

(6) MEMBER QUESTIONS

Questions have been submitted, and responses provided, as follows:-

(i) Question from Councillor Sue Jepson to Councillor Nigel Robbins, Chair of the Council

'I understand that all members were invited to a gathering on Tuesday 17th December, together with our officers, to bid a friendly farewell to Mr David Neudegg - for ten years or more this Council's Chief Executive.

Given Mr Neudegg's widely recognised track record of delivering ground-breaking change at this council - and also our partner councils - could the Chairman please explain why he was unable to attend or, indeed, to send a deputy?

Response from Councillor Robbins

'I was not aware of a formal invitation to this event, either in my role as Chair or indeed as a member.

Having looked into the matter as a result of your question, I have found out that, as part of the regular Keeping Councillors Connected e-mail, David Neudegg mentioned the staff gatherings that would be held across the Publica partner sites in the run-up to Christmas, and his intention to use such events to say his personal farewells before leaving Publica.'

(ii) Question from Councillor Mark Annett to Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

'I understand that all members were invited to a gathering on Tuesday 17th December, together with our officers, to bid a friendly farewell to Mr David Neudegg, for ten years or more this council's Chief Executive. Given Mr Neudegg's widely recognised track record of delivering ground-breaking change at this council – and at our partner councils – could the Leader of the Council please explain why he was unable to attend? Perhaps he could also comment as to why no member of his Cabinet or indeed no member of the whole Cotswold Liberal Democrat group were able to attend either?'

Response from Councillor Harris

'I wasn't formally invited to the gathering and, in any event, was attending a meeting with the Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council at the time exploring how we can work together to rebuild the Council. This was a long-standing diary commitment.

As noted by the Council Chair, it would seem that this was an informal event.'

(iii) Question from Councillor Stephen Hirst to Councillor Lisa Spivey, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

'There was a survey in the local press recently regarding the provision of affordable social housing in the County. All six District Councils were asked to express their plans to increase the supply of affordable social housing to meet demand; five councils provided reasoned positive statements. Cotswold District Council on the other hand provided what could only be described as a political rant against the previous Cotswold administration.

This would indicate that the current administration have no reasoned plans to provide new affordable homes, after all they keep repeating that we have a housing crisis in the Cotswolds. How do they intend to resolve this?'

Response from Councillor Spivey

'The provision for affordable housing is set out in the current Local Plan and site allocations up to 2031 have been identified.

In addition to these allocations, we have a Community-Led Housing enabler (Lois Taylor) who is working local communities to help them bring forward affordable housing for towns and rural settlements and set up community groups to deliver them. This administration has been very clear in its intent to work with parishes and help them deliver genuinely affordable housing in their area. We held a seminar in Northleach last year to encourage town and parish councils to come forward and we will be working with GRCC to carry out more parish needs surveys this year and are identifying parishes on an opportunity basis - either potential land coming forward or a parish with a desire to deliver more affordable homes. Town and Parish Councils can also help by coming forward and identifying opportunities themselves. We have practical and financial support available to help them deliver.

Stow is a good example where they are actively looking to bring forward affordable homes; however, with AONB and development constraints, this is very challenging.

Furthermore, this administration is exploring other ways of providing additional affordable homes, most specifically social rented homes. This could be done through a variety of methods which are currently being scoped out but include, direct provision where the Council sets up a Housing Company and directly delivers housing, working with strategic partners to deliver additional affordable homes on sites the Council owns, and a far more robust approach with developers on S106 agreements and viability studies.

Through these combined methods, this administration will, by design, ensure the increased delivery of genuinely affordable homes for our residents most in need.'

(iv) Question from Councillor Stephen Hirst to Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

'Is it not time that this current administration provide a detailed, costed and comprehensive Corporate Plan to provide major benefits for the residents of the Cotswolds following more than ten years of progressive benefit achievement for all residents?'

Response from Councillor Harris

'As I outlined when the corporate strategy was adopted in September 2019, and as noted in the minutes of that meeting, the more detailed plan on how we rebuild the Council will be presented to full Council in May 2020.'

(v) Question from Councillor Julian Beale to Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

'May we please be informed if and when Mr Jan Britton will make a formal presentation to Councillors of his progress plans and aspirations for Publica?'

Response from Councillor Harris

'I will organise for Jan to come to a Conservative group meeting and brief you on what he's up to, his plans for Publica, and how we can work with Publica to rebuild the Council.'

(vi) Question from Councillor Ray Theodoulou to Councillor Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

'Last year CDC provided in the budget a sum of £500,000 to facilitate broadband services in hard to reach areas of the District.

