

(5) MEMBER QUESTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, questions have been submitted as follows:-

From Councillor AR Brassington to Councillor Sue Coakley, Cabinet Member for Health, Environment and Communities

'The greatest threat facing the Cotswolds is climate change; its effects are unknown but could include more extreme weather such as the floods that have affected Scotland and northern England, drought, habitat change, and loss of certain animal and plant species etc. With this in mind, it is important that we take every opportunity to minimise our carbon footprint. Has the Council considered placing solar panels on the roofs of buildings which it owns? If it has, please state which buildings and, if not, why?'

Response from Councillor Coakley

'Over the last few years, the Council has carried out a range of activities to reduce its carbon footprint, both at its offices and Leisure Centres. These activities include:-

- Trinity Road: insulation to whole building / new boiler to south wing/associated controls/next phase of new controls for Trinity Road and Moreton-in-Marsh being planned over next 24 months;
- all leisure centres and museum: valve jackets and relevant pipework lagging/full LED lighting replacement scheme to identified areas;
- replaced boilers at museum to high efficiency condensing type;
- lighting control improvements carried out Bourton Leisure Centre;
- variable speed drives have been installed at Trinity Road to reduce energy consumption;
- general pump changes have taken place as part of maintenance programme.

In addition, the now completed upgrade to the gym at Cotswold Leisure Cirencester included:-

- new lowered ceilings to reduce room space to be cooled;
- new more controllable and efficient air conditioning system.

Solar PV has been considered on a number of occasions, but has been hampered by successive changes to the Feed In Tariff regime which impacts upon the business case assessments - indeed, recent changes realistically mean business cases need to be built around nil return to the grid and occupier use only. The sites considered have also had both fitting complications (roof loadings) and environmental considerations (AONB etc.).

However, more recently, Officers have worked alongside West Oxfordshire DC in securing revised business cases, which are currently being reassessed to take account of 'own use' only of generated power - when these business cases are complete, they will be brought forward appropriately on a 'spend to save' basis in addition to the environmental benefits.'

Notes:

(i) If Councillor Brassington is present at the Meeting, he will be entitled to ask one supplementary question in respect of each original question. Any supplementary question must arise directly out of either the original question or the answer given thereto.

(iii) An immediate answer cannot be guaranteed to any supplementary question, but Councillor Coakley will try and answer any supplementary question(s) at the Meeting. However, if this is not possible, then Councillor Coakley 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, then a holding response will be sent to Councillor Brassington, along with the reason for delay and a likely timescale for the full response.

(END)