

(6) MEMBER QUESTIONS

Council Procedure Rule 11 - Not more than fifteen minutes allowed for written questions to be put by Members 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 Councillor Juliet Layton to Councillor Sue Coakley, Cabinet Member for Health, Environment and Communities

'Now that the Council has concluded its purchase of the Packers Leaze site at South Cerney, there remains the challenge to ensure that the amenity of local residents and leisure users are protected in line with British Standard 4142. To that end there is a short window of opportunity to establish baseline noise levels at the site before operations start in earnest later in the year. Will the Council undertake baseline noise assessments so that the impacts of operations at the site can be measured and controlled?'

Response from Councillor Coakley

As the Council's use will be broadly equivalent to when the site was being utilised by SITA, the Council will be complying with the associated noise condition as set out in original planning permissions.

It would not be appropriate to use noise levels when the site is unused as a baseline, as they would merely register the current position.

As the Council will now control the site through ownership/influence of Ubico, it will be better placed to ensure compliance than if a third party used the site.

(2) From Councillor Juliet Layton to Councillor Mrs. SL Jepson, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing

'Can Councillor Jepson assure me that the Highway conditions on visibility splays at the Packers Leaze site are being met? Highways stated that visibility splays of 4m x 150m and 100m should be maintained (Condition 6. 2000) - are these figures consistent with current Highway's guidance, and are they being met by the recent changes to the neighbouring Berite fence?'

Response from Councillor Jepson

The Council will seek to ensure that it uses the site in line with the previous user.

Permission was granted for the adjoining fence in October 2015 - the Highways Officer raised no objection to the proposal. That said, if the Council can do anything to improve visibility splays, then naturally it will.

With regard to highways issues, Councillor Layton will recall that, in response to a related question at the September 2015 Council Meeting, the Cabinet Member for Health, Environment and Communities had suggested that a speed limit reduction should be sought along this length of road to the benefit

of all users of the road. I too am fully supportive of such a proposal, and would ask whether Councillor Layton would lend her support in calling for such a measure?

(3) From Councillor Roly Hughes to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

“Clean for the Queen’ is a campaign to clear up Britain in time for Her Majesty the Queen’s 90th Birthday in June.

Fly tipping is an issue around the Cotswolds and costs the Council money to clean up. Would the Leader consider waiving the charges for collection of bulky goods during March and April to support this campaign? Applications could still be booked in and limited to 3 items per household.’

Response from Councillor Stowe

In accordance with our usual practice, I have asked the relevant Cabinet Member to deal with your question, and Councillor Coakley’s response is as follows:-

In numbers terms, during the financial year 2014/15, the Council identified 349 incidences of fly-tipping and spent £21,121 on clear-ups. For the same period, we undertook almost 2,500 bulky waste collections, for which we charge £14 for up to 3 items and £5 per item for up to three additional items. We have deliberately kept this price competitive, with no increases for many years. During the calendar year 2015, we collected almost 7,000 individual items.

I believe that the above figures illustrate that people are not put off by the cost, and we would be unlikely to reduce fly tipping by waiving the charges for bulky collections over such a short period of time. I would also encourage anyone who witnesses a fly-tipping incident to come forward with details of the incident and as much supporting information as possible, so that we can then take appropriate legal action. As we have seen before, continued successful prosecutions are a far greater deterrent to would-be fly-tippers.

Councillor Coakley will also respond to any supplementary question you may have.

(4) From Councillor JA Harris to Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council

Please can the Leader give an update on the plan to rehome Syrian refugees in the Cotswolds?

Response from Councillor Stowe

In accordance with our usual practice, I have asked the relevant Cabinet Member to deal with your question, and Councillor Coakley’s response is as follows:-

The Council has identified two properties in Cirencester in preparation for receiving the first two families. We are currently working with the other Gloucestershire Districts, and the County Council, to put in place an effective support package from the day of their arrival. We have updated the Home Office on our readiness and anticipate the arrival of the first two families in March 2016. Syrian Refugees will come to the UK with five years humanitarian leave to remain, and the Home Office have now confirmed the funding arrangements for the full five years. The Member/Officer group set up to manage our proposal is confident that we can accommodate and support the families and has gained some valuable experience from supporting the two families recently received by West Oxfordshire District Council.

Councillor Coakley will also respond to any supplementary question you may have.

(5) From Councillor JA Harris to Councillor NJW Parsons, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Forward Planning

We have the ridiculous situation at present that dwellings built or given planning permission in Cirencester won't go towards reducing the overall number of houses at Chesterton.

How does the Deputy Leader plan on rectifying this?

Response from Councillor Parsons

Many of the 1,000 homes built/approved at Cirencester since 2011 have been at Kingshill on sites that were allocated in the 2006 Local Plan. They cannot be counted again in the context of the emerging Local Plan. Further 'windfalls' within the town would yield nothing like this number of dwellings. The Distribution Strategy for Cirencester, excluding the strategic site at Chesterton, allows for some 30 houses.

In any event, the District-wide housing requirement, derived from the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN), is not a ceiling. It is a minimum target, which CDC must demonstrate it can deliver. To ensure 'soundness', Local Plans need to be based on up-to-date evidence, such as national household and economy projections, which can profoundly affect the OAN. Updates to the OAN could result in further increases to the District housing requirement. In a situation where it is challenging to identify sufficient deliverable/sustainable sites to meet the current requirement, every site identified to date makes an important contribution to the development strategy.

The outline application submitted by BDL is for up to 2,350 dwellings, if outline planning permission is granted, 2,350 will be the maximum number of dwellings that can be constructed on the site in accordance with the outline planning permission.

A reduction in the amount of housing proposed for any site would effectively mean alternative(s) having to be found elsewhere - potentially in less sustainable locations. Recent appeal decisions give a clear indication that the Government is serious about addressing housing supply issues, and it clearly expects local planning authorities to do the same.

(6) From Councillor AR Brassington to either Councillor Lynden Stowe, Leader of the Council, or Councillor Sue Coakley, Cabinet Member for Health, Environment and Communities

'As part of the initial phase of the Vision 20-20 programme, the Public Protection services of Cotswold DC, Forest of Dean DC and West Oxon DC are gradually merging into one work-force, with full implementation due to be achieved by September 2016.

Can the Leader of the Council or the Cabinet Member for Health Environment and Communities:

(i) state how many FTE qualified Environmental Health Officers worked for each separate local authority in March 2014 and how many will be employed by the new combined service in September 2016 and September 2017; and

(ii) guarantee that front-line Public Protection services will not be negatively affected as a result of these changes.'

Response from Councillor Coakley

At the moment, I can really add nothing further to the responses given by the Leader and myself to your very similar questions on this subject at the Cabinet Meeting on 19th November 2015; and to the oral update given at the Joint Consultative Committee meeting on 10th December 2015, at which you were present. I also understand that, following on from that meeting, Officers met with you to discuss the new shared service framework.

In the time available since the submission of your questions, it has not been possible to draw together the authority-specific details you have sought; but, given that the shaping of the service is still on-going, and will be for some time, it is also not possible to predict with certainty the numbers involved at this stage.

In short, and to reiterate what has previously been stated, we are not proposing to reduce the level of service, and the new framework will provide a more resilient delivery model.

Notes:

(i) Questions (3)-(6) above were submitted after the deadline by which an answer could be guaranteed either in advance of, or at, the Council Meeting. However, the Leader/relevant Cabinet Member have been able to provide responses in the time available, which have been sent to the questioners.

(ii) If any Member who has submitted a question 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.

(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 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)