

**(4) PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, a question has been submitted, and a response provided, as follows:-

**(1) From Mr. P Moylan of Cirencester**

*'Cotswold District Council claims to be one of the most efficient in the country and has courted admiration for keeping council tax low. A national survey by 'Planning' magazine showed that a reduction in staff planning numbers over the past few years has led to a situation where planning authorities are often ill-equipped to deal with the upturn in development. It would be impossible to believe that this particular council's response to the increasing demands placed on planning have not been impoverished by its policies on staffing numbers. From what we have seen of the extensive professional expertise and limitless resources that Bathurst Development have called on to pursue the Chesterton Farm application, there is clearly a one-sided engagement between its planners and developers.*

*What reasons would the council give for this not being the case and thereby assure us that the planning and decision-making process has been administered to prevent over-development in Cirencester?'*

**Response from Councillor Lynden Stowe**

The Council has committed what it considers to be an appropriate dedicated level of resource to the BDL application, combining Officer resource with consultants and other external support to ensure that the relevant expertise is available to address what is a complex matter. However, in terms of our own staff, we have back-filled the resources required for this so as to ensure that it has not impacted detrimentally on the other work of the service.

**Notes:**

(i) If the questioner is present at the Meeting, he will be entitled to ask one supplementary question arising directly out of either the answer given or the original question.

(ii) 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 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, 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)