

COUNTY COUNCIL – 17 March 2021

Members' Questions

1. Questioner's name: Cllr Shaun Parsons	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
<p>Does the Cabinet member for Environment & Planning agree that whilst there is much to commend in the LTP it does not adequately address the recommendations made by the Cotswolds Conservation Board during the consultation regarding HGV movements associated with the cluster of quarries between Naunton, Bourton -on – the – Water and Toddington.</p> <p>Would he agree furthermore with The Board that this issue should be addressed much more explicitly in the LTP particularly with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy LTP PD3.1 – Freight Network• Connecting Places Strategy CPS3 – North Cotswolds <p>The Board considers that the LTP should explicitly commit to ensuring that HGV movements associated with this quarry cluster are managed and addressed in a way that minimises adverse impacts on the Cotswold National Landscape and on the amenity of local communities. This should include establishing a robust baseline of current HGV movements and undertaking an assessment of the cumulative impacts of HGV movements across this cluster.</p>	<p>LTP policy in the Cotswold CPS3 was reviewed following feedback from the LTP public consultation and the issue of HGV freight routing in and around quarries was considered as part of the LTP Review and responded to in the consultation. The LTP has identified this in the Issues & Opportunities, in the supporting evidence to the LTP (see Annex 1.0 – LTP Summary Evidence Base).</p> <p>We have further strengthened LTP policy, PD3.1 - Gloucestershire's Freight Network, to extend GCC's role in partnership with designated neighbourhood forums. GCC will continue to work collaboratively with local planning authorities and other partners to ensure the effective implementation of adopted transport related land use policies with development proposals that could impact on the county's functioning freight network. Gloucestershire's Advisory Freight Route Map sets out the strategic primary route corridor for the freight network. GCC continues to monitor HGV flows on the freight network.</p> <p>As far as monitoring of the quarries is concerned, GCC have policies on the response to alleged breaches of planning control, and how we monitor all minerals and waste sites and our powers limited to the quarry sites.</p>
2. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
<p>The ash dieback felling of trees has been sad to see but people understand the need for it. Whilst I have heard about the aim to replant trees in the impacted areas I want to raise with you concerns expressed by residents about the way areas have been left after tree felling. In particular the sides of the A429 between Bourton and</p>	<p>In line with Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership, Ash Dieback Position Statement, a set amount of vegetation including wood and chippings, are left on site for biodiversity reasons. Many small species including insects, fungi and soil animals benefit from the</p>

<p>Northleach and also around Fossebridge. The areas now look stark, untidy and in places messy. Can you please list how these areas will be tidied up, rewilded and replanted along with a timescale in order to make sure this part of the Cotswolds becomes a green and pleasant area once again?</p>	<p>creation of such material. The practices we are using are sympathetic and are encouraging natural regeneration and, in time, appropriate replacement tree cover. Where it is safe to do so large mature stumps will also be left at a reasonable height, along with some cord wood. We have identified the presence of red data species such as violet click beetle, on a number of sites. These rare insects are found in the heart of decayed ancient trees, and in Britain found only within beech & ash trees.</p> <p>Surveys have been undertaken at several felling locations, and findings report promising evidence of natural regeneration at all sites. We will continue to encourage regeneration from the natural seed bank present in the soil, especially where infected ash trees have been removed in large numbers.</p> <p>Suitable areas have been, and will continue to be, identified for replanting. Forestry Commission guidance is being followed and we intend to replant at least two trees for every tree felled. Where possible we would like to plant on Highway land, however this approach has to be carefully considered as many of the ash being felled are self seeded in origin and so are often not in the most appropriate or safe locations on the highway verge. We need to establish the right tree in the right place for the right reason, through both active planting and natural regeneration as appropriate.</p> <p>With regard to the specific location identified, several Highway verge locations along the A429 Fosseway have been identified for replanting and this work will be undertaken in March 2021.</p>
<p>3. Questioner's name: Cllr Andrew Miller</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Patrick Molyneux</p>
<p>Is the cabinet member for Education aware of the plans for the SAND academy to take over Tuffley Primary school on 1 April 2021?"</p>	<p>Tuffley Primary School is due to convert to academy status and will join the SAND Trust as a sponsored academy on 1st April 2021.</p>

