton, to developers (over 1000 houses have been mooted for this area of Leckhampton/Shurdington).</p> <p>Given the statutory responsibility of the Council to ensure the provision of sufficient local secondary school places for the children of both current residents and those in anticipated housing developments, will GCC be making any of its land in the Leckhampton/Shurdington area available for a new Academy secondary school?</p>	There is insufficient demand for a new Academy Secondary school. Additional school places to meet future demand can be provided by expanding existing schools. Opening a new Academy Secondary school would provide excess places, therefore capital funding is not available from the council's Basic Need budget or developer contributions.

<p>17. Questioner's name: Cllr John Cordwell</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Ray Theodoulou</p>
<p>Please can the Cabinet Member for Finance & Change provide me with an update of the appeal that was lodged against the FoI request requiring the county to disclose the details of the Javelin Park incinerator contract?</p>	<p>The Information Tribunal will hear our appeal on the 26th and 27th May. The Council has already placed over 90% of the contract on the Council's website and this is available by searching on Javelin Park within the FOI disclosure log.</p>
<p>18. Questioner's name: Cllr John Cordwell</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Ray Theodoulou</p>
<p>Please can the Cabinet Member also provide me with an update on the progress to date on the construction of the facility at Javelin Park?</p>	<p>The Planning and Development unit of the Council agreed the Construction Environment Management Plan on the 3rd March. This is another major step in the construction of a facility that will divert over 90% of Gloucestershire's Residual Water from landfill and generate sufficient electricity for 26,000 homes.</p>
<p>19. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain</p>
<p>To: Cllr Paul McLain</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member tell me how the £700-£800K deficit has emerged in the school's Supply Mutual Scheme (SMS)?</p>	<p>The scheme was in surplus but ran into deficit in 2014/15 owing to a significant rise in claims from schools for both sickness absence and maternity cover. Adjustments were made to both benefits and premiums but claims have continued to rise.</p>
<p>20. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain</p>
<p>To: Cllr Paul McLain</p> <p>When and how were schools made aware of the deficit in the Supply Mutual Scheme?</p>	<p>The position has been tracked through the Schools Forum and discussed with the Gloucestershire Association of Primary Heads.</p>

<p>21. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain</p>
<p>To: Cllr Paul McLain</p> <p>What impact will this deficit have on those 200+ primary and special schools that currently participate in this scheme and what support will this Council give to those schools that had been getting their supply cover through the scheme?</p>	<p>Schools have been asked to contact us if paying the additional premium for 2015/16 causes significant difficulties for them – specifically if they run into deficit as a consequence. We can then phase the payment of the additional premium.</p> <p>Schools have been given advice on what to look for in specifying their requirements for supply cover and drawn attention to alternative providers.</p>
<p>22. Questioner's name: Cllr Steve Lydon</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Andrew Gravells</p>
<p>What is the Cabinet member's view that the Government have again delayed the publication of the Childhood Obesity Strategy which was originally scheduled for December then January it further slipped to February or even March. Now the publication is further delayed to the Summer?</p>	<p>Childhood obesity is a high priority for Public Health and member organisations of the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board. As Members will know, GCC has recently been selected as one of four Local Authorities to work with Leeds Beckett University on a national programme to co-produce guidance for local areas on implementing a whole system approach to obesity. Our Public Health Team will have the opportunity to be supported in that work by leading academics in this field and to be at the forefront of emergent good practice.</p> <p>In Gloucestershire, our rates on Childhood obesity compare favourably with national statistics. The obesity rate for year 6 children is 17.2% compared with 19.1% for England. I look forward to the publication of the national strategy, in the knowledge that here in Gloucestershire we are already taking this issue very seriously. In recognition of the complexity of this area, my main concern is that the strategy is based on a full consideration of all the issues involved.</p>

