

MEMBER QUESTIONS

CABINET MEETING – January 2024

Question 1: Cllr Chloe Turner	Respondent: Cllr David Gray
<p data-bbox="125 517 1021 587">Agenda Item 9: Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy – fourth annual report and action plan.</p> <ol data-bbox="174 667 1093 1289" style="list-style-type: none">1. In the action plan at 1.5 I note that the Council has committed to reporting on the carbon emissions of platinum level contracts over the next 5 years.<ol data-bbox="271 778 1093 1289" style="list-style-type: none">a. What is the definition of a platinum contract?b. What percentage of the total contract value for the council is comprised of platinum contracts, ie how much of the Council's contract spend will this work cover?c. The Council has a commitment to aim for net zero as an organisation by 2030, which is now only six years away, so this Scope 3 data (which as the report notes, some councils are estimating to comprise up to 96% of emissions) is needed now rather than "over the next five years". When is the platinum contract emissions analysis due to start and finish? Is the resource in place to do this work? Is the Council looking to peer councils for learnings on this? for example Oxfordshire	<ol data-bbox="1137 483 2087 1327" style="list-style-type: none">1. a) A platinum contract is a strategic, high-risk value contract above £1m per year. Products or services that are crucial to GCC in strategic terms and are characterised by high value and high supply risk. Suppliers need to be closely managed. This quadrant is typically characterised by strategic partnering relationships. It requires the development of long-term relationship with supplier and collaborative working. Contract management input will be a large percentage of someone's working week and regular reviews, reports, risk monitoring, management updates and supplier meetings have to be carried out. There is a requirement for quarterly performance snapshots and the involvement of the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) over the contract lifecycle. Examples: Highways, ICT Infrastructure, Adult Social Care domiciliary DPS or other similar arrangements, major DPSs or Frameworks which are strategic to GCC or fulfil a statutory requirement. The review time for such a contract will be 18 months before expiry to ensure sufficient time is allowed to prepare and undertake procurement and fulfil GCC governance requirements.

<p>where I understand Scope 3 analysis has been underway for the last year.</p>	<p>b) Based on the estimated annual cost for known Platinum level contracts and taken as a percentage of the total commercial, third-party spend for 2022-23, the percentage of Platinum contract spend against total spend is estimated to be just under 50%.</p> <p>c) The Council recognises the urgency of this activity. Further recruitment is now in progress for a Climate Action Programme Manager who will be responsible for leading the Council's approach to this, including learnings from peer councils. The work to identify scope 3 emissions will be further developed in 2024.</p>
<p>Question 2: Cllr Chloe Turner</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>Agenda Item 9: Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy – fourth annual report and action plan.</p> <p>The reports pack for this meeting runs to 528 pages, including items that have not been published elsewhere (even if the public could be expected to trawl through committee and other documents to find previous publications, which is not a reasonable expectation). The time between publication of the Cabinet agenda and the deadline for public questions is less than 48 hours. Does the Cabinet think that is acceptable?</p>	<p>We have to strike a balance between giving an opportunity for councillors and members of the public to ask a question, but also providing officers with sufficient time to provide a meaningful answer.</p> <p>As you will be aware, this report also went to Environment Scrutiny in November where members had the opportunity to ask any questions on it.</p>
<p>Question 3: Cllr Chloe Turner</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr David Gray</p>
<p>Agenda Item 9: Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy – fourth annual report and action plan.</p>	<p>A requirement to complete the tool has now been added to the cabinet template and reports will not be approved until the tool has been completed in all future cabinet reports.</p>