<p>4. Questioner's name: Cllr Andrew Miller</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith</p>
<p>Can the cabinet member for Highways list the many and excellent improvements to roads and pavements in the Tuffley County division in the last four years arising from the Council's £150m commitment to Gloucestershire Highways?"</p>	<p>4/81530 Calton Road, Gloucester 4/81556 Laburnum Road, Podsmead A38 Finlay Road & St Barnabus R/bt, Gloucester 3/8010 Tuffley Lane (from the Gladiator PH to Railway Bridge), Gloucester - Phase 2 4/81539 Romney Close, Tuffley 4/81549 Podsmead Road (Woodpecker Road Jct to just before Masefield Avenue) 4/85515 Oakbank Tuffley 4/85515 Gurney Avenue, Gloucester A38 Cole Avenue (Podsmead Rd to St Barnabus R/bt), Gloucester (2610)</p>
<p>5. Questioner's name: Cllr Andrew Miller</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith</p>
<p>Can I congratulate the cabinet member on the achievement of the Council in resurfacing Seymour Road, and does he agree with me that persevering through a number of a technical obstacles has been well worth the patience and effort for the people of Linden and those who use that road?"</p>	<p>Thank you Cllr Andrew Miller, I whole heartedly agree, our structural maintenance team along with the contractors Tarmac and Ringway have done a fantastic job in delivering a great scheme.</p>
<p>6. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>I was saddened to see the news that our Chief Fire Officer has left for Berkshire, and I wish him the best of luck with his endeavours. I am, however, worried about the culture of this council that has led to the loss of so many directors in the last four years. Can the Cabinet Member please confirm how many senior staff have left during this term?</p>	<p>Eight directors have left the council since May 2017. Some have retired and some have gone onto bigger and better things – which reflects well on the reputation of our council.</p>
<p>7. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>Does the Cabinet Member share my view that the loss of council talent should be a concern for council residents, and what is he going to do to ensure Gloucestershire County Council is a magnet organisation?</p>	<p>Council officers changing role is a normal part of the running of any council, or indeed any business.</p>

8. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
Can the Cabinet Member please confirm how many trees have been planted in Gloucestershire since the Full Council meeting on 17 February?	By the end of the month, 7780 trees and 2,400 hedging plants will have been planted. Cllr Hodgkinson will forgive me but, despite his keen interest in this area, I don't propose to ask for daily totals.
9. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
Since our last meeting on 17 February, can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the number of trees the County Council has chopped down – either through Ash Dieback programmes or in GCC's capacity as the Highways Authority – and what proportion have been replaced?	As of 11/03/21 GCC Highways have removed 3,358 trees which posed a safety risk to the public highway. By the end of March 2021 we will have replaced trees at a rate of almost 3 to 1.
10. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
How many Electric Vehicles does the county now operate in its own fleet?	At least 13 vehicles: 3 battery EVs and 2 hybrid EVs in our staff pool car fleet (only one pool vehicle is not electric). 8 hybrid EVs that we lease for use by NSL our parking enforcement contractor. GFRS has started taking delivery of hybrid Volvo XC60s.
11. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
What has been the carbon saving from the greater use of EVs by the Council?	We do not yet hold this data but it will be collected as part of a corporate fleet review that is currently underway.
12. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
How many procurement processes have included a requirement for use of electric or low emission vehicles?	In the past two years we have included these in our contracts for parking, highways and pool cars.
13. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
How many electric or low emissions vehicles are being used on behalf of the council through procured services?	Our parking contractor uses 8 hybrid EVs and our highway term

