

(5) PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Council Procedure Rule 10 - Not more than fifteen minutes allowed for written questions to be put by members of the public on any matter in relation to which the Council has any power or duties or which affects the District.

Questions have been submitted, and responses provided, as follows:-

(1) From Dr. C Watson of Colesbourne to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

1. Is there a regular programme of roadside litter clearance commissioned by Cotswold District Council, and if so, with what frequency; and how much Council expenditure was devoted to roadside litter clearance during the last financial year 2013-14?
2. What is the Council policy about the provision and emptying of litter bins at bus-stops and lay-bys (as my observation of the A435 would suggest that this is at best haphazard); and which roads does the Council regard as its responsibility to maintain free of litter (I understand that dual carriageways are the responsibility of the Highways Agency)?

Response from Councillor Stowe

'I am grateful to the work of Dr Watson and all the volunteer litter pickers who participate in community clean up campaigns and help to keep the Cotswold clean. I am saddened that it is the action of a relative small number of inconsiderate individuals dropping litter that requires us to spend so much time, money and effort trying to keep the Cotswolds a clean and beautiful place.

Turning to your specific questions:-

1. Yes the Council has obligations under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 for carrying out litter clearance; and taking into account the size of the District (456 sq. miles) and limited financial resources, Cotswold District Council has planned its cleansing activities carefully so as to have maximum effect.

Each area of the District is split into one of 5 cleansing zones, which are cleaned as per the schedule below:

Zone 1 – Cleaned every day manually and cleaned once a week using a mechanical sweeper;

Zone 2 – Cleaned once a month using a mechanical sweeper;

Zone 3 – Cleaned twice a year using a mechanical sweeper;

Zones 6 & 7 – Litter picked on an ad hoc basis dependent on need.

In order to explain the classifications:

Zones 1 – 3 are Town Centres, just outside the Town Centres and the Villages - these areas have a significantly higher level of footfall and use by people, so therefore the proportion of litter and detritus regularly present, is higher, which means that they require a greater level of cleansing;

Zones 6 and 7 are predominantly the arterial roads which have significantly fewer or no dwellings and therefore require a lower frequency of cleansing;

The Council's total street cleansing expenditure for 2013/14 is currently £801,870.

2. The Council will replace any damaged or vandalised litter bins free of charge and will provide, install and service litter bins when requested and paid for by Town & Parish Councils.

The Council specifies that all bins should be emptied at a frequency to prevent overflowing. In response to this question an instruction has been given for the A435 bins to be inspected over the next month and the emptying frequency adjusted accordingly (if required).

The Council has the responsibility for all adopted public highways within the district with the exception of the A417 Trunk Road which comes under the responsibility of the Highways Agency. However, the Zone 6 & 7 roads are assessed as detailed above and in these areas the target is 'predominantly free of litter' rather than 'free of litter'.

(2) From Ms J Forde of Bagendon to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

'Why is it that our schools have to fund separate collections for their waste when other lorries drive past the schools doors during their domestic rounds? These collections cost our schools thousands of pounds in lost frontline education funding. As Governor of North Cerney Primary School, I, alongside with my fellow Governors and the school's management team, work extremely hard to ensure our children receive the best possible educational experience. And with the Government stating it wants funding intended for education to reach frontline teaching, surely we could achieve some efficiencies in this matter?

Will you please look into what can be done to help more of our money go towards our children's education and not 'in the bin'?

Response from Councillor Stowe

'Thank you for your question regarding the collection of waste from primary schools.

The question is similar to one raised by Councillor Hodgkinson last September, when I explained that this Council, along with Gloucestershire County Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Forest of Dean District Council, are part of the Gloucestershire Joint

Waste Committee (GJWC) and Joint Waste Team. Decisions on strategic policy and service provision are developed jointly by the waste collection and disposal authorities and all of the Councils involved have devolved their waste powers to the Joint Waste Committee.

The question of waste collection for schools was passed to the GJWC for investigation and they submitted a response in April which I understand will be discussed in a forthcoming meeting between yourself, Council Members, Officers and the Cabinet Member, Councillor David Fowles.

I do have sympathy with the economic situation faced by Schools but would point out that they make provision in their budgets for waste collection services along with many other services. Schools have to fund separate collection and disposal of their waste as they are not entitled to 'free' domestic waste collection and disposal. It is too simplistic to suggest that the domestic waste lorries can simply collect and then dispose of schools waste as this would have operational, legal, and financial implications. Although schools have devolved budgets for these support services, the County Council has arranged contracts with the private sector providers to pick up and dispose of recycling and waste from schools, with the aim of providing the service to schools as cost-effectively as possible. Individual schools are at liberty to buy into this or make their own arrangements. Having checked with the County Council Facilities Support Team, I understand that the relevant contracts are due for renewal in 2016 and exposing the services to the market at that time will provide a further opportunity to ensure value for money on behalf of the schools.

At this stage, I think that we can do no more than await the outcome of your forthcoming meeting, and for the matter to be considered alongside the related Motion on the subject which, I understand, will be referred to the Cabinet for determination.'

Notes:

(i) If a Questioner is present at the Meeting, he/she will be entitled to ask one supplementary question arising directly out of either the answer given or his/her 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)