

MEMBER QUESTIONS

CABINET MEETING – 20 July 2016

Question 1: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent: Cllr Vernon Smith
Agenda Item 10: Financial Monitoring Report Where is the £3.1million programme for structural patching going to be spent?	The list of schemes was reviewed at the Lead Cabinet Meeting on the 11 th July and will be discussed with Shadow Members on the 21 st July. Once agreed, the list will be published on the Council's website and a link will be put into Members Matters. Local Highways Managers will also update members concerning schemes in their area.
Question 2: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent: Cllr Ray Theodoulou
Agenda Item 10: Financial Monitoring Report Local Authorities have already budgeted to spend a percentage of their reserves in 2016/2017. Does the Cabinet Member for Finance and Change not envisage that a percentage of our reserves will also be used in 2016/2017?	The council's general reserves are only 4.7% of the council's revenue budget, within the 4-6% deemed prudent nationally prudent and approved as part of the MTFS. The MTFS has assumed use of some ear marked reserves in 2016/17 e.g. Broadband investment. The current budget monitoring report also outlines use of ear marked reserves e.g. the Care Act Reserve and the Vulnerable Children's reserve.
Question 3: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent: Cllr Ray Theodoulou
Agenda Item 10: Financial Monitoring Report How much does the Cabinet Member for Finance and Change hope to raise by selling this Council's surplus assets in 2016/2017?	The estimate for asset sales in 2016/17 is £22.9m – this is year 2 of the £60m target included in the MtC2 strategy which was approved as part of the MTFS.

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Question 4: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor
Agenda Item 5: Draft Minerals Local Plan Why are you proposing to safeguard land off Myers Road, in my division, for concrete batching, and for the processing and distribution of recycled and secondary aggregates?	Government policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and supporting guidance set out in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) requires Minerals Planning Authorities (MPAs) to safeguard infrastructure, which support the sufficient supply of minerals. Consequently, as Land off Myers Road contains permitted and active minerals-related infrastructure, it is necessary for the County Council as the local MPA to propose, through the Draft Minerals Local Plan, to safeguard this use.
Question 5: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor
Agenda Item 5: Draft Minerals Local Plan The City Council is currently working up a new City Plan. It may decide that it would like to allocate land off Myers Road currently used for concrete batching, and for the processing and distribution of recycled and secondary aggregates as land for housing to meet Gloucester's future housing needs, as identified in the emerging Joint Core Strategy. How would you overcome such policy conflict?	Both the Draft Minerals Local Plan and the emerging Gloucester City Plan are subject to statutory Duty-to-Cooperate requirements during their preparation. This is the means available for both plan-making authorities to show how potential conflicting matters, such as that described, have been considered. Having to resolve competing land use conflicts is not an unusual circumstance for local plan-making authorities to deal with. At present, Land off Myers Road has permission for mineral-related infrastructure and is operational. The City Council is the local planning authority and was responsible for permitting the concrete batching plant. The site does not presently benefit from a housing allocation and the emerging City Plan remains at a relatively early stage of preparation with limited material weight afforded to it.

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	<p>As a result, at this time, it is not unreasonable for the site to be put forward for mineral safeguarding within the Draft Minerals Local Plan.</p>
<p>Question 6: Cllr Jeremy Hilton</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>Agenda Item 5: Draft Minerals Local Plan</p> <p>You propose to safeguard land off Myers Road currently used for concrete batching, and for the processing and distribution of recycled and secondary aggregates.</p> <p>If this was a new proposal, how would it conflict with policies in the minerals local plan?</p>	<p>If the Land off Myers Road site was not already permitted to facilitate minerals-related infrastructure, it would not be put forward for mineral safeguarding under the Draft Minerals Local Plan.</p> <p>As a consequence, any ‘new’ proposal for minerals infrastructure would be determined by the local planning authority (the City Council) and would be considered on its merits, having due regard to the relevant local planning policies contained within the development plan at that time and to other material considerations.</p> <p>At present there would be no conflict with the policies set out within the Draft Minerals Local Plan.</p>
<p>Question 7: Cllr Richard Leppington</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>Agenda Item 11: Council Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017-18</p> <p>Gloucestershire County Council is currently considering cuts to bus services in the Forest of Dean. I appreciate the need to secure value for money from subsidies. However, I am very concerned about the adverse effect the abolition of evening and/or Sunday services will have on the most vulnerable of my constituents.</p>	<p>I am happy to brief local members on the current situation, and discuss alternative solutions. However, we do not have the funding to continue subsidising bus services at levels that exceed the £8 subsidy cap.</p>

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<p>Would the Cabinet member agree to the setting up of a task group of Forest Councillors to explore other alternatives?</p>	
<p>Question 8: Cllr Iain Dobie</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Andrew Gravells</p>
<p>Agenda Item 9: Decision to launch public consultation on the principles of the Sexual Health Services Review</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member explain what is wrong with the current service delivery model for there now to be a review of Sexual Health Services in Gloucestershire?</p>	<p>It is important to regularly review all council services to ensure that they meet the needs of Gloucestershire residents. Responsibility for this service passed to the council in 2013 and it has not been reviewed since then, nor for some time before that.</p> <p>Additionally the Gloucestershire Sexual Health Needs Assessment (completed in 2015) highlighted opportunities for the development of sexual health services: improving access; understanding and responding to needs of key vulnerable groups; focusing on prevention; and reducing reliance on specialist services.</p>
<p>Question 9: Cllr Iain Dobie</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Andrew Gravells</p>
<p>Agenda Item 9: Decision to launch public consultation on the principles of the Sexual Health Services Review</p> <p>How confident is the Cabinet Member that the public consultation will reflect accurately the demographics of Gloucestershire?</p>	<p>I want as many people as possible to have their say as part of this consultation. It is important to remember that consultations aren't opinion polls – they are there to let people have their say and for those views to be taken into account as part of decision making.</p> <p>For example, groups like service users, or particularly at-risk communities, may have more to say on consultations than the population in general – and it is important to listen to their views – even if they don't demographically reflect the entire county.</p>