	<p>maintenance contractor, Ringway, has recently acquired 4 battery EV vans.</p>
<p>14. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Open Contracting</p> <p>How many of the report recommendations put forward and accepted from the Open Contracting Task Group have been implemented?</p>	<p>There were seven recommendations. Progress has been made against all 7. 5 have been fully implemented and 2 are partially implemented and ongoing.</p>
<p>15. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Which actions, if any, remain outstanding?</p>	<p>The outstanding actions are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness sessions on procurement for members – These will be delivered as part of the new member induction following the elections. • Financial checks take place when requested by commissioners/contract managers and plans are in place to introduce a regular programme of checking during the next 12 months. • Providers are expected to comply with the Government's Code of Conduct on Whistleblowing. This requirement will be integrated into the standard Selection Questionnaire for suppliers within the next 3 - 6 months. <p><i>(The final two actions relate to a single recommendation)</i></p>
<p>16. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</p>
<p>Grass Verges</p> <p>How many of the report recommendations put forward and accepted from the Biodiversity Task Group been implemented?</p>	<p>Significant progress has been made on all eight of the recommendations made by the Biodiversity Task Group. One area which has not moved forwards as far as desired was that whilst a useful trial project was implemented to trial cut and clear techniques on roadside verges, only a limited number of sites are suitable with the equipment currently available on the market.</p>

17. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
Which action, if any, remain outstanding?	Installation work on road studs to better identify and mark protected verges on the ground as well as via an electronic register is still to be completed and will be actioned as soon as practicable.
18. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
What has been the impact of the actions taken?	The Biodiversity Task Group has provided a useful focus to ensure Gloucestershire keeps biodiversity central to the considerations of projects and operations. Specific outcomes include that the County Council's Biodiversity Guidance has been updated to follow the Plantlife publication. This document is used by many partners and is alongside engagement and additional information provided directly to town and parish councils in the form of an information sheet last year. Useful discussions have also been undertaken with our partners and providers with the result of trialling the introduction of some flexibility into the grass cutting schedule with the aim of improving biodiversity.
19. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
<p>Single Use Plastics Task Group</p> <p>At a meeting of full Council in March 2018, a motion was unanimously carried to: Eliminate all SUP within County Council managed buildings and facilities by 2020, and seek to encourage the elimination of SUP within its supply chain by 2025. Was the 2020 commitment met?</p>	All single use plastics have been removed from our catering supplies and provision in GCC buildings and as part of the GCC procured schools catering contract. We have been working with our supply chain on all construction and property maintenance projects in order to reduce or remove SUP as fully as currently possible. All new construction and maintenance contracts and frameworks have a requirement within them to do this.
20. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
What progress has been made towards eliminating single use plastics within the supply chain?	See above.

<p>21. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p> <p>Climate Emergency</p> <p>Whilst the Cabinet like to talk a lot about the Carbon emission cuts in the Council's own estate (which is of course a necessary step for leadership on climate action, but should not become laurels to rest upon), this accounts for less a fraction of one percent of the carbon reductions needed across Gloucestershire.</p> <p>- The motion passed by Council on 15th May 2019 to declare a Climate Emergency resolved to: "Deliver a carbon neutral county by 2050, and work with partners to identify what measures would be needed to deliver a stepped target of 80% carbon reduction by 2030 to reflect the IPCC report on climate change."</p> <p>Almost two years on, what progress has been made against this commitment, and what stepped targets for county-wide carbon reduction have been identified?</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</p> <p>May I refer you to the detailed report agreed by Cabinet in December 2020 which sets out progress in delivering against the Climate Change strategy and our five year rolling action plan. This includes proposals in 2021/22 to study transport decarbonisation in the county. With over one third of emissions being transport generate the findings of this report will be critical to inform stepped targets for all carbon reductions by 2030 and 2045.</p> <p>As part of our Climate Change Strategy we also agreed to contribute towards a county-wide climate change coordinator post to work with districts on measures to reduce carbon emissions across Gloucestershire. Following discussions at Leadership Gloucestershire in January 2020 it was agreed that this post would be hosted by Gloucester City Council. We have been keen to see this important role filled and understand that interviews have recently taken place.</p>
<p>22. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p> <p>The motion also committed the council to</p> <p>"Call on Central Government to provide additional powers and resources to support local and national action towards this 2030 target."</p> <p>· "Lobby national government to commit to 100 per cent carbon neutrality by 2050."</p> <p>"Consider its contracts going forward to oblige all contractors to report their carbon emissions and to place a 'carbon/environmental cost' on competing bids. "</p> <p>What progress has been made on these items.</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</p> <p>GCC is committed to the UK100 pledge to accelerate the transition to a net zero society. UK100 brings together local authorities to collaborate, share knowledge and engage with government on matters such as policy development, target setting and resources. Alongside this, as a member of the Western Gateway Sub National Transport Body, we are working with other local authorities in our region to support the transition to reducing carbon emissions at local and regional levels.</p> <p>Changes to the council's decision making processes aim to ensure that climate change implications are considered and recorded in procurement and policy decisions. For example, the new schools we are building will be carbon neutral.</p>