<p>In the answer to my question at the November 2023 Cabinet meeting, it was noted that "we want [the new climate tool] to be used more extensively and consistently, including in the production of every report coming to Cabinet". Has the new climate impact tool been used in producing the reports for this Cabinet meeting?</p>	<p>The sustainability team have been responding to reports that have been sent to the climate inbox, asking the authors to complete the tool and supporting when required. The sustainability team have also been attending author support sessions to provide guidance where required.</p> <p>Up to now it has been the report authors responsibility to contact the climate change team and make sure they have completed the relevant checks. This was done as part of the learning process for authors and no record was kept of those who did and didn't.</p>
<p>Question 4: Cllr Chris McFarling</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>Thank you for the Budget 2024-2025 consultation presentation page. It is written in plain English and makes for positive reading.</p> <p>However, I wish to challenge the integrity of your budget statements with regard to the Energy from Waste (EfW) incinerator, where you state,</p> <p><i>Unlike many other councils who are struggling to balance the books, we haven't had to make dramatic cuts to the services you rely on each day – in fact, we've increased our investment in them by £42 million. In part this is thanks to our Energy from Waste plant. Not only has it stopped Gloucestershire's rubbish going to landfill by turning it into green energy, it has generated a £15 million boost to our budget.</i></p>	<p>Approximately 50% of the energy recovered at the Gloucestershire Energy from Waste Facility can be called renewable because of the organic/biogenic composition of waste feedstock. This contributes to renewable energy targets.</p> <p>Urbaser, who operate the plant, send data to Ofgem who confirm the proportion of biogenic content of waste entering the facility.</p>

<p>What proof do you have to promote incinerators as generators of 'green', 'renewable' or 'low-carbon' energy when evidence from monitoring shows that the UK's 50+ incinerators emitted more than seven million tonnes of fossil-based carbon dioxide last year, largely from burning plastic?</p>	
<p>Question 5: Cllr Chris McFarling</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>Could you also please explain how you have calculated the carbon emission figures for landfill as against incineration of our waste, when monitoring of carbon emissions nationwide seems to indicate that EfW plants produce on average more than twice as much CO² per unit of electricity as gas-fired power plants, and some have a higher carbon intensity than coal plants?</p> <p>https://ukwin.org.uk/files/pdf/UKWIN-2018-Incineration-Climate-Change-Report.pdf</p>	<p>The calculation uses DEFRA' S greenhouse gas emissions conversion factors, which are publicly available.</p> <p>For 2022/23 they state household residual waste at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21.2801938 kg of CO2 for combustion; and • 446.2041084kg of CO2 from landfill. <p>Using this conversion factor results in;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 124,993 tonnes of waste X 21.2801938 / 1000 (for tonnes) = 2,660 tCO₂e for combustion • 124,993 tonnes of waste X 446.2041084 / 1000 (for tonnes) = 55,772.4 tCO₂e as landfill <p>A key aim of the County's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (2007 – 2020) was a residual waste solution to move waste up the waste hierarchy. The Gloucestershire Energy from Waste Facility was built to fulfil this requirement and is currently diverting over 97% of waste generated by the County's residents from landfill. EfW produces less CO₂ than landfill.</p>

	<p>There are ultimately only two options for residual waste, even after pre-treatment, landfill or EfW. There are no other technologies with proven track records to manage residual waste.</p>
<p>Question 6: Cllr Chris McFarling</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>Not only are EfW incinerators carbon intensive, but they suppress recycling behaviour. Our recycling rates are flat-lining, and the amount of incinerated household waste in this country exceeded the amount recycled since 2019 . More than half of incinerated plastic is either “readily recyclable” or “potentially recyclable.” How do you think we can raise recycling rates to further reduce residual waste, carbon emissions and boost a more circular economy?</p>	<p>The Gloucestershire Energy from Waste Facility is one part of the County’s overarching waste management solution and is complimented by a range of recycling services available to the public, namely kerbside collections of dry recyclable materials, food and garden waste, as well as the household recycling centres, and bring sites over the County. The Gloucestershire Resource and Waste Partnership’s (GRWP) ‘2022-25 Interim Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Strategy’ has an aim of 60% recycling and through its annual action plan will aim to deliver incremental improvement towards this target, with an interim target of 55% by 2026.</p> <p>The waste composition study undertaken in 2019 showed a significant amount of recyclable material still being disposed of by residents as residual waste. It is clear that if all residents recycled as much as they could within the existing waste services the recycling rate would be in excess of the recycling target.</p> <p>Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Partnership members are committed to improving performance in this area. Most districts now offer a range of plastics recycling collections, with the Forest of Dean making changes later this year to introduce plastic recycling at kerbside. Furthermore, national policy changes will drive the uptake of plastics recycling and a reduction in the reliance on virgin</p>