Can the Deputy Leader confirm that the provision is unused and remains in the accounts; also will the Deputy Leader advise Council what plans he has to use this reserve for the purpose?'

Response from Councillor Evemy

'The provision of £500,000 within the Capital Programme for 2019/20 has not been used.'

Fastershire presented their progress to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2019 and advised that it was reviewing its strategy in light of recent statements by HM Government about changes to the universal obligation and new developments in 5G. Fastershire have now completed that review and included an option for local funds to supplement their next procurement process. This is anticipated to move to a procurement stage in March.

The Council will formally consider the outcome of the Fastershire review and, assuming the Council supports the recommendations from

the Fastershire review, funding can be included in the Capital Programme 2020/21. A report back from Fastershire is expected in April after the completion of the procurement process.'

(vii) Question from Councillor Ray Theodoulou to Councillor Mike Evely, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

'The provisional budget proposes a significant level of borrowing for CDC which has for many years been debt free. Will the Deputy Leader confirm how the debt trajectory will rise in the life of this Council and list the projects each with its associated borrowings included in this forecast?

Will he also provide an estimated annual cost of servicing this debt as to interest and capital repayment as well as detail how this debt will be sourced?

Will he also confirm that before incurring any borrowing the Administration will dispose of investment assets held for yield only as opposed to strategic holdings?'

Response from Councillor Evely

'The Council will be asked to consider updates to the Council's Capital Strategy, Investment Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy in February, following scrutiny by the Audit Committee on 30 January. These strategic documents set out the framework for the Council's capital spend and treasury management activity.

The capital projects which will require borrowing are set out below:

- *Waterloo car park - £7.2 million*
- *Cirencester Leisure Centre - £1.2 million*
- *Commercialisation Strategy: which will include investment in housing, economic development and green technology - £47.5 million. At present we are assuming that funding streams would be as follows: (i) social housing £30 million (100% borrowing), (ii) green technology £5 million (50% borrowing, 50% external funding) and (iii) economic development £12.5 million (50% borrowing, 50% external funding). The Commercialisation Strategy is still in development; therefore these figures are indicative only.*

Before any expenditure is committed on any capital project, including those listed above, the Council will consider business cases which will include capital financing costs, other revenue impacts, risk and contribution to Council priorities.

The set of strategy documents set out details of the expected level of borrowing over the next three years. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy includes the cost of servicing the debt (see Annex

A2). *The sources of external borrowing are set out in the Treasury Management Strategy.*

The Treasury Management Strategy sets out that the Council will look to maximise the use of “internal borrowing” (surplus cash holdings) to fund capital expenditure rather than accessing external borrowing. With cash deposits earning less than 1%, the loss of investment income represents better value for money than external borrowing - with the associated interest charge and requirement to make a revenue provision for repayment of the debt. The Council is unlikely to be able to fund all of its borrowing from low interest cash deposits and eventually will need to consider whether it is more cost effective to use cash held in pooled funds for investment purposes or access external borrowing. Officers will seek advice from the Council’s treasury advisors (Arlingclose) and these decisions will be considered by the Council’s Audit Committee and full Council through regular reporting on Treasury Management performance.’

(viii) Question from Councillor Sue Jepson to Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

‘Could the Leader of the Council please explain the delay in bestowing Honorary Alderman status on those former members of this Council who either stood-down or were not re-elected at the May 2019 District elections, and who had amassed the necessary length of service and points under the rules of our extant Constitution.

It is now more than eight months since those elections. Today’s meeting is the sixth meeting of full council (including Special Meetings) to have taken place since those elections and the matter is once again not on the agenda.

In the continued absence of the necessary Officer Report, please could the Leader publish as part of his answer to my question both the extant “point-scoring” rules under which those members would have served this council, together with the “points” amassed by each councillor who either stood down or were not re-elected in May 2019?’

Response from Councillor Harris

‘The Liberal Democrat group does not believe that the Honorary Alderman scheme is compatible with the modernisation agenda we are implementing or with the motion about democratic renewal unanimously agreed by Council in July.

