

(4) **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, questions have been submitted, and responses provided, as follows:-

(1) From Mr. P Moylan of Cirencester to Councillor NJW Parsons, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Forward Planning

'At the full council meeting on 17th May, a senior councillor and a member of the planning committee was heard to say that they hoped that parking issues in Cirencester would not get in the way of the Chesterton development. Does the cabinet member not think that this was a poorly judged statement and that such a mind-set could lead to rushed and wrong decisions being made?'

Response from Councillor NJW Parsons

'We must deal with any application for the proposed Chesterton strategic site in its own right and on its merits. As such, the overall issue of parking in Cirencester is not material, although any additional demand that might result from the proposed development would be.

In general, Officers would not present the report for the Chesterton development to the Planning and Licensing Committee with significant issues unresolved, and would ensure that all relevant considerations are highlighted.'

(2) From Mr. M Pratley of Cirencester to Councillor NJW Parsons, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Forward Planning

'The growth of car parking requirements **IS ALREADY A MAJOR PROBLEM ESPECIALLY IF THE** proposed Bathurst development, **GOES AHEAD**. Will CDC give an absolute assurance that no further consideration will be given to the Bathurst Development, until long term solutions for parking have been established, **AND IF NOT, WHY NOT?**'

Response from Councillor NJW Parsons

'We must deal with any application for the proposed Chesterton strategic site in its own right and on its merits. It would not be appropriate to seek to delay the application until long-term parking solutions have been devised for Cirencester as a whole - to do so would leave ourselves open to an appeal against non-determination at some stage in the future.

From a housing perspective, like all Local Planning Authorities, CDC is required to 'boost significantly the supply of housing' (NPPF 47). Given the strategic significance of the Chesterton site in delivering the District's housing requirement to 2031, I also see no justification for delaying housing delivery on the grounds of parking issues in the town centre which are not directly as a result of the development.

That said, I can confirm that Officers are considering to what extent the Chesterton development will impact upon car parking in the town centre and how this can be dealt with. However, it should be noted that IF contributions are required from the Chesterton development towards town centre parking, the contribution will only relate to any additional demand resulting from the development.

In response to representations on the first Reg.18 consultation in January 2015, research has been undertaken to seek to fully understand Cirencester's parking issues, and a Parking Board has been set up to consider potential solutions. Considerable progress has already been made. Until a long-term solution has been implemented, short-term measures are being actively pursued to increase parking capacity in the town centre.

It should also be noted that, in the event of permission being granted for the Chesterton development, it would take several years for essential infrastructure to be put in place before meaningful development could commence; and that subsequent development is likely to be phased.'

(3) From Mr. M Pratley of Cirencester to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

'We note the two new appointees to the cabinet. Given the prominence that the local plan, for example accords to Cirencester as the principal town, why is there STILL no representation for Cirencester at Cabinet level?'

Response from Councillor Lynden Stowe

'The substantial majority of Local Authorities in England are run with a Cabinet system. Inevitably, where a political grouping has a majority of seats, then the Cabinet will consist entirely of representatives from that group. Although it is a rather surreal comparison - it is replicated at Government level too.

It should also be remembered that the overriding duty and accountability of all Councillors, irrespective of whether they serve on the Cabinet or any Committee, is to the whole of the District, not just to individual Wards or specific towns.

In establishing my Cabinet, I have sought to introduce roles which reflect the priorities and needs of the District, and then make appointments based on skills, attributes and an ability to commit to what can often be heavy workloads. You will note that one of my new appointees has specific lead responsibility for the Cirencester Car Parking project.

In what is a relatively small District Council, we are well aware of issues right across the District - including those relating to our largest town of Cirencester - not least because of the valuable feedback we receive from all Members and, indeed, our residents and businesses.

The Cabinet also draws on the expertise and local knowledge of other Members from time-to-time, e.g. the appointment of a Cirencester-based Member as Chairman to the Car Parking Project Board (Councillor Mark Harris).

In summary, I should like to assure Mr. Pratley that all Members of the Cabinet share a keen interest in issues relating to Cirencester; and would point out that the Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member with responsibility for Forward Planning, whilst not living in Cirencester, does work in the town (and has done so for many years).'

Notes:

(i) These questions were, submitted **after** the deadline by which answers could be guaranteed either in advance of, or at, the Cabinet Meeting. However, the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Forward Planning have been able to provide responses in the time available, which have been sent to the questioners.

(ii) If the questioners are present at the Meeting, they will be entitled to ask one supplementary question arising directly out of either the answer given or their original question.

(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, then the Members 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 the questioner, along with the reason for delay and a likely timescale for the full response.

(END)