<p>23. Questioner's name: Cllr Rachel Smith</p> <p>(3) The motion further committed the council to:</p> <p>“Ensure that our major plans, such as the local transport plan, have clearly identified strategies to reduce carbon emissions.”</p> <p>What is the estimated carbon impact of the actions contained in the latest Local Transport Plan?</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</p> <p>As part of Gloucestershire's LTP review, an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken. The subsequent Post Adoption Statement concludes that “Overall it is concluded that the additions and amendments made to the LTP in response to consultation have improved its overall sustainability performance and as such, the LTP's vision for Gloucestershire of ‘A resilient transport network that enables sustainable economic growth by providing travel choices for all, making Gloucestershire a better place to live, work and visit’ can be achieved in a sustainable and integrated fashion.”</p> <p>In addition the LTP commits to undertake further work to map out a pathway to carbon zero for Gloucestershire.</p>
<p>24. Questioner's name: Cllr Paul Hodgkinson</p> <p>The amended Council Strategy, approved four weeks ago, confirms the County Council's commitment to “tree planting that will see 35 million new trees planted across the county by 2030.” Given this pledge, can the Cabinet Member please confirm his understanding of how many trees need to be planted each and every day</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</p> <p>The 35 million trees pledge is Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership's target, which the county council, along with district councils (including Cotswold) are committed to supporting.</p> <p>With the greatest respect for Cllr Hodgkinson, despite his interest, I will not ask officers to spend their time producing daily figures for him.</p>
<p>25. Questioner's name: Cllr Jeremy Hilton</p> <p>What is the outcome of the study carried out by Severn Trent, in collaboration with the county council, into the August 2020 floods that impacted on parts of Kingsholm?</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith</p> <p>Officers have received feedback from Severn Trent Water (STW) on the initial investigations they have carried out on their network in this area. These have not shown any immediate issues requiring repair, and it would appear that the assumption it was down to sheer volumes of water accessing the existing network was correct. STW are currently extending the area of investigation and will be looking into improvements to the capacity of the network following a multi-agency meeting.</p>

26. Questioner's name: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent's name: Cllr Lynden Stowe
<p>Does the county council own any land at Javelin Park that is not used by UBB and which may be free for non-incinerator uses?</p> <p>If so what is the size of the unused land?</p>	<p>No, all land at Javelin Park is allocated for use by UBB.</p>
27. Questioner's name: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
<p>Has the county council received the annual report from Allstone about their search for an alternative site to relocate their stone crushing, recycling, aggregates and skip hire business to?</p>	<p>The operator has been in regular discussions with council officers prior to making their anticipated formal submission.</p>
28. Questioner's name: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent's name: Cllr Dave Norman
<p>When will the Kingsholm parking review be completed?</p>	<p>Our consultants have created a portal to enable consultation to start in May on proposals for yellow lines to improve safety and accessibility in Kingsholm. Subject to the response of the local community the review could be completed this year.</p>
29. Questioner's name: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
<p>After so many years of Tory control why are there as so many potholes all over the county?</p>	<p>Given that Cllr Hilton and his colleagues proposed amendments in last year's budget that would have cut pothole repairs, and proposed amendments in this year's budget that would have slashed vital drainage budgets, that protects areas in his own division from flooding, residents might be glad of the continued Conservative investment into our road network – rather than the cuts that Cllr Hilton and his colleagues proposed.</p>
30. Questioner's name: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent's name: Cllr Patrick Molyneux
<p>What plans do you have to build a new non-selective secondary to serve the north of Gloucester?</p>	<p>The Gloucestershire school places strategy will be coming to cabinet later this month, and will provide more details on anticipated future school need.</p>