Insofar as the extant scheme is concerned:-

(a) *the points system to determine eligibility is as follows:-*

- *each year as an Elected Member of the Cotswold District Council or one of its predecessor Councils - 1 point;*
- *each year as Chair of the Council (pre September 2001) - 3 points;*

- *each year as Chair of the Council (post September 2001) - 2 points;*
- *each year as Vice-Chair of the Council (post June 2003) - 2 points;*
- *each year as Leader of the Council - 3 points;*
- *each year as Deputy Leader of the Council - 2 points;*
- *each year as a Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) - 2 points;*
- *each year as Chair of a main Committee - 2 points.*

(b) *the Council has previously accepted that a former Councillor accruing 15 points or more would be automatically considered for the title;*

(c) *the Council has not ruled out, in exceptional circumstances, conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on former Members who may not have accrued the necessary points but have otherwise rendered eminent service to the Council:*

(d) *by using the points scheme at (a) above, those councillors who either stood down or who were not successful at the May 2019 elections would have accrued the following points:-*

Former Councillor	Number of Points Accrued
<i>Tatyan Cheung</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Sue Coakley</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Alison Coggins</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Robert Dutton</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>David Fowles</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Chris Hancock</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Maggie Heaven</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Jenny Hincks</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Mark MacKenzie-Charrington</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Nick Parsons</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>Shaun Parsons</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Tina Stevenson</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Lynden Stowe</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Len Wilkins</i>	<i>18</i>

(ix) Question from Councillor Gina Blomefield to Councillor Lisa Spivey, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

'How often is the housing list reviewed to check on whether individuals' and families' requirements have changed or to find out if they have been found homes by some other agency or means?'

Response from Councillor Spivey

'Checking whether families' circumstances have changed or whether they have been housed elsewhere is an ongoing task which Officers are engaged with daily.'

There are 3 main points to consider:

1. The responsibility to ensure an applicant's details are up-to-date rests on the individual applicant themselves. If there has been a change in their circumstances, they have a duty to inform us, especially where it could affect their priority banding, bedroom need or local connection.

2. In regard to Officers checking information, this happens at 2 main stages:

- At the time the application is submitted - documents will be requested to confirm the information provided on the application, this in turns allows us to correctly award their priority banding, bedroom need or local connection. This would also be used to reduce fraudulent applicants - only last week we caught someone who lied, saying they weren't a homeowner when they were.*
- At the time the applicant is considered on a shortlist - documents will be requested and further checks are made to ensure the applicants circumstances are the same. If their circumstances have changed and they have not informed us then they would be bypassed on the shortlist.*

3. On top of these, we also run an Annual Review through the system. This is an email/letter which goes out to applicants who haven't updated their circumstances within the preceding 11 months. It gives people 28 days to respond. If no response is received or the email/letter bounces back, then their application is removed. The Annual Reviews are sent out at the start of each month.'

(x) Question from Councillor Gina Blomefield to Councillor Lisa Spivey, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

'Parish and Town Councils conduct housing needs surveys when doing their Neighbourhood or Local Plans - are these cross-referenced with the housing lists to clarify where and what types of homes are required?'

Response from Councillor Spivey

'Parish Needs Surveys for Cotswold District Council's work are carried out on CDC's behalf by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, using a standard developed format for comparison and consistency. Respondents are asked if they are registered on the Council's Housing Register - Homeseeker Plus; however, as Parish Needs Surveys are anonymised, it is only possible to cross reference numerically to avoid double counting when assessing demand. Parish Needs Surveys are used to inform the need for rural exception sites - sites for affordable housing where local need cannot be met through other forms of delivery such as planning obligations on market sites. The Council also uses other sources of information when assessing demand for housing and has recently commissioned a Local Housing Needs Survey, with its Gloucestershire District and Borough partners, which informs Local Plan work. This examines existing supply and demand, including the Council's Housing Register, as well as demographic and economic forecasts for projected growth. This is carried out on a district-wide basis.

Parish and Town Councils commission their own housing needs surveys when preparing their Neighbourhood Plans. GRCC is usually commissioned to carry out the survey however CDC does not control the format. Statistical information on need from the Council's Housing Register, subject to GDPR, is provided to Parish and Town Councils, and GRCC on their behalf, when requested, so that Parish and Town Councils can compare data. Please note that Council's Housing Register, Homeseeker Plus, only captures the demand for rented affordable housing, not low cost home ownership.'

(xi) Question from Councillor Tony Berry to Councillor Mike Every, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

'In the 'Budget Consultation Pack' you quote that Government funding has decreased from £5.9 million in 2009/10 to £2.5million in 2019/20. Please could you tell me how much of this drop in funding has been managed through the various joint working initiatives which finally led to setting up Publica?'

Response from Councillor Every

'The table below shows the new savings each year achieved through joint working together with the cumulative savings.