	materials. We are also committed to delivering a range of public campaigns, with a regular focus on plastics reduction and recycling around the home.
Question 7: Cllr Chris McFarling	Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe
<p>Agenda Item 6: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>The EfW incinerator at Javelin Park emits millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide straight into the atmosphere now, without carbon capture. What impact do you think these emissions will have on our reaching our 2045 net zero target?</p>	<p>The Climate Change Strategy - Fourth Annual Report and Action Plan has reported that the Javelin Park Energy from Waste Facility emitted 2,660 tCO₂e in 2022/23 (part of GCC's scope 3 emissions), compared to 55,772.4 tCO₂e had the waste gone to landfill. The renewable electricity generated offset 12,363 tCO₂e compared to grid electricity, giving a net reduction of 9,704 tCO₂e.</p> <p>As set out in Question 6, the County and district partners have put in place a range of services to help residents to recycle and the county and its partners run many campaigns a year not only about recycling, but more importantly reuse and waste reduction. This is supported by the Gloucestershire Resource and Waste Partnership's '2022-25 Interim Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Strategy'.</p>
Question 8: Cllr Chris McFarling	Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe
<p>Agenda Item 6: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>Do you agree with Piers Forster (interim Chair of the independent Climate Change Committee) when he calls for "<i>more honesty and transparency about the carbon intensity of our EfW operations, for indeed we should be paying for their pollution, either via the ETS or</i></p>	<p>The Emissions Trading Scheme will in the future be a driver for change in the way waste is managed. It will complement the County's 2022-25 Interim Gloucestershire Resources and Waste Strategy, which includes the desire to maximise resource value.</p> <p>The Gloucestershire Energy from Waste Facility will implement carbon dioxide emission reporting once formal guidance is received</p>

<p><i>another mechanism, not profiting from them to deliver services that should be funded properly by the government.?</i></p> <p>https://ukwin.org.uk/oppose-incineration/</p>	<p>from the Environment Agency on the monitoring and reporting requirements for carbon emissions.</p>
<p>Question 9: Cllr Colin Hay</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>How much money, has the council had to spend to get out of “inadequate” and special measures on Childrens services?</p>	<p>We cannot quantify what the spend has been to improve our Ofsted rating as all investment into children’s services has made in order to improve the lives of vulnerable children, not to get out of special measures. However, we can quantify the total increase in the vulnerable children’s budget since 2017/18, which is a total of £84.5m.</p>
<p>Question 10: Cllr Colin Hay</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>How much are we getting of the 600million extra announced by the Government on the 24th January and what are the restrictions on the money? And has the Government given any indication of what future settlements will be beyond the end of the coming financial year?</p>	<p>The Council welcomes the fact that the government has recognised the financial pressures under which Councils operate and have responded by providing additional funding. Nationally, £500 million of additional money will be allocated via the Social Care Grant – so can be spent on either Children’s or Adults Social Care. The remainder of the money focusses on district / city council functions.</p> <p>The exact amount that will be allocated to GCC has yet to be announced. This will be confirmed in the Financial Settlement which is anticipated in the week commencing 5th February.</p> <p>Cabinet are working up plans for how this money will be used.</p>

	There remains very limited detail about future year funding levels.
Question 11: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe
<p>Agenda Item 6: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>Does the council think planning for just 2% pay increases from 25/26 onwards is sensible?</p>	<p>The Bank of England's latest Monetary Policy Report states that the most likely projection is that CPI inflation will return to the 2% target by the end of 2025. The mean projection over the three-year time horizon is 1.9%.</p> <p>These forecasts are regularly reviewed but suggest that a 2% pay award assumption for 25/26 and beyond is sensible.</p>
Question 12: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe
<p>Agenda Item 6: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>How much money does the council spend on equalities and diversity training?</p>	<p>We continually strive to embed EDI into everything we do. Our employee networks deliver a series of events and our two advisers work across services to ensure that our culture is inclusive and respectful and that our workforce represents our communities. In addition, many services undertake role specific training and targeted development, for example in the social work academy and GFRS. As such, investment in training is not fully centralised as it is spread across a wide range of departments and budgets.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the council has a comprehensive equalities, diversity and inclusion corporate development (EDI) programme which costs in the region of £40K and is supported by the two officers.</p>
Question 13: Cllr Colin Hay	Respondent: Cllr Philip Robinson