31. Questioner's name: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith
Will you join me in condemning the persons who vandalised the speed survey equipment on Sandhurst Lane, Gloucester?	Yes – entirely.
32. Questioner's name: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent's name: Cllr Lynden Stowe
What discussions have been had with the county council over plans to locate an eco-park at the site of the Hempsted Landfill facility?	These are exciting proposals that could see a significant boost to green energy production in Gloucester, and the planting of hundreds of thousands of trees. Whilst the council hasn't been formally involved to date, this is an extremely interesting proposal which will make a significant difference to our area.
33. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent's name: Cllr Kathy Williams
How many care home residents tested positive for Covid since the start of the outbreak?	815.
34. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent's name: Cllr Kathy Williams
Given the lack of testing available at the start of the pandemic, can the cabinet member and public health team provide an estimate of how many care home residents caught Covid in the first 6 months?	In the 6 months 26/02/2020 to 26/08/2020 there were 18 confirmed cases amongst care home residents, with the first case not being confirmed until 29/05/2020. Based on the information we hold it is not possible to estimate the number of cases of Covid-19 in care home residents prior to routine testing being implemented.
35. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent's name: Cllr Kathy Williams
What proportion and total number of care home residents have now been vaccinated?	Based on the data submitted by care homes, 89.4% of residents have had the vaccine. It is important to note that individuals are asked to wait 28 days after confirmed Covid-19 infection to have their vaccine. Some of these residents may have had active or recent Covid-19 infection when the home was visited which has delayed their vaccination.
36. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent's name: Cllr Lynden Stowe
	The risk of a pandemic has been on the Local Resilience

<p>What was in the Council's Risk Register about pandemics in 2019?</p>	<p>Forum's Risk Register (of which GCC is a statutory partner) for a number of years, as well as in the Public Health team's risk register. In both cases, the risk is owned and managed by the Director of Public Health. The risk of a pandemic is not just a GCC risk to plan and prepare for and so the planning and preparedness has been led by the Director of Public health on behalf of the Local Resilience Forum. During this time the Gloucestershire multi-agency pandemic influenza response plan was updated in line with national guidance and exercises were carried out to test key elements. Whilst there are differences between influenza and Covid-19, the process of preparing and testing of local plans enhanced local understanding of emergency planning and health protection processes and also developed and further strengthened local partnership arrangements. Both of these outcomes have helped deliver a strong integrated response to Covid-19 in Gloucestershire.</p>
<p>37. Questioner's name: Cllr Colin Hay</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Tim Harman</p>
<p>Looking back, do you think that Cabinet should have done more to ensure the mitigations were in place for a major pandemic within Gloucestershire?</p>	<p>I'm sure all of Gloucestershire's councils will look to learn lessons from the pandemic to put us in a stronger position in future.</p>
<p>38. Questioner's name: Cllr Kate Haigh</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>Question to Leader</p> <p>In 2017 the Council newly elected Council formed with 10 women members out of 53 in total and there are now 2 out of 10 female members of his Cabinet. Minority groups are also mostly underrepresented, as are younger people. What steps has he taken to encourage a greater diversity of people coming forward for election and does he agree that more diversity in the photo on the steps of Shire Hall in May would be a positive step for Gloucestershire?</p>	<p>The make up of this council is a matter for the electorate, not for me.</p>
<p>39. Questioner's name: Cllr Lesley Williams</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Dave Norman</p>
<p>Parking problems on residential streets is an issue which blights</p>	<p>We are aware of the pressures caused by parking for all road</p>