	2008-9 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000
<i>New Savings</i>	25	48	218	165	388
<i>Cumulative Saving</i>	25	73	290	455	843

	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	Total savings £000
New Savings	313	598	541	1,200	3,492
Cumulative Saving	1,155	1,753	2,294	3,492	

It is incumbent upon all Councils to ensure that they are financially prudent and have built resilience so they can weather difficult times. Clearly savings were made by the administration Cllr Berry supported and latterly led in response to the reduction in government funding. We are now awaiting consultations on a new local government financial regime from 2021/22 which we anticipate will put further pressure on our revenue budget. The budget consultation to which Cllr Berry refers gives us the opportunity to explain and discuss with residents our current financial situation, how we are looking to rebuild the Council and ensure the financial resilience of the Council to cope with this challenge.'

(xii) Question from Councillor Tony Berry to Councillor Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

'The Cabinet report on the Medium -Term Financial Strategy and Budget highlights a number of areas where funds either have been committed (£47 thousand on increased Members Allowances, FTE for a Climate Change Manager etc.), or are planned expenditure such as:-

- Strategic financial support enhancement £50k
- Commercialisation strategy development £350k
- Property options £50k
- Development of a strategy for Health, Wellbeing and Leisure £50k

Please could you explain how these latter monies are to be spent and the expected outcome and the total cost of the initiatives (including office refurbishment and the cost of officers' involvement in out of hours meetings) instigated by your administration?'

Response from Councillor Evemy

'Our Medium Term Financial Strategy as outlined in the Cabinet report has rebuilding the Council at its core.

Strategic financial support enhancement provides funding for our Chief Finance Officer to be dedicated to Cotswold District Council rather than being shared with West Oxfordshire District Council.

The Commercialisation Strategy will be key to increasing income to the Council both to replace lost income from Government and to enable the Council to invest in services in line with its priorities. The allocation of £350,000 will provide funding for support for economic development in the District as well as support to develop and implement the Commercialisation Strategy.

£50,000 on 'Property Options' reflects the decision taken by Cabinet on 4 November 2019 to provide funding to enable feasibility studies to be carried out on existing Council owned sites, or other sites, which could be used to support the delivery of the Council's priorities.

The £50,000 provision for the development of the Health, Wellbeing and Leisure Strategy will fund a strategic review of these needs across the District and identify existing service provision. From this evidence, the Council will then identify where there are gaps in service provision and how it plans to contribute towards improving Health, Wellbeing and Leisure across the District.

Cabinet Members will work with Officers to identify how these outcomes can be delivered and to commission and procure services accordingly. Procurement will be in line with the Council's Contract Rules and Financial Rules and, where necessary, reports will be brought to Cabinet and Council.

At this point, Publica has not requested additional funding to support the work on these Council Priorities. Therefore, Officer costs are within the proposed budget. There are no office refurbishment costs associated with these proposals.'

(xiii) Question from Councillor Stephen Andrews to Councillor Rachel Coxcoon, Cabinet Member for Planning Policy, Climate Change and Energy

'In July 2019 the Council declared a state of Climate Emergency and committed to carbon and energy targets.

In September 2019 the Council approved that funding of £70,000 be provided to Publica for the recruitment of a Strategic Climate Change Manager in this Financial Year. It is understood that this appointment has now been made.

Can Cllr Coxcoon please provide detail of the priorities that the Strategic Climate Change Manager will be working to, in particular the top three priorities they will be given, together with the key milestones for the delivery of tangible and measurable outcomes for each of those three priorities in order that it can subsequently be shown that this post is delivering, on time, the work expected of them by this Council in line with the urgency this Council has given to this subject.'

Response from Councillor Coxcoon

'The Climate Change Manager starts on 3rd February and the Officer will be working to review existing data and commission additional reports and data gathering to enable priorities to be established. Informed decisions on desired outcomes need to be based on data showing where the greatest opportunities lie to generate carbon reductions. A Strategy and action plan with key milestones will be reported to this Council in July 2020. This is the timetable originally committed to in the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration, which

was a reasonable timetable given that the Climate Emergency Declaration represented a complete departure from the priorities of the previous administration, and there was no officer capacity or internal skills base to draw on to deliver this challenging new priority.

We are confident that the new Climate Emergency Manager is a high calibre individual who will be able to hit the ground running and bring an action plan to the Council by July, in line with the original commitment.