<p>Agenda Item 6: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>Given the statutory override on the SEND budget finishes during the period of the MTFS, what provision can the council possibly make?</p>	<p>This is an issue that is affecting Local authorities across the country. Gloucestershire County Council is an active member of f40 which continues to actively lobby government for a permanent, sector wide resolution.</p> <p>At a local level the Council is participating in the Department of Education's Delivering Better Value programme and has also been selected to take part in the DfE's Change Partnership Programme (CPP) and has consequently been awarded a £5.8m grant in partnership with Swindon Borough Council to investigate ways of managing the pressure brought about by growing numbers of children needing High Needs placements.</p>
<p>Question 14: Cllr Jeremy Hilton</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>Agenda Item 8: Corporate Peer Challenge Final Report</p> <p>On page 8 of the report, in relation to Continued investment in IT. There are also other references to ICT failures impacting mental health and capacity. As a result of this report, what changes has the council made to the budget to address their concerns?</p>	<p>The council has invested significantly in our ICT infrastructure and in developing our ICT service including £1.5m to implement our Microsoft toolset, more than £3m in our new network and over £1m in cyber security. We are seeing improved feedback from our staff as a result. There is an additional £1.2m revenue already in the proposed 2024/25 budget plus £3.8m capital for ICT programmes to ensure further modernisation as well as an increased focus on digital innovation.</p>
<p>Question 15: Cllr Jeremy Hilton</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 10: GCC Workforce Strategy 2024-2027</p>	

<p>Anecdotally we have heard stories of people leaving the council due to frustration at the equipment they have been given. Does the council know how many people have referenced IT or equipment as one of the reasons for leaving their job?</p>	<p>Exit interviews are recorded as free text and therefore providing a numerical answer to this question would require a manual review of every exit interview conducted.</p> <p>We are acutely aware of how our staff feel about their experience with our IT systems and have committed to improving it, and have indeed made many improvements, so that staff can have confidence in reliable and efficient tech.</p>
<p>Question 16: Cllr David Willingham</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Philip Robinson</p>
<p>Agenda Item 5: Bus Improvement Scrutiny Task Group</p> <p>Which of the bus improvement recommendations is the cabinet member willing to commit to and what will the timescales be for their delivery?</p>	<p>I very much value the work that the Task and Finish group have put into this report over the last six months. I look forward to having it formally presented to me at the cabinet meeting on January 31, after which I will carefully consider the recommendations the group have put forward and work with officers on ways to address issues raised and enhance current working practice where appropriate.</p>
<p>Question 17: Cllr David Willingham</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Mark Hawthorne</p>
<p>Agenda Item 8: Corporate Peer Challenge Final Report</p> <p>Email correspondence to Highways Development Management currently triggers the following automatic response: Unfortunately due to recent IT issues we are currently unable to respond to enquiries as quickly as indicated below, please bear with us. Given the comments in the peer review about the Council ICT, when are the ICT issues going to be resolved so they do not impact on council teams' ability to do the work?</p>	<p>Thank you for flagging this issue. This message relates to delays caused by an IT issue at one of our district councils which caused workflow issues. Clearly it is now outdated and has been amended accordingly.</p>

<p>Question 18: Cllr Paul Baker</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 10: GCC Workforce Strategy 2024-2027</p> <p>I note the increase in annual staff voluntary turnover to 11.5% which represent around 400 employees a year leaving. Clearly this causes significant disruption, creates additional costs, impacts customer service and adds addition stress to existing staff.</p> <p>When is the review of pay and reward structures going to be completed? Likewise when will the revised workforce policies, conditions and guidance to underpin a changed agile work place culture enabling a flexible attractive employment offer be completed and will it reflect modern working practices typically seen in the private sector such as working from home, flexible working hours and the offer of a four day working week. And for non facing customer roles will out of hours working either in the office or from home be available?</p>	<p>We are confident that the Council is offering an attractive package of workforce terms and conditions. Our agile working policy already aims to ensure a workplace culture which enables the delivery of critical services to the people of Gloucestershire while allowing flexibility for employees and a positive work life balance.</p> <p>The general trend of the council's turnover is down from post pandemic levels of over 13%, and is only marginally higher than pre-pandemic levels of around 11%. This is in line with many other councils and reflects that the market for some roles remains very competitive (particularly where we compete with the private sector). We would expect turnover to continue in the region of 10-11% in order to ensure that we attract new skill sets and enable promotion within the council.</p> <p>We expect the review of pay and reward structures completed by the Autumn.</p>
<p>Question 19: Cllr Paul Baker</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 10: GCC Workforce Strategy 2024-2027</p> <p>With respect to the Workforce strategy, Will there will be extensive engagement with staff and unions and reference to best practice in other local government institutions?</p>	<p>The Workforce Strategy was developed by the HR service in conjunction with managers in service areas and following broad engagement with employees, our trade unions and taking into account feedback from our employee engagement survey. HR colleagues also regularly share best practice via a number of networks including South West Councils, County Councils' HR Directors network and the Public People Managers Association.</p>