<p>23. Questioner's name: Cllr Steve Lydon</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Andrew Gravells</p>
<p>What are his views on the statement ref the further delay of the childhood obesity strategy made by Cancer Research UK's Director of prevention Alison Cox David Cameron has called children's obesity a crisis and yet the Government. has failed the next generation by stalling on one of its own health priorities.</p>	<p>I think the answer is the same as the previous question in that this is a complex issue and one that no country has effectively solved. I welcome a national strategy. But in the meantime we will continue to work with our partners to implement the new healthy weight action plan.</p>
<p>24. Questioner's name: Cllr Steve Lydon</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Andrew Gravells</p>
<p>What are Cabinet members views on a ban on junk food ads during family viewing times and a sugary drink tax?</p>	<p>I am sure that Cllr Lydon will be delighted by the Chancellor's recent announcement, and will join me in welcoming the action that the Conservative government is taking to address this important issue.</p>
<p>25. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul McMahon</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Dorcas Binns</p>
<p>Please detail whether domiciliary/home care workers are assigned '15 min' slots to conduct their duties per client.</p>	<p>Current commissioning arrangements do permit providers to allocate 15 minute visits within staff rotas. Such visits can be allocated where it is considered appropriate and reasonable, such as for checking that medication has been taken. This would be in agreement with the service user as part of their care plan. We pay an enhanced rate for these visits to ensure that providers allow for travel time.</p>
<p>26. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul McMahon</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Dorcas Binns</p>
<p>Please detail how many domiciliary care contractors employ care workers on zero hour contracts.</p>	<p>We do not keep this level of detail about providers. However, zero hours contracts are known to be a predominant contractual approach within domiciliary care in this county and nationally. In some circumstances and for some workers a zero hour's contract</p>

	offers them the flexibility that they need to be able to balance employment and personal caring commitments.
27. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams	Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne
Can the Leader update councillors of any upcoming changes to the library system, or libraries in the County?	<p>The Library service is building on the installation of free public Wi-Fi to provide digital support for customers, such as training on the use of tablet devices to help customers access a range of online services, including the virtual library.</p> <p>The service is also working with colleagues in the council, and partners, to improve access to information and advice.</p>
28. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams	Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne
Can the Leader confirm that there are no planned closures or 'reshaping' to the County's libraries?	Yes.
29. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams	Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne
<p>To: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p> <p>It has recently been announced that Gloucestershire Breastfeeding Supporters Network are struggling to find funding to continue, many of these local groups operate within our remaining children's centres. Can the Council offer any officer support to help GBSN find funding for their programme?</p>	<p>I understand there is good news here – we are currently procuring an enhanced breastfeeding peer support service.</p> <p>This service will seek to increase the number of new mothers who initiate breastfeeding and support exclusive and continued breastfeeding up to 6 months through the provision of breastfeeding peer support on a 1:1 basis to those women who are least likely to continue to breastfeed in areas of low breastfeeding rates. The contract will be awarded to enable an appropriate service to continue to be provided during 2016/17.</p>

30. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne
I was pleased to hear that Gloucestershire County Council are match funding Cotswold District Council's £500K investment into broadband in the Cotswolds - Please can the Leader tell me how long this investment will continue to sit in this Council's Economic Growth Reserve?	The Broadband Strategy adopted by Cabinet sets out the approach to timescales for further broadband deployment in the County. Further procurement in the Cotswold would form part of Lot 3; with resources for this within the Economic Growth Reserve.
31. Questioner's name: Cllr Richard Leppington	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Robbins
Can the Chair of Audit and Governance Committee confirm that county councillors are required to declare their membership of secret societies such as the Freemasons as part of their register of interests?	Councillors are required by law to declare disclosable pecuniary interests (these are defined in the Council constitution). Councillors are not required to declare personal interests such as those relating to the membership of clubs, societies and charitable organisations (including the Freemasons). The Gloucestershire County Council register of interest form includes provision for councillors to disclose personal interests on a voluntary basis. The register of interest for each member is published on the GCC website.
32. Questioner's name: Cllr Sarah Lunnon	Respondent's name: Cllr Ray Theodoulou
The impact of a Gloucestershire district or borough forming an unitary authority with other neighbouring county districts is currently being considered. What impact would such a development have on the contract GCC has signed for residual waste services?	None.
33. Questioner's name: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent's name: Cllr Paul McLain
The government has announced that all schools will be forced to become academies. What does the cabinet member think of this centralising proposal?	The academy process has been supported by all political parties, with Labour beginning the process, which was then extended significantly under the coalition government. I don't believe that passing more power to teachers and governors is centralising.