<p>neighbourhoods, causes community friction and can make it difficult for people with disabilities or families with small children to get around. What progress has been made with the parking review (by division) and has he given any consideration of greater enforcement where parking blocks pavements.</p>	<p>users, especially for people with disabilities but also for people walking, cycling and businesses reliant upon deliveries.</p> <p>As part of this year's capital programme we are continuing to fund work to update and improve the parking regulations in Cheltenham (All Saints), Stroud town and Gloucester (Kingsholm). These are being quality reviewed and will be ready for public consultation this summer.</p> <p>Outside of London, pavement parking which causes an obstruction is enforceable by the council only where there are yellow lines or similar restrictions in place (backed by a Traffic Regulation Order). Where there are no lines or restrictions only the police have powers to enforce this. Last year the government announced that it would enact Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 for areas outside of London. We are waiting for confirmation as to when this will happen but it is good news for everyone because it will allow the police to focus on other priorities and enable councils to deal with antisocial parking wherever it obstructs the pavement.</p>
<p>40. Questioner's name: Cllr Brian Robinson</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Vernon Smith</p>
<p>The Councils investment in roads over the past 4 years was designed to improve our road network. Will the cabinet member confirm the impact of this investment on the backlog of road repairs in Gloucestershire.</p>	<p>In the past four years, we've reduced the proportion of classified roads in red condition by 34%, and the proportion in amber condition by 17%. Overall, over 200 miles of road (has been improved – very nearly enough to stretch from Gloucestershire to Scotland.</p>
<p>41. Questioner's name: Cllr Brian Robinson</p>	<p>Respondent's name: Cllr Tim Harman</p>
<p>The impact of Covid has affected people's emotional well-being as well as their physical health as many people have been denied the companionship of friends and family even if they did not catch Covid. Will the cabinet member for public health confirm help to address this will be a future priority for this council and outline steps the Council will be taking.</p>	<p>From the outset of the pandemic, the Council has worked with its partners to prioritise support for mental health and wellbeing; and this work is continuing. Mental wellbeing is already a priority in the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing strategy, and we will work with partners to embed our learning from the response to Covid-19 in our plans going forward, and in the county's existing all-Age Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy.</p>

At present our priority is responding to the ongoing impact of the pandemic on mental health, and there is a recognition that we need to consider support in the short, medium and longer term. While some people's mental wellbeing will recover as restrictions are eased, others will experience ongoing effects, arising from experiences such as bereavement, ill-health, PTSD, financial insecurity and job loss.

We are taking a number of steps to address the mental health impacts. The multi-agency Mental Health Cell established in response to the pandemic and co-chaired by Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is continuing to meet on a fortnightly basis to share intelligence on local need and co-ordinate our response. The cell has a number of sub-groups, including the children and young people's strategic response group and the workforce wellbeing group which brings together HR representatives from across the ICS.

Public Health commissioners are also reviewing options for continuing the new open access mental health provision commissioned by the Council in response to the pandemic for a further period of time (subject to the relevant approvals). The new services, introduced in Spring 2020 include an anonymous 'drop in' helpline (TIC+ Chat) for children and young people experiencing issues with their mental health, such as anxiety and low mood; and two digital mental wellbeing platforms; Qwell for adults and Kooth for 11-18 year olds, providing anonymous access to online counselling and self-care resources.

It is vital that we continue to raise awareness of the support available, and in January the Council worked with the CCG and Gloucestershire Health and Care to launch a new year long campaign: '*Be Well Gloucestershire*'. The joint campaign is designed to provide information on looking after your mental wellbeing; and will include a range of promotional activities over the next 12 months, including a new website and radio advertising.

As we move forward, it is important that we embed support for

wellbeing in communities recognising the important role that connections with others play in our wellbeing. The Council will shortly be confirming the recipients of the new GloW (Gloucestershire Wellbeing) community grant scheme. Funded by NHS England, the grants will support community based and led initiatives aimed at supporting social connections and reducing isolation with a particular focus on those individuals likely to be most vulnerable to poor mental health.

Finally, we will be working to refresh the county's Suicide Prevention Strategy; working with the county's existing Suicide Prevention Partnership Forum.