



**CABINET**

**15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2015**

**AGENDA ITEM (7)**

**NOTICE OF MOTION - HIGHWAYS FUNCTIONS**

<b>Accountable Member</b>	Councillor Sue Coakley Cabinet Member for Environment and Communities
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Claire Locke Head of Environment and Commercial Services 01285 623000 claire.locke@cotswold.gov.uk

<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide the Cabinet with information in respect of the Motion submitted to the Council on 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2015 that requested that a working group be set up to review how Cotswold District Council and its partners can assist Gloucestershire Highways in delivering a quality service in the area, particularly in respect to more minor issues concerning civic pride.
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>That the Cabinet considers the Motion and agrees a way forward.</b>
<b>Reason(s) for Recommendation(s)</b>	The Motion stood referred to the Cabinet for consideration and decision

<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Recommendation to Council</b>	No

<b>Financial Implications</b>	If Cotswold District Council takes on works to maintain Highway verges, kerbs, signage etc., which is the responsibility of the County Council, it would result in an increase in cost to CDC.  However, a more joined-up approach on some of these maintenance issues may increase efficiency and generate cost savings.
<b>Legal and Human Rights Implications</b>	The legal responsibility for the majority of the works referred to lies with the Highways Authority.
<b>Environmental and Sustainability Implications</b>	A more efficient joined up approach may result in Environmental improvements being carried out quicker than they are currently.

<b>Human Resource Implications</b>	If a decision is made to facilitate discussions with multiple organisations to try and achieve a more joined-up and efficient approach, a suitable staffing resource will need to be identified to achieve this. There will be considerable time involved in bringing these organisations together and pursuing this option. There is currently no spare capacity to do this, as other key projects are on-going,
<b>Key Risks</b>	Establishing a working group may indicate that the District Council will take on functions which are the responsibility of the County Council and therefore falsely raise expectations.  Increasing the work that the District Council takes on may result in allocated budgets being exceeded.

<b>Equalities Analysis</b>	Not required
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<b>Related Decisions</b>	Notice of Motion - Council Meeting, 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
<b>Background Documents</b>	None
<b>Appendices</b>	None

<b>Performance Management Follow Up</b>	Implement any Cabinet decision(s)
<b>Options for Joint Working</b>	Grounds maintenance and street cleansing, along with other waste etc. services, are undertaken by UBICO Ltd, a company owned jointly with neighbouring Councils.  There is scope for CDC to work with GCC, Ubico and Town and Parish Councils to join up or share out certain works to improve efficiency; however, this would only be successful if all parties agree and each allocates suitable funding no authority will bear the cost of functions which are the responsibility of others.

<p><b>Background Information</b></p> <p>1. <u>General</u></p> <p>1.1 At the Meeting of the Council held on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2015, the following Motion was Proposed by Councillor JA Harris and Seconded by Councillor Jenny Forde:-</p> <p><i>'Council notes that, in austere times, there is pressure on all Councils and public authorities to deliver effective, efficient and quality services and that, where possible, authorities should work together to achieve these aims.</i></p> <p><i>Council notes the current pressure on Gloucestershire Highways to maintain the road network across the County and the Cotswolds.</i></p> <p><i>Council further notes that, due to efficiency measures imposed on Gloucestershire Highways, more minor responsibilities such as cleaning road signs, dealing with overgrown vegetation, cutting verges, removing weeds from the kerb channel and removing old infrastructure are often neglected and that this lets our beautiful area down.</i></p>
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*Council therefore resolves to set up a working group to review how Cotswold District Council and its partners can assist Gloucestershire Highways in delivering a quality service in the area, particularly in respect to more minor issues concerning civic pride.'*

1.2 In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, the Motion, having been Proposed and Seconded, was referred to the Cabinet for consideration. In the light of such referral, the Proposer and Seconder of the Motion are entitled to attend the Cabinet Meeting and present it formally to Members. The Proposer of the Motion will also have an opportunity to respond to the Cabinet debate, immediately prior to final comments by the accountable Cabinet Member and the formal vote.

## 2. Current Service Provision

2.1 The work identified in the Motion relating to highway verges, kerb channels, road signs and old infrastructure (such as old disused sign posts) is the responsibility of the County Council and it therefore has a budget allocation for this work.

2.2 In any district, the responsibility for cleansing and maintenance work is often split between different bodies, e.g. highway verges, parks and play areas and grass on common areas in housing developments may all be cut by different bodies including the County Council, District Council, Town/Parish Council or Housing Association depending on who owns the land. In some cases, arrangements are in place under contract for one organisation to undertake work on behalf of another organisation for which a payment is received. There may be scope to create a more joined-up approach to this.

2.3 Cotswold District Council delivers its grounds maintenance and street cleansing services via the Local Authority Company Ubico. Ubico provides a suitable level of resource both in terms of staffing and vehicles to perform the services required within the Contract with the Council. There is not spare capacity within this service, and the Council pays Ubico the actual cost of delivering services so any additional functions or increase in workload would result in an increase in direct costs to the Council.

2.4 District Councillors have been allocated £2,000 each for 2015/16 to fund targeted improvements such as litter picking and grass cutting. Some of the work highlighted within the Motion could be funded from this allocation. It is also understood that County Councillors have a substantial allocation for highway repairs and improvements in their area, which could include verge cutting.

## 3. Options

3.1 The Council could establish a working group to explore improvements to Highway elements; however, progress is likely to be constrained by the budgets available. The District Council delivers a number of mandatory and discretionary functions and does not have the capacity to take on functions that are the responsibility of other authorities.

3.2 There may be scope for Ubico to deliver services for the County Council and increase efficiency of grass cutting, cleansing etc.; however, this would be dependent on the appropriate level of budget being made available by GCC and Ubico agreeing to take on the work required. Should the County Council wish to explore this option, the Council could facilitate these discussions (it being acknowledged that the County Council would need to act in accordance with its own Procurement Rules).

3.3 The Council could establish a working group to explore a more joined-up approach to maintenance and cleansing, bringing together representatives from the County, Town and Parish Councils and Housing Associations which could be done at a strategic level or at a more local level on a settlement by settlement basis. The more localised approach may be more viable as it will depend on the willingness of the Town or Parish Council to work with the County and District Councils. It is also likely to achieve greater efficiencies where there are Town Council which have their own significant grounds maintenance and cleansing responsibilities and either have their own workforce or contract out the work.

3.4 The Council may consider that current arrangements are adequate and therefore that no further action is required at this time.

(END)