I will be meeting with the new Climate Emergency Manager in their first week to lay out some key priorities to build the action plan from. Our priorities will be based on the levers of influence we have as a local authority:

- *Direct Control - ensuring our own operations, staff practices, travel policies, directly provided services are net zero*
- *Procurement and Commissioning - requiring non-council suppliers to demonstrate that they provide services and goods that are carbon zero*
- *Place-shaping - Applying our existing powers and using our local plan review to design and apply policies to determine and control quality and style of new developments and to direct purpose and nature of regeneration, infrastructure investment and economic development to create net zero outcomes*
- *Engaging - Communicating, potentially in partnership with others, to make this global issue locally relevant and to motivate effective individual and collective responses, encourage behavioural change, promote community wellbeing and lead by example*
- *Convening - Bringing people together to create and support effective partnerships across sectors to develop shared purpose and co-ordinated efforts and communications*
- *Showcasing - Demonstrating, promoting and rewarding good practice (e.g. flagship initiatives, open days and study tours, awards programmes etc.).'*

(xiv) Question from Councillor Stephen Andrews to Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council

‘Although the prime focus of this question is in the context of the declaration by this Council of a Climate Change Emergency in July 2019, it also cuts across areas that are the responsibility of others in the Cabinet.

The Planning Committee have on a number of occasions commented upon their inability to be more proactive in addressing Climate Change issues when considering Planning Applications.

The Government is currently consulting on the “The Future Homes Standard” that should be applied to all new build housing. The consultation specifically covers proposed changes to Part L (conservation of fuel and power) and Part F (ventilation) of the Building

Regulations for new dwellings. This consultation has been open since October 2019 and is due to finish on the 7th February 2020.

Can Cllr Joe Harris confirm that this Council is preparing a response based upon its experience as a Local Planning Authority and its planned efforts to address Climate Change? Can he also reassure Councillors, particularly those who are members of the Planning Committee, that they will have the opportunity to comment on that response before it is submitted?’

Response from Councillor Coxcoon (as key Cabinet Member), on behalf of Councillor Harris

‘The Council has prepared a response to the Government’s Future Homes Standard consultation and this will be presented to Cabinet on 10th February for its consideration and approval. The Council raises serious concerns about the government’s commitment and ability to meet its legal requirement to become zero carbon by 2050. Proposals do not go far or quickly enough and rely too heavily on the energy sector to meet reductions in carbon emissions.

Equally, we reject the government’s proposal to remove our ability to set local housing standards higher than Building Regulations (e.g. zero carbon homes). The Council’s Local Plan does not require higher building standards and it is our ambition and commitment to rectify this along with other climate emergency measures to ensure development becomes carbon neutral as soon as possible.

I’m happy for any member of the Council to contact me about the Council’s response and to receive their views.’

(xv) Question from Councillor Richard Norris to Councillor Jenny Forde, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Public Safety

‘The Communities of Tetbury and Fairford welcomed the decision taken by the Cabinet on the 4th November 2019 to:

- prioritise potential solutions for Tetbury and Fairford, and invite engagement with interested parties in those towns to help with our research and to frame the future; whilst,
- in the meantime, and without prejudicing the strategy work, reaffirm that the Council would be prepared to consider funding well-planned and costed solutions in future that demonstrate real community benefit.

This was set against the work that was continuing at that time relating to the production of a District-wide leisure strategy, looking at provision holistically, based on current and future needs.

During the debate at that Cabinet meeting, Cllr Mark Harris noted that it was reasonable for the communities of Tetbury and Fairford to know when this District-wide leisure strategy might be available in order that they could frame their own work. In response, Cllr Forde reassured Cabinet that she anticipated its completion at Easter.

Can Cllr Forde reassure the communities of Tetbury and Fairford that this remains the case and that they can expect to be contacted imminently to assist with the research being undertaken in advance of the completion of the Leisure Strategy this coming Easter?’

Response from Councillor Forde

‘Thank you for your question Cllr. Norris. We are all very eager to have a Leisure Strategy especially given that, to date, the District hasn’t had one - and which is why, as part of rebuilding the Council, we are investing in leisure, health and wellbeing. I hope to be able to communicate a more definitive timetable shortly.

Meanwhile, you may not be aware but we are already in contact with the communities of Tetbury and Fairford and I thought you might be interested in a brief summary of the work we are already involved in Tetbury and Fairford/Lechlade:

Tetbury:

1. S106 Care contribution funding (Steepleton Development)

The aim of this project is to help the older people of Tebury (55+) improve their quality of life, by putting in place services that address the key areas of need, for this cohort. We are facilitating partnership working and decision making on how the money might be spent. In this role we are giving in-kind advice and professional support.

