

MEMBER QUESTIONS

CABINET MEETING – 13 December 2017

<p>Question 1: Cllr Iain Dobie</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 9: To establish a new Secondary School for Cheltenham (Pages 145 to 154)</p> <p>As County Councillor for Leckhampton and Warden Hill, I welcome the establishment of a new secondary school in my area to meet the needs of the local community. However, the proposed location on Leckhampton Fields is served by ancient and unsuitable roads, (Farm Lane and Kidnappers Lane), which link to an inadequate junction with the busy and congested Shurdington Road (A46).</p> <p>Will the Cabinet guarantee to commit the necessary resources to build a road infrastructure to mitigate the risk that this proposed new school will lead to traffic chaos and misery if it is located where currently proposed?</p>	<p>I know Cllr Dobie has previously suggested the County Council use land it owns in Leckhampton as a site for a new academy and I welcome his continuing support for the project in general terms.</p> <p>We will commission a traffic impact study to fully assess traffic implications. The study will also identify any mitigation measures that may be necessary and these would be incorporated within the design proposals for the new school.</p> <p>We will also be working with Cheltenham Borough Council, with whom the planning decision will sit, to explore any opportunities to improve the transport infrastructure as part of the proposed Cheltenham Local Plan. I am particularly keen to ensure that good walking and cycle routes are included in the scheme.</p> <p>.</p>
<p>Question 2: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Ray Theodoulou</p>
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>On page 4 of the MTFs 2018/19 to 2020/2021, (page 24 of the agenda pack), it notes that “cuts in government grant have been a feature of the settlement”.</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member tell me exactly how much the total reduction in the government grant for 2018/19 is compared to 2017/18?</p>	<p>As Cllr Hodgkinson will recall, the County Council’s grants have been reducing since the coalition government in 2010. That approach continues today.</p> <p>The key grants for the Council that make up the Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) are Revenue Support Grant (RSG), and Baseline funding, i.e. income from Business Rates. RSG has reduced from £31.2 million in 2017/18 to £19.34 million in 2018/19. However, Baseline funding has increased from £70.8 million in 2017/18 to £73.0 million in 2018/19. Therefore, in total, the SFA has reduced from £102.0 million to £92.4 million, a £9.6 million reduction or 9.4%.</p>

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Question 3: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent: Cllr Ray Theodoulou
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>The transformation reserve was set up in 2009/10 to fund liabilities to pay for redundancy and one-off transformation costs associated with the MtC programme.</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member explain the legitimacy of using this reserve to fund those one-off proposals as outlined on page 7, (page 27 of the agenda pack), which includes the Growing our Communities Fund, Lengthsman Scheme and A417 Reserve?</p>	<p>The Financial Budget Monitoring Report, which went to Cabinet in November, identified one off savings against past service pension costs and insurance resulting in a £5 million transfer to the Transformation reserve. This element of the reserve was uncommitted and therefore available to fund the proposals outlined in the budget. These proposals aim to underpin our approach to transforming and managing demand across some of our key services. The reserve will be topped up again in the event under spends accrue as we go through 2017/18 to ensure it continues to support transformations costs.</p>
Question 4: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent: Cllr Ray Theodoulou
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member for Finance and Change tell me who will be the Cabinet Member responsible for the proposed Growing our Communities Fund?</p> <p>And how will he or she ensure that those projects and activities really do make a difference to local communities?</p>	<p>We know that both Highways Local and previous schemes like Active Together have shown the real difference local councillors can make with relatively small amounts of money. This is building on that record of success. Whilst officers will apply their experiences from previous grant projects, ultimately it will be the councillors themselves, accountable to their electorate, who will ensure these schemes make a real difference. Cabinet responsibility will sit between Cllrs Tim Harman and Vernon Smith.</p>

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Question 5: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent: Cllr Ray Theodoulou
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>The vulnerable children's reserve was established to cover the budgetary risks associated with the fluctuations in demand led Children's Services.</p> <p>The projected balance of this reserve at 31st March 2018 will be zero.</p> <p>Does the Cabinet Member not feel it would be prudent that funds be put in this particular reserve where demand is rising?</p>	<p>We are addressing the pressures that services for vulnerable children face by significantly increasing the budget to support them – by almost £11m or 19.3%. If there is a need for more support in year, we will use the council's general reserves to support that. Putting more money into those services now is key.</p>
Question 6: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent: Cllr Vernon Smith
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>Will the 2018/19 Budget include the member's Highways Local Fund?</p>	<p>Yes, £530,000 is set aside - £10,000 per councillor. In addition, there is separate funding for the Lengthsman Scheme and funding from the new Growing Our Communities Scheme can also be used for highways schemes.</p>