<p>Question 20: Cllr Roger Whyborn</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Philip Robinson</p>
<p>Agenda Item 5: Bus Improvement Scrutiny Task Group</p> <p>The (Environmental) Scrutiny Bus Improvement Task Group’s report is on today’s agenda, and recommends that a One Team approach is used to improving bus services across the County, to include Councillors of all parties, bus operators, Council officers, bus action groups and community transport providers to meet regularly to discuss improving integration, helping to support the work of the Cabinet Member. It goes on to recommend that this should include engagement with districts and district councillors over both current services and service changes and improvements including, but by no means limited to, planning for new developments. In that regard, there was great emphasis on improving punctuality, reliability, and connectivity both between services and with rail, including local bus hubs, and including timetabling to interface with schools hours. Will the Cabinet commit to this One Team approach, including the full participation of district members and officers?</p>	<p>I very much value the work that the Task and Finish group have put into this report over the last six months. I look forward to having it formally presented to me at the cabinet meeting on January 31, after which I will carefully consider the recommendations the group have put forward and work with officers on ways to address issues raised and enhance current working practice where appropriate.</p>
<p>Question 21: Cllr Roger Whyborn</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Philip Robinson</p>
<p>Agenda Item 5: Bus Improvement Scrutiny Task Group</p> <p>The Bus Improvement Task Group’s report identifies some 16 recommendations including a number of early priorities or ‘quick wins’ including</p>	<p>I very much value the work that the Task and Finish group have put into this report over the last six months. I look forward to having it formally presented to me at the cabinet meeting on January 31, after which I will carefully consider the recommendations the group have put forward and work with officers on ways to address issues raised and enhance current working practice where appropriate.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the NHS health authority to ‘batch’ appointments to better optimise hospital community transport to/from rural communities, as for example occurs in Lincolnshire. • Surveying GCC staff and members as to suitability of bus travel to and from their work/meeting places. • Doing what can be achieved now on multi-operator ticketing, as for example is currently occurring in Cornwall, in advance of the full potential of the DfT’s ‘Project Coral’? • Surveying and understanding what prevents a large section of the public using buses regularly, or indeed ever. • Improving the obtaining and availability of better data and information to the public, freely available and including but not limited to providing a suitable multi-modal map. <p>To what extent will the cabinet member commit to implementing the report’s recommendations, and will he issue a timeline for doing so?</p>	
<p>Question 22: Cllr Roger Whyborn</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Philip Robinson</p>
<p>Agenda Item 5: Bus Improvement Scrutiny Task Group</p> <p>Will the cabinet member commit specifically to Recommendation 15 that “the Environment Scrutiny Committee receive regular updates on the progress of the implementation of Gloucestershire’s BSIP, progress measured against the recommendations of this report, and the work and effectiveness of the Enhanced Partnership. This should include an update on the progress of the development of the national back-office system by the DfT to facilitate multi-operator ticketing on buses.” (so called ‘Project Coral’)?</p>	<p>Government has requested regular monitoring against BSIP delivery. GCC officers are happy to report to Scrutiny on the outcome of this monitoring, as and when requested.</p>

<p>Question 23: Cllr Linda Cohen</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Philip Robinson</p>
<p>Agenda Item 5: Bus Improvement Scrutiny Task Group</p> <p>How are Gloucestershire County Council working with WECA to support the continuation of the 84/85 routes?</p>	<p>Discussions are on-going with South Gloucestershire Council about the 84/85. We currently provide a financial contribution towards the service and plan to continue this in 2024/25.</p>
<p>Question 24: Cllr Jeremy Hilton</p>	<p>Respondent: Cllr Lynden Stowe</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>Does the Conservative Administration plan to increase resident parking permit fees by 3% as indicated in the budget papers.</p>	<p>To enable us to deliver services, we keep our fees and charges under an annual review. No decision has yet been taken for 24/25.</p>