

MEMBER QUESTIONS

CABINET MEETING –November 2023

Question 1: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe
<p>Agenda Item 6: Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report 2023/24</p> <p>On page 46 in paragraph 17 the report states that surplus parking income has raised an additional £366,000. How much of this extra income has come from the extension of the resident parking permit zones in my division?</p>	<p>Paragraph 17 is explaining an increased movement in the outturn position for the total parking income of £366k therefore we have not already achieved this surplus. There are six types of income streams of which permit parking sits with waivers and other income such as suspensions and we do not forecast the income target based on each of the individual income streams. The income target budget is set at a total parking level therefore we are unable to answer your question.</p>
Question 2: Cllr Chloe Turner	Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe
<p>Agenda Item 6: Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report 2023/24</p> <p>a) I'm concerned that ICT Priority 1 incidents continue to occur at a rate in excess of target (more than double in this reporting period), and for a variety of root causes. I note that actions to mitigate reoccurrence are ongoing - is adequate resource being directed towards this work, as we do not yet seem to be seeing results?</p> <p>b) What is the timing to address the six remaining applications that require repackaging onto the purple Citrix layer so that the blue layer can be decommissioned, if this is what will reduce SR3.1 "Failure to ensure ICT remains fit for purpose" from its current highly elevated state?</p>	<p>Although any Priority One incident is a concern, as a positive result of the ICT improvement journey, these P1s were not related to our modernised infrastructure but to the applications which had yet to be upgraded at the point of the defect. Our social care systems have since been successfully hosted and other defects were linked to replacing old telephony which is due to complete by the end of the financial year. The ICT support arrangement was also shown to be working more effectively as all of these incidents were resolved within the four-hour SLA.</p> <p>b) There are a number of factors which contribute to the current level of this risk including the removal of the 'blue' layer. We expect to be</p>

<p>c) Noting that the Member ICT workgroup has not met for some time, could this be reconvened soon to discuss the above and other ICT matters, please?</p>	<p>able to review and reduce the risk at the end of quarter four this year.</p> <p>c) There is an update on progress of the ICT improvement plan due to be presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny committee on 6 December. With regards to Member ICT, a date is being arranged for the near future.</p>
<p>Question 3: Cllr Chloe Turner</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6: Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report 2023/24</p> <p>We heard at Environment Scrutiny Committee that a climate impact tool is now in use for Council decision-making. Has this been used in relation to the Cabinet decisions coming to the meeting next week?</p>	<p>We always ask Cabinet report authors to summarise the Climate Change implications of Cabinet Decisions, and in recent months (following the Council Motion about Biodiversity) have also asked them to complete an Ecological Impact Assessment where applicable. The tool has been developed to help authors assess that, recognising that not all authors will feel confident that they have the necessary expertise and knowledge. All authors of reports coming to today's meeting have been signposted to the tool and encouraged to use it in the development of their reports. As we roll out the tool, we want it to be used more extensively and consistently, including in the production of every report coming to Cabinet.</p>
<p>Question 4: Cllr Chloe Turner</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Dom Morris</p>
<p>Agenda Item 12: Civil Parking, Social Care and Commercial Council Debt Enforcement Services Contract</p> <p>Regarding the Civil Parking, Social Care and Commercial Council Debt Enforcement Services Contract, I'm pleased to see that it's proposed the social value element of the contract will be applied to supporting local debt management organisations and charities. What SV percentage will be applied to the contract?</p>	<p>The currently proposed level of social value in the contract quality evaluation will be 20%.</p> <p>The council is keen to work with debt charities to help support debtors, especially those identified as having vulnerabilities.</p>

<p>Question 5: Cllr Chloe Turner</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 13: Disposal of Land at North West Cheltenham</p> <p>Regarding the sale of Council land at North West Cheltenham, what will the Rural Estate acreage be after the disposal?</p>	<p>The current Rural estate is calculated as being 6973 acres. The GCC owned land forming part of the proposed development at NW Cheltenham is 163 acres.</p>
<p>Question 6: Cllr Chloe Turner</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>Agenda Item 10: Transfer of Local Enterprise Partnership Functions</p> <p>Post-integration of the LEP, what steps will be taken to ensure that the LEP functions within the Council retain something of the independent nature that is valued by businesses?</p>	<p>While we are working on draft plans for the continued business voice post transfer to the County Council, we are still awaiting final guidance from the government which is due by the end of year.</p>
<p>Question 7: Cllr Paul Baker</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6: Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report 2023/24</p> <p>I refer to the section 'Supporting refugees and asylum seekers (including Homes for Ukraine scheme). The support for our Ukrainian guests is to be congratulated but can I ask what support is being extended to our non-Ukrainian refugees and asylum seekers? Can the 12 week English language and employment programme be extended to other refugees and asylum seekers all of whom can make a significant contribution to our local community and economy?</p>	<p>The county council receives funding for the Homes for Ukraine scheme and the UK Resettlement Scheme. The latter scheme supports refugees from a number of countries. Through these funding sources, we have a partnership with GARAS who support employment schemes for all refugees, and we commission ESOL support. We have also provided a grant to GARAS to support asylum seekers in the county. In addition, Afghan refugees are similarly supported through work commissioned by the International Resettlement Coordinator based at Gloucester City who works on behalf of all seven local authorities to administer that scheme.</p>

