

(5) MEMBER QUESTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, the following questions have been submitted:-

(1) From Councillor PR Hodgkinson to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

'The County Council, along with district councils, the NHS and the police will be marking International Day Against Homophobia taking place on 17 May with events and statements of support. What will you as Leader of this Council be personally doing on that day to mark it?'

Response from Councillor Stowe

'I do not believe that this is a political or executive issue and, as such, I will not be marking the day in my Leader role. My response to your second question sets out the Council's position in respect of equalities issues generally which, I believe, sends out a more powerful message than support for individual days of action in respect of specific campaigns.'

(2) From Councillor PR Hodgkinson to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

'Although homophobia is rightly on the decrease in the UK, it still remains an issue for some gay people who are subject to bullying and threats. A recent case, highlighted by the Wilts and Glos Standard, reported a 14 year old girl from the Cotswolds who was coming to terms with her sexuality and tragically took her own life. The International Day Against Homophobia on 17 May is a way of combatting publicly the discrimination which many still face. What is this Council doing to mark that day and how is it promoting a positive message to combat discrimination against councillors, council staff and members of the public?'

Response from Councillor Stowe

'The Council has for many years worked in partnership with others on Community Safety matters, and we are members of the Cotswold and Stroud Hate Crime Group monitoring and addressing hate crime issues, including homophobia. We also work with the County Council on these issues and support the work they have done to combat homophobia.

Whilst the Council is against discrimination of any minority or protected group, it is not our practice to mark particular events linked to any of those groups, by way of another for example, Black History Month, and so we will not be marking the International Day Against Homophobia. Furthermore, unless a blanket approach was adopted, it could be very difficult to decide which days/events to support or otherwise.

The Council has, however, made a commitment to equality and takes its duty to eliminate discrimination seriously. The Council published

an Equality Scheme in 2012 which sets out various equality objectives, many of which relate to all groups. We have also recently published our Equality Annual Report which sets out the progress we have made against those objectives as well as outlining what we see as the issues facing different groups in the District. The Council also holds training and awareness sessions for staff every year, the most recent one having been held in early March 2014.'

3. From Councillor JA Harris to Councillor Mrs. SL Jepson, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing

'What is Cotswold District Council's view on the Community Infrastructure Levy?'

Response from Councillor Mrs. Jepson

'The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a new levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their areas. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the Council, local community and neighbourhoods want.

The Council is currently investigating the adoption of CIL. Consultants will soon be appointed to assess CIL viability and propose a Schedule of Charges. Any proposals will be assessed by the Cabinet and, if approved, the Charging Schedule will be submitted at the same time as the Local Plan.'

4. From Councillor JA Harris to Councillor Mrs. SL Jepson, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

'Cllr. Jepson will no doubt be aware of the hundreds of Planning Notices left up around the Cotswolds, these can look particularly tatty when left for months tied to lampposts, telegraph poles and signage.

'What is CDC doing to make sure these notices are removed when the deadline for comments on applications is up?'

Response from Councillor Mrs. Jepson

'Officers are aware of this concern and are encouraged to remove notices when the expiry date for comment has passed. However, they will not make a return trip to the site simply to remove the posted notice(s).

In response to previous comments about this issue, the site notices now include the following text in bold type:-

'THIS NOTICE CAN BE REMOVED AFTER THE EXPIRY OF THE DEADLINE COMMENT DATE.'

It is acknowledged that a significant number of historic notices remain and that their condition is deteriorating. There is a need for a collective effort, from Applicants, Officers, District Councillors, Parish

Councillors and the general public, to ensure that notices are removed once the deadline date has expired. However, care must be taken to ensure that whoever removes the notice does not trespass onto private land.

The Planning and Development Manager will investigate the possibility of publicity to encourage the removal of the old notices that remain.'

Notes:

- (i) The above questions were submitted by the time responses are guaranteed to be provided to the Questioners by virtue of the Council's Procedure Rules (at least 24 hours before the Cabinet Meeting).
- (ii) If Councillors Harris and/or Hodgkinson are present at the Meeting, they will be entitled to ask one supplementary question arising directly out of either the answers given or their original questions.
- (iii) The Member to whom any supplementary question is addressed will try and answer any supplementary question at the Meeting; but if this is not possible, the Member will answer as much as possible at the Meeting and then provide a full response within five working days. If, for any reason, a full response cannot be provided within those five days, a holding response will be sent to the Questioner(s), along with the reason for delay and a likely timescale for the full response.

(END)