2. Tetbury Town Council - Tetbury Health and Wellbeing Group (Cllrs Hirst and Ind)

The purpose of this group is:

- To act as an advisory group for Tetbury Town Council*
- To focus on health and wellbeing for the community of Tetbury Town parished area*
- To link with, and build on, the work started by the Tetbury Cares initiative and Action Plan*
- To give additional capacity to the Town Council*
- To report back every 3 months and make recommendations to the Town Council for the health and wellbeing of residents.*

The work is directed by a committee. We are a committee member and have already been able to influence their work positively.

Fairford/Lechlade:

Working for Wellbeing in Fairford and Lechlade

This initiative started at the beginning of 2019 with a group of local people supported by Cllr Andrews that got together to address local health and wellbeing needs due to a lack of services (in particular around end of life care). A Community Wellbeing Action Day has been held in the autumn where over 30 organisations in the Fairford and Lechlade catchment areas attended. The aim of this event was to

gather intelligence around local assets and needs and to see whether there is an appetite to address these collaboratively. This initiative looks at the Frome Care Navigators Model as best practice and had a guest speaker from the Frome programme presenting at the event. Subsequently, a project group has been formed to look at the identified priorities and to focus on initial actions. GRCC, Cllrs Doherty and Andrews, as well as our CDC Community Wellbeing Manager, are part of this group. The group meets on a monthly/bi-monthly basis.'

(xvi) Question from Councillor Richard Norris to Councillor Jenny Forde, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Public Safety

'There is a budgetary provision of £1.2m to increase capacity at Cirencester leisure centre, increase revenue generation and/or make provision for activities that are not currently being provided. Alternative options such as ten pin bowling have also been presented.

A recent report provided to Overview and Scrutiny advises that no decision has been made regarding these options. There is an aspiration to commission consultants to complete a leisure facility strategy for the Cotswold District which will require approval from Cabinet. Does this form part of the Health and Well Being Strategy and when will this happen?'

Response from Councillor Forde

'We believe that £1.2m is a lot of money to spend on increasing the capacity of a Leisure Centre without any District Wide Strategy. Therefore, I'm sure you'll agree, it makes sense to make informed decisions on how this money is spent once we have one. The Leisure Facilities Strategy referred to previously will provide needs-based evidence to inform any decisions the Council might make regarding any leisure facility investments.

Whilst the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and Leisure Facility Strategy are separate work strands, they all form part of our overall plan for the entire Cotswolds to enable residents to achieve a high level of health and wellbeing. I look forward to presenting this to you and working with you to deliver it in your Ward(s).'

(xvii) Question from Councillor Richard Morgan to Councillor Clive Webster, Cabinet Member for Development Management, Landscape and Heritage

'It is our understanding that the Lib Dem administration are reviewing the Chesterton development and you are attempting to increase the amount of affordable housing on this specific development. Could we please have an update regarding this review and the progress made so far? In addition, could you specifically confirm if it's your intention to reduce some of the infrastructure projects related to the Chesterton development in return for more affordable housing, and if so, which infrastructure projects you are willing relinquish?'

Response from Councillor Webster

'We currently have no plans to renegotiate or vary the S106 agreements for the Chesterton development proposals. In more general terms, Councillor Morgan is correct to say that we are committed to finding ways to deliver more truly affordable housing for the residents of this district. We are developing multiple options to do this, including direct delivery and a greater proportion of social rented housing within Affordable Housing allocations, but this must not be at the cost of much-needed infrastructure improvements. We remain confident that we can deliver higher levels of truly affordable homes, more resource-efficient housing and strategic investment for our towns and villages.'

(xviii) Question from Councillor Richard Morgan to Councillor Lisa Spivey, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

'It is our understanding that the Lib Dem administration are intending to borrow money and provide council housing and socially rented housing. Could you confirm if you intend for CDC to develop and build this housing provision itself, or is it your intention to purchase existing (already built) housing from the open market at current market valuations?'

Response from Councillor Spivey

'It is no secret that this administration wants to provide genuinely affordable homes in the District, especially social rented as outlined in my response to Question 3.

To that end, a report is being prepared to consider options for the provision of affordable/ social rented housing. This will include consideration and viability of building on existing sites within the Council's ownership, purchasing land to build on, purchasing open market housing and purchasing housing off plan to develop (on sites which have planning permission but have not been built out and would be built by third party developer).

As with any financial decision, this report will come before Cabinet and Council for full consideration and decision.'

(END)