<p>Question 8: Cllr Paul Baker</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6: Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report 2023/24</p> <p>Mass Rapid Transit system, I note a Mass Rapid Transit Board is being set up, what is the anticipated make up of this body?</p>	<p>The Mass Rapid Transit Project Board is in the process of being set up and no meetings have taken place to date. The first one is expected to take place in December 2023. Whilst the final make up of the Board is still to be confirmed, it will include senior officer representation from all six District Councils, as well as the County Council and the GFirst LEP.</p>
<p>Question 9: Cllr Paul Baker</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6: Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report 2023/24</p> <p>I note that only 28% of the schools capital budget is spent to date. Given that there is a £20m backlog in school repairs according to a reply I recently received can I be assured that this budget will be fully spent by the financial year end given that to avoid disruption to the school day much work is carried out during the long summer holidays?</p>	<p>This year's capital budget makes provision of £4.2m for capital repairs and maintenance projects at schools. This represents almost 30% of the Council's total capital programme for schools. Given that the council cannot afford to address the full maintenance backlog of approx. £20m in any one year, schemes are based on priority need according to the Council's school condition data and annual discussions with schools.</p> <p>Capital Maintenance Projects are programmed and planned by Asset Management and Property Services across the whole year to deliver as many schemes as possible as part of the ongoing capital maintenance of the school estate. However, this depends on a number of factors including ability to secure contractors to carry out the works, and fitting those works in around the school's operational requirements. For example, this year's programme includes a number of toilet refurbishment schemes. Where we have been unable to secure contractors during the 2023 summer holidays, some of those will need to be reprogrammed for summer 2024 in order to avoid disrupting the school year.</p>

	<p>Needless to say, we always try to deliver schemes in the year for which they are planned. However, should that not be possible the associated budget is carried forward to the following year, so the funding is not lost.</p>
<p>Question 10: Cllr Roger Whyborn</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Dom Morris</p>
<p>Agenda Item 12: Civil Parking, Social Care and Commercial Council Debt Enforcement Services Contract</p> <p>The cabinet member has rejected the option of setting up an in-house agency for the collection of fines associated with Civil parking (and related) enforcement, on the grounds of the associated learning curve and the setting-up cost of c£250,000. If the Cabinet was to decide to invest that sum in setting up an in-house agency, how much additional net revenue annual would flow back the Council?</p>	<p>It is very difficult to exactly quantify the amount of additional income that the council would receive as statutory enforcement fees are based on the stage that the debt is at when settled.</p> <p>Furthermore, an inhouse enforcement agent service may not have access to the same data sets and intelligence that a national operator would have access to.</p> <p>It should be noted that in 2022/23 29% of outstanding debt relates to debtors who live outside of the county. A national agent is able to pursue this debt using local operatives negating the high costs of travel to out of county addresses. Having a nationwide agent also means that resources can be brought in from other areas to manage peaks in demand.</p> <p>In terms of recruitment, the council's current pay scales would mean that it would be hard to recruit competent agents as private sector pay and benefits far exceed those that would be offered at the council.</p>