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	<p>The design of the public consultation has been careful to consider the key population demographics across Gloucestershire and the key groups who are most vulnerable to poor sexual health outcomes.</p> <p>This has been supported by the in depth analysis as part of the Sexual Health Needs Assessment. Some of those who are most vulnerable are also considered 'hard to reach'. To ensure they are represented in the consultation, we have completed some pre-consultation engagement with some of these groups, and will be working with organisations and individuals who already have a relationship and understand how best to engage them.</p> <p>The consultation will be available in a variety of formats to ensure accessibility to a broad range of the Gloucestershire population. There are also planned reviews throughout the consultation period, to help highlight lower response rates from some groups, which can then be responded to with a more targeted approach.</p>
Question 10: Cllr Iain Dobie	Respondent: Cllr Andrew Gravells
<p>Agenda Item 9: Decision to launch public consultation on the principles of the Sexual Health Services Review</p> <p>One of the principles the public will be consulted on is that 'people should find it easy to access the care they need, regardless of the service they require or the location they attend'. Please can the Cabinet Member tell me how a fundamental re-design of Sexual Health Services in Gloucestershire will satisfy this principle?</p>	<p>At the moment the review of Sexual Health Services will consider how the current service model complies with the consultation principles, including access.</p> <p>Evidence of best practice shows that both the format and location of services are crucial to their accessibility, particularly to groups who traditionally have the highest risk of poor sexual health outcomes.</p>

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	<p>The Sexual Health Public Consultation will enable Gloucestershire residents to feedback on how they access services, as well as being an opportunity to gather information on how to offer more accessible services, targeted at those with the highest need.</p> <p>This will be an important source of information in any service redesign to meet the needs of the population of Gloucestershire.</p>
Question 11: Cllr Bernie Fisher	Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor
<p>Agenda Item 5: Draft Minerals Local Plan</p> <p>In light of the vote taken and views held by members at the recent Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee, please can the Cabinet Member tell me how the policy on fracking in the Draft Minerals Local Plan be strengthened with the presumption against fracking in Gloucestershire?</p>	<p>I want a firm, enforceable, policy on fracking in Gloucestershire. I'll look closely at what was said at the committee. Councillors must be aware, however, that if our planning policy exceeds what national guidance allows, applicants will simply appeal any planning refusals they receive.</p>
Question 12: Cllr Bernie Fisher	Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor
<p>Agenda Item 5: Draft Minerals Local Plan</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member tell me whether there will be an all member seminar on the Draft Minerals Local Plan for Gloucestershire, where District, Town and Parish Councillors are invited to receive a presentation and have the opportunity to raise concerns?</p>	<p>We have carried out an extensive programme of consultation to date with public forums, roadshows, and workshops, for which key stakeholders have attended and which has shaped the current Draft Plan. I am happy to look into how we can support district, parish and town councillors to take part in the next round of consultation.</p>

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Question 13: Cllr Tracy Millard	Respondent: Cllr Paul McLain
Agenda Item 7: Adoption West: Question referred to Cllr McLain Lord Nash recently commented that he would like to see the end of Adoption Panels, believing that they are too cumbersome, which will ultimately slow down the process. Would the Cabinet Member tell me his thoughts on the matter?	<p>I am presuming that you are referring to comments made as part of discussions in the Lords about the new Children and Social Work Bill. The Bill includes a clause which will allow local authorities to ask for powers to innovate and freedom from complex regulations. I would support this; we know all too often we follow processes just because a rule book tells us to rather than because it will help children.</p> <p>Lord Nash was asked to give examples of what LAs might ask for and included Adoption and fostering panels.</p> <p>I have always greatly valued the work of our Adoption Panel, which is an example of best practice I hope to see continue.</p>
Question 14: Cllr Steve Lydon	Respondent: Cllr Ray Theodoulou
Agenda Item 10: Financial Monitoring Report Question referred to Cllr Theodoulou It appears that a good majority of the Social Care Levy is being used to make up the short fall in the Adult Services Budget. Was this the intended use of this extra tax?	Yes.

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Question 15: Cllr Lesley Williams	Respondent: Cllr Mark Hawthorne
<p>Agenda Item 11: Council Strategy and MTFs</p> <p>Question referred to Cllr Hawthorne</p> <p>The top core challenge of the MTFs is about living within our means; however, from looking at the Council's budget, it's clear that this isn't achievable. Children's and Adult Services are overspending as pressures continue to build, and you're only hitting 6 out of 10 targets.</p> <p>Is your administration failing to cope under the pressure of central government? Or have you realised that you can't do more, with less?</p>	<p>The current budget monitoring report shows that the Council is forecasting a slight revenue underspend in 2016/17 – so it is living within its means.</p> <p>The Council sets itself stretching performance targets – where these ambitious targets are not being achieved then action plans are put in place to address the issues.</p>