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<p>Question 7: Cllr Jeremy Hilton</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Tim Harman</p>
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>The Council has forecast a reduction of around 2.5% in Public Health funding for 2018/19.</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member tell me what services currently provided within this particular budget will be put at risk as a result of this reduction?</p>	<p>As Cllr Hilton ought to be aware, we have already agreed the changes that deliver these savings, through re-commissioning healthy lifestyles and drug and alcohol services and remodelling sexual health and public health nursing services with the existing provider, Gloucestershire Care Services.</p>
<p>Question 8: Cllr Jeremy Hilton</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>There are proposed savings of £160,000 in the fire and rescue services budget, listed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reduced cost of pension scheme ➤ Rationalisation of software licencing ➤ Realising benefits from new systems <p>Please explain how much of the £160,000 savings will be achieved under each heading and precisely how these savings will be made?</p>	<p>Reduced cost of pension scheme - £90K Rationalisation of software licencing - £22K Realising benefits from new systems - £48K</p> <p>Pension reductions are due to a decrease in employers contributions.</p> <p>Prudent renegotiation on software licence costs.</p> <p>Introduction of new systems include better management of rostering system and introduction of new equipment that has reduced maintenance costs (no effect on front line outcomes).</p>

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Question 9: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>The strategic waste reserve will grow by another £1.7m to £37.705m. The report says that the reserve is required to meet the contractual obligations of the Javelin Park Incinerator.</p> <p>Will there be any need to further top up the strategic waste reserve in the future to meet the council's contractual obligations on the completion of the incinerator?</p>	<p>The EFW reserve will be used as a smoothing reserve throughout the operation of the plant. It is planned to be high until the drawdown of contract payments in 2019/20. The Javelin Park plant is expected to save taxpayers over £100m over its operation.</p>
Question 10: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member provide more details regarding the proposal to consider the introduction of 'winter opening' hours at household recycling centres?</p>	<p>The council intends to review household recycling centre winter opening hours next year to ensure they still meet the needs of the council and of residents. Until the review has been carried out, there are no proposals to share.</p>
Question 11: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent: Cllr Nigel Moor
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>With reference to the question above, what does this mean in terms of reduction in pay for those employees who work at such household recycling centres?</p>	<p>Please refer to the answer to Question 10.</p>

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<p>Question 12: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Kathy Williams</p>																																																
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member provide me with a clear breakdown detailing those reductions made in 2017/18 amounting to nearly £5million in the Learning Disability Budget?</p>	<p>The budget agreed by council in February 2017 included a presumed circa £5 million benefit from the development of the Building Better Lives programme, including reducing the cost of some packages through the greater use of community resources, closer working with Health and the impact of the employment programme.</p>																																																
<p>Question 13: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Tim Harman</p>																																																
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>Please can you provide me with a budget summary for Public Health showing the different areas of spending, as it appears not to have been included in this year's Cabinet papers?</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;"></th> <th style="width: 10%;">2017/18 GCC Revised Base Budget £'000s</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Cost Movements £'000s</th> <th style="width: 10%;">Proposed 2018/19 Budget £'000s</th> <th style="width: 10%;">Cash Increase / Decrease £'000s</th> <th style="width: 10%;">Percentage Increase / Decrease %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sexual Health</td> <td>3,846</td> <td>-504</td> <td>3,342</td> <td>-504</td> <td>-13.10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health Behaviours</td> <td>2,084</td> <td>256</td> <td>2,340</td> <td>256</td> <td>12.28%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Drugs and Alcohol</td> <td>6,327</td> <td>-234</td> <td>6,093</td> <td>-234</td> <td>-3.70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Children 0-19 (incl. Health Visiting & School Nursing)</td> <td>9,458</td> <td>145</td> <td>9,603</td> <td>145</td> <td>1.53%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Public Mental Health</td> <td>302</td> <td>-32</td> <td>270</td> <td>-32</td> <td>-10.60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NHS Health Checks</td> <td>712</td> <td>-242</td> <td>470</td> <td>-242</td> <td>-33.99%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Safeguarding</td> <td>100</td> <td></td> <td>100</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.00%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2017/18 GCC Revised Base Budget £'000s	Cost Movements £'000s	Proposed 2018/19 Budget £'000s	Cash Increase / Decrease £'000s	Percentage Increase / Decrease %	Sexual Health	3,846	-504	3,342	-504	-13.10%	Health Behaviours	2,084	256	2,340	256	12.28%	Drugs and Alcohol	6,327	-234	6,093	-234	-3.70%	Children 0-19 (incl. Health Visiting & School Nursing)	9,458	145	9,603	145	1.53%	Public Mental Health	302	-32	270	-32	-10.60%	NHS Health Checks	712	-242	470	-242	-33.99%	Safeguarding	100		100	0	0.00%
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	PH function incl. staffing and intelligence	2,083	-29	2,054	-29	-1.39%
	Total: Public Health	24,912	-640	24,272	-640	-2.57%
Question 14: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent: Cllr Vernon Smith					
<p>Agenda Item 5: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (Pages 9 to 114)</p> <p>Looking at the budget summary for Highways, what financial savings are envisaged with the procurement of the forthcoming new highways contract?</p>	<p>As I set out in the September Cabinet paper on this, the change is likely to be cost neutral.</p>					