

COUNTY COUNCIL – 24 June 2020

Members' Questions

1. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
<p>In June 2019 I asked this question:</p> <p>The county council consistently states in the media that the incinerator will save greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>When were these figures last updated, and in particular have they been updated to take into account the reduction of food waste going to landfill? And got this answer:</p> <p>We have previously calculated that Javelin Park will result in the reduction of the equivalent around 40,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases per annum. This calculation will be reviewed once the facility is operational and any change is likely to be positive. The current figure is based on the county achieving recycling rates of 60% which takes into account food waste being diverted from landfill.</p> <p>My question today: Has a review of the greenhouse gas emissions from the incinerator now taken place? How much CO2 is the incinerator producing? How close are we to achieving the 60% recycling target?</p>	<p>No further review of the carbon savings from the Gloucestershire Energy from Waste Facility has been undertaken.</p> <p>The countywide recycling rate for 2019/20 was 50.64%.</p>
2. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
<p>In February this year at budget scrutiny I asked the cabinet member for Highways if he was satisfied that enough money had been allocated to highways drainage schemes, given the increases in heavy rainfall and flash-flooding we experience as a result of climate</p>	<p>In 2019/20 the drainage budget was £2.2m, and the amount spent was £2mk.</p> <p>In 2020/21 the drainage budget is £2.4m, at this point in the year we have paid for £243k of works, with a further £1.3m ordered.</p>

<p>breakdown. He stated he was satisfied. Please can the cabinet member provide me with figures for the amount budgeted for drainage in 19/20 and 20/21 and how much was spent on highways drainage in 19/20, and how much has been spent so far in 20/21?</p>	
<p>3. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>What actions have taken place under the climate change strategy since it was published?</p>	<p>The ten 'Actions by April' have been largely completed. A summary of progress against action is shown below.</p> <p>Whilst there has been some disruption during the Covid-19 pandemic we are aware of potential new opportunities and challenges presented for climate change and the environment in the Recovery stage. We are working closely with partners on the Environment and Climate Action Group to identify these and support the delivery of our carbon reduction targets.</p> <p>Action 1: Agree with Leadership Gloucestershire and other partners how we will work together to bring about a co-ordinated approach in response to the climate emergency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A jointly funded post has been agreed by Leadership Gloucestershire, hosted by Gloucester City Council and funded for 3 years by partners. The post would have been filled in March/April 2020 but due to Covid-19 it was agreed at the time not to advertise the post. It is due to be advertised by the City Council in the near future. <p>Action 2: Million Trees Challenge - commit to planting a million trees by 2030</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is in development with the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT), Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership, The Woodland Trust and Forestry England.

Action 3: Establish £1m 'Action Fund' to incentivise carbon reduction and air quality improvements

- The funding is in place, principles drafted and mechanism being finalised.

Action 4: £1m energy efficiency invest to save loan fund

- Funding is in place with legal agreement drafted for partners.
- 2 expressions of interest received
- Scheme to be promoted to public sector partners.

Action 5: Buy only 100% renewable electricity

- Implemented

Action 6: Generate electricity from the Javelin Park Energy from Waste facility to power around 25,000 homes a year

- Implemented..

Action 7: Host and support Gloucestershire Youth Climate Panel

- Implemented.

Action 8: Review the Local Transport Plan (LTP) in view of the climate change emergency and consult on the revised LTP in January 2020 (including policies for all transport modes: public & community transport; cycle; freight; highways; rail; walk)

- Following a recent public consultation we will be amending various aspects of the LTP and it will be updated with the latest transport information. The revised LTP will be reported back through Cabinet later this year and Full Council early next year. Final approval of the LTP has been delayed to allow time for the LTP to incorporate the governments Decarbonising Transport Report which is due to be released

in November.

Action 9: Tender a contract to deliver over 200 new electric vehicle charging points by 2023, as part of a county-wide Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy

- ULEV Strategy drafted, shared with Environment Scrutiny Committee in March and ready for adoption.
- Western Power Distribution assessing grid capacity at potential sites.
- Soft market testing underway to inform the financial business case and define our tender requirements.

Action 10: Recruit staff to deliver the Strategy

- Interim project officer started in March pending permanent recruitment.

Progress with medium and long term actions:

Action 11: Work with our partners to ensure that all new public buildings and residential and commercial developments support the move to zero carbon and improve resilience

- Developments by the council's Property Services and Education are being reviewed to accommodate this.

Action 17: Establish baseline carbon emissions for Gloucestershire

- Completed.