<p>Question 11: Cllr Roger Whyborn</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Dom Morris</p>
<p>Agenda Item 12: Civil Parking, Social Care and Commercial Council Debt Enforcement Services Contract</p> <p>The questioner has direct experience of the effects of external enforcement agencies on this subject. This has both affected constituents and close members of the questioner’s family. Typically, things go wrong because the offender has forgotten to tell DVLA that they have moved house, leading to a racking up of unpaid fines due to notices having been sent to the wrong address. It would be fair to say in my experience that the demeanour of some of the enforcement agency employees is akin to ‘thugs in suits’, and I do not use that language lightly. In more than one case substantial distress was caused a) to a man in my division already suffering mental health issues, and b) a young mother (in another area but with a similar agency involved) arriving with a 1 year old child to find her car about to be clamped upon threat of further costs for release – in both cases resulting in costs over £700.</p>	<p>The enforcement agent contract will have an emphasis on identifying and appropriately managing customer vulnerability. This may result in the enforcement agents taking a different approach to chasing outstanding debt, such as, not making visits in person or communicating with the debtor via a method they are comfortable with, such as text, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.</p> <p>Should a debtor be identified as having acute financial vulnerability then the case would be referred to the council to take a decision on whether the debt should be pursued or written off. In 2021 The Debt Respite Scheme (also known as Breathing Space) was introduced by the government to support vulnerable debtors. The Breathing Space scheme allows debtors to obtain a moratorium for their outstanding debt via a registered debt charity, such as the Citizen’s Advice Bureau.</p> <p>It should be noted that it is an offence to not update the DVLA with new address details. A fine of up to £1000 can be issued to any motorist identified by the police to have not updated their address with the DVLA.</p> <p>Any debtor who has concerns regarding the conduct of an enforcement agent is able to raise this with the council, who will undertake a thorough investigation, including the reviewing of any relevant CCTV/bodycam footage that may exist.</p>

Question 12: Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe
<p>Agenda Item 6: Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report 2023/24</p> <p>The report for agenda item 6 on page 80 states that 209 of adult care providers in the county are rated good or outstanding, but that 30 are rated as requiring improvement and 3 as inadequate. Could you please list those that are rated as requiring improvement or inadequate?</p>	<p>The position has changed slightly as there are no longer 3 inadequate. Please see below the current list of the 34 providers rated as RI on the CQC list.</p> <p>Provider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Assistance (Kent) Ambleside Aroma Care Astell Bafford House Bramble Home Care LTD - Cinderford Bramble Homecare Limited Brockworth House Care Centre Care Hearted Charnwood House Nursing Home Chaxhill Hall CMichaels Healthcare CSK Support 24 Care Agency Empowerment Care Ltd Farecare Gloucestershire Limited Five Valleys Care LTD Global Caring Gloucester Highborder Lodge Jubilee Lodge Minchinhampton Centre for the Elderly - Horsfall House My Homecare Gloucester Northfield House OSJCT Henlow Court Pine Tree Court Care Home Queensbridge House St Paul's Residential Home

	<p>Stinchcombe Manor Stratton Court The Elms TNC Healthcare Limited Watermoor House Westgreen House Winslow House Woodstock Nursing Home</p>
<p>Question 13: Cllr Jeremy Hilton</p> <p>Agenda Item 6: Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report 2023/24</p> <p>On page 79 of agenda item 6 it says the number of people in the last quarter waiting for a care package increased by 43% in quarter 1, from 222 to 318. It says average waiting time had dropped to 1.8 weeks by end of September. How long should a vulnerable person have to wait to get a care package agreed and implemented?</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p> <p>The average waiting time relates to the period between the end of assessment/referral to Brokerage and the start of the care package. The average waiting time is currently at approximately 2 weeks.</p>
<p>Question 14: Cllr Jeremy Hilton</p> <p>Agenda Item 6: Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report 2023/24</p> <p>The number of people with learning disabilities in Settled accommodation across Gloucestershire is just 64%. It's difficult comparisons with other councils for this. But we are failing against the target we have set ourselves. What is the reason for this? Is this a national issue?</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p> <p>The primary reason for this is due to the number of individuals in Gloucestershire with learning disabilities who live in Residential Care Homes.</p> <p>The parameters of this indicator also does not include those individuals who live in supported living services, this accounts for a significant proportion of people who live in the community with their own tenancies (with or without support).</p>

	<p>Work continues between operational, commissioning and performance colleagues to address anomalies between national and local data interpretation, which once clarified, we believe will improve our performance in this area.</p>
<p>Question 15: Cllr Jeremy Hilton</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Carole Allaway Martin</p>
<p>Agenda Item 11: Gloucestershire Care Partnership Contract Extension</p> <p>Why is this contract being extended while a review of the service is being undertaken? Why was the review not done in advance so that a new tender process could have been done before the current contract termination?</p>	<p>GCC is currently undertaking work on the Market Position Statement for the Health & Social Care market. This will provide information on the future demographic need for care and the type of care provision needed. Once this is finalised, this contract and the overall delivery within the wider market will be reviewed in relation to short, medium and longer term goals relating to the care needs outlined in our demographic profiles.</p> <p>The nine-month extension allows time for the Market Position Statement to be completed before the Cabinet makes any long-term decisions regarding care provision in the county.</p>