Action 18: Investigate the feasibility of District Heating Networks, (Gloucestershire Royal Hospital (GRH); Gloucestershire Quays (GQ); Javelin Park (JP)), to deliver at least one by 2025

- GQ – detailed technical and economic viability assessment completed. Developing a bid to BEIS for Detailed Project Development funding, including feasibility funding for an

	<p>additional site in Gloucester.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRH – on hold as GRH focuses on Covid-19 response. • JP – opportunities continue to be explored, but no viable options have been developed to date. <p>Action 20: Identify ways to reduce carbon emissions in our £150m highways investment plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial meeting held with Devon CC to explore scope for a collaborative programme with other SW highway authorities to identify decarbonisation opportunities in highways services (construction, maintenance and operations).
<p>4. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Richard Boyles</p>
<p>Is the cabinet member for Children and Families satisfied that children in this county identified as at risk, in need or otherwise vulnerable are safe?</p>	<p>Children's social care services continue to work together with multi-agency safeguarding partners to safeguard and protect vulnerable children in need of support, protection and care. Safeguarding and protecting vulnerable children continues to be a service priority.</p> <p>Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm, multi-agency professionals work together to ensure that children are safe. Intervention and support, in accordance with the local child protection procedures and statutory guidance, continues to be provided by all social work operational teams.</p> <p>Accordingly, services continue to be delivered and this is without applying any of the related easements contained within The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. The children's social care workforce continues to have capacity and has remained resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>

COVID-19 business continuity planning arrangements have been in place since the Prime Minister's announcement on 23 March 2020. Immediate steps were taken to establish visiting and keeping in touch arrangements with identified children in need of support, protection and care. The vast majority of visits continue to be undertaken safely on a face to face basis. Social workers are able to adhere to the national advice and guidance from the Government and Public Health England to prevent the spread of the virus in order to maintain contact with vulnerable children, young people and families. When a child or parent/carer is symptomatic or has a diagnosis, alternative arrangements using ICT/digital methods of communication are used.

Visiting performance data is reported and scrutinised on a weekly basis by SLT in REACT Meetings with Ofsted and the DfE. Gloucestershire's visiting performance data is strong and compares very favourably against other local authorities in the South West Region.

All court care proceedings are being held virtually on a remote basis as are child protection conferences and statutory reviews of arrangements for children in care. A weekly report is prepared to oversee the nature and level of incoming contacts and referrals being considered by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and whilst this shows less activity when compared to pre-COVID-19 activity the rate of contacts and referrals are starting to increase.

The Council has promoted a public campaign to emphasise that just because children may be out of sight this does not necessarily mean that they are out of harms way. Member of the public, neighbours and local communities has been reminded about how

	<p>to contact the MASH if they have welfare concerns about a child.</p> <p>During the pandemic, there has been a presumption that vulnerable children will be encouraged and supported to continue to attend nursery and school. Allocated social workers and school staff continue to risk assess and support presenting needs, risks and circumstances for all children on roll. Attendance performance data relating to vulnerable children is also scrutinised in the REACT meeting with Ofsted and the DfE on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Children’s Services has established a Vulnerable Children and Young People’s Cell through which a new cohort of ‘new vulnerable’ children has been identified. There are 700 more children now eligible for Free School Meals and additional support is being provided to address increasing food and energy poverty. Plans are also being made to ensure children continue to be supported over the summer holidays.</p>
<p>5. Questioner’s name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent’s name: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Moving the meetings online means more members of the public can engage who might otherwise not be able to travel to Shire Hall. What is in place to ensure public participation through use of technology continues once we are able to resume meetings in Shire Hall?</p>	<p>To be honest, I don’t think this is something we have fully considered as yet, but it is something we will look at moving forward.</p>
<p>6. Questioner’s name: Cllr Lesley Williams</p>	<p>Respondent’s name: Cllr Kathy Williams</p>
<p>I have had reports of an increase in on street drinking and general anti social behaviour. It has been suggested that the culprits are the ex-street homeless that Councils have taken into accommodation during the Covid-19 crisis. I would like to think this is not the case, is there any evidence to support this suggestion.</p>	<p>Whilst housing is a district council responsibility, in light of the crisis, the county council stepped in to underwrite the emergency response to homelessness, investing £800k to provide accommodation. Over 300 individuals have been helped as a result. We are now working to support district councils as they move to ensure provide future accommodation for these people.</p>

	Homeless outreach, the community drug and alcohol service, and other relevant support agencies continue to support and encourage engagement by those clients with complex needs and chaotic lifestyles. This includes both residents and non residents of the emergency accommodation who may be visible on the streets.
7. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams	Respondent's name: Cllr Patrick Molyneux
Is it known how many schools are planning to remain open during the school holidays?	<p>All schools in the county have opened over the April and May holidays to support those children needing provision and I am grateful to all school staff who have forgone their holiday entitlement to enable this to happen.</p> <p>Current DfE guidance is that schools are not expected to open over the school holidays.</p>
8. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams	Respondent's name: Cllr Richard Boyles
Now it is certain that vouchers for 'free school' meals are to continue through the summer holidays please could the vouchers be delivered to phones, not all recipients have a printer to print them, there use by date extended so that they do not expire after 7 days, and that the Council uses its best endeavours to ensure that the vouchers are accepted by the widest possible range of shops.	The voucher scheme is run nationally by DfE. I have asked officers to draw your concerns to their attention.