

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

11<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2018

Present:

Councillor Julian Beale - Chairman  
Councillor David Fowles - Vice-Chairman

Councillors -

SI Andrews (from 10.12 a.m.)	Jenny Hincks
Mark F Annett (from 10.30 a.m.)	SG Hirst
AW Berry	RC Hughes
AR Brassington	RL Hughes
T Cheung	Mrs SL Jepson
Sue Coakley	RG Keeling
Alison Coggins	Juliet Layton
PCB Coleman	RA Morgan
Andrew Doherty	Dilys Neill
RW Dutton	NJW Parsons
Jenny Forde	SDE Parsons (until 11.25 a.m.)
C Hancock	NP Robbins
JA Harris	Lynden Stowe
M Harris	R Theodoulou
Maggie Heaven	LR Wilkins

Apologies:

MGE MacKenzie-Charrington

Absent:

Tina Stevenson

CL.30 WELCOME

In opening the Meeting, the Chairman read out a comment provided by Councillor M Harris which, he hoped, would apply throughout the proceedings:-

'Let our debating be reasoned and temperate, recognising that others may have a different point of view; and may we always remember our deliberations and decisions are for the benefit of other people'.

The Chairman welcomed Honorary Aldermen, Members, Officers and members of the Public and Press to the Meeting.

CL.31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST(1) Declarations by Members

Councillors M Harris and Jenny Forde declared other interests in respect of Agenda Item (12) - Old Memorial Hospital, Cirencester - as they both served on the Council's Car Parking Board.

There were no other declarations of interest under the Code of Conduct for Members or Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(2) Declarations by Officers

There were no declarations of interest under the Code of Conduct for Officers.

CL.32 MINUTES

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018 be approved as a correct record.**

**Record of Voting - for 30, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 4.**

CL.33 ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Chairman explained that he would exercise the discretion available to him under Council Procedure Rule 3.2 to vary the order of business at the Council Meeting to allow this item to be debated and dealt with in advance of any further items of business.

It was PROPOSED and SECONDED that Councillor AW Berry be elected Leader of the Council, to hold office for the remainder of the Council term.

In so doing, Members commented upon Councillor Berry's extensive experience in management and contract management and highlighted his dedicated service on the Council's Planning and Licensing Committee, and Audit Committee. It was felt that Councillor Berry would serve with a 'wise head' and had suitably broad shoulders for the role of Leader.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group confirmed that his group members would not be voting against such appointment, and that they wished to welcome Councillor Berry to the role. However, they urged Councillor Berry to 'seize back' control of the Council and eradicate any potential 'cultures of secrecy' within the Council.

Another Member commented that he hoped the new Leader would review existing training and development opportunities and would share Council successes across the wider local authority network.

**RESOLVED that Councillor AW Berry be elected Leader of the Council, to hold office for the remainder of the Council term.**

**Record of Voting - for 27, against 0, abstentions 4, absent 3.**

Note:

Councillor Berry thanked the various Members for their kind words of support and explained that he looked forward to serving as Leader of the Council for the next five months. He added that he was grateful for living in the District, which he considered was part of a great country. He recognised that there were issues facing the Council and that some decisions were required to be made, despite not having the full support of the Council, but stated that Councillors were serving because they cared for their residents and the District as a whole. He concluded by confirming that he would do his best for the Council and that he looked forward to seeing what Council Members could achieve together in the future.

**CL.34 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN, LEADER OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

(i) Honorary Alderman Mrs. Aileen Calvert - the Chairman informed Members of the recent death of Honorary Alderman Mrs. Aileen Calvert, at the age of 92. The Head of Paid Service reported that Mrs. Calvert had been elected to the Council on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1983, to represent the Cirencester Abbey Ward, and had served on the Council for 16 years until 1999. He explained that, in addition to every Committee of the Council, she had served on over 40 Sub-Committees and working groups; 12 outside bodies; Cirencester Town Council for 29 years, including a term as its Mayor from 1992 to 1994; and had also been involved with many charities and trusts. Mrs. Calvert had been bestowed the title of Honorary Alderman by the Council in November 1999; and had been made an Honorary Freewoman by Cirencester Town Council in 2013. Information relating to the funeral and memorial service would be circulated to all Members.

Councillor JA Harris explained that he had the pleasure of bestowing the title of Honorary Freewoman on Mrs. Calvert as Mayor of Cirencester in 2013 and commented upon Mrs. Calvert's feisty nature and quick-wit that she was well-known for. He added that he wished to extend his thanks, on behalf of Cirencester, to her for her service to the town.

Members and Officers, and others present, then stood for a period of silence in memory of, and in tribute to, Mrs. Calvert.

(ii) Filming/Recording of Proceedings - the Chairman referred to the standing notification previously received from a member of the public of the intention to film the Council Meeting; and stated that, accordingly, the Council would make its own audio recording of the proceedings.

(iii) WW1 Armistice Commemorations 2018 - the Chairman referred to the number of commemorations events held to mark the Centenary of the Armistice of the Great War and extended his thanks to all Members and Officers that had assisted with the record-breaking 'human poppy' event in Cirencester Market Place on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018, in addition to the commemoration concert and the Chairman's Awards Evening which had also taken place over the same weekend.

(iv) Member Presentations/Briefings - A417 'Missing Link' and Publica - the Head of Paid Service explained that he had been in discussions with Highways England regarding a presentation to the Council. He added that a

preferred route was due to be announced in March 2019 and, accordingly, a briefing would be arranged for Members towards the end of January 2019. In addition, an update briefing regarding Publica was also being planned for January 2019, in advance of the formal budget-setting meetings, and review of the Publica Business Plan. If possible, both briefings would be held on the same day.

There were no announcements from the Leader.

#### CL.35 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

(1) From Mr. M Pratley, Chairman of Save Our Cirencester, to the Leader of the Council

'The Council has declined to answer a Freedom of Information request, made by Mrs Golics on behalf of Save Our Cirencester, regarding details of the role of the QC in the Bathurst Outline Planning Application for 2,350 homes on Chesterton Farmland.

The Council has openly declared that his costs were in excess of £30,000, paid for by the Council Taxpayer. If CDC are transparent about the costs, why are they denying the public (who paid for these services), the information requested regarding the instructions they gave to the QC and the information they received from him?'

Response from Councillor Berry

*As you are aware, the decision taken to withhold the information at this stage had full regard to the legislative provisions, and the application of a public interest test. The decision of the Council's Officers has also been the subject of consideration by an experienced Monitoring Officer from another authority, as part of the internal review mechanism.*

*I accept and support the premise that, as a general principle, the Council should be open and transparent in all of its business, and acknowledge the general presumption in favour of disclosure of all information requested. However, in certain instances, it is right and proper for the Council to withhold information, either with or without a public interest test - as provided for by virtue of the absolute and qualified exemptions in legislation.*

*In the case to which you refer, the detailed responses provided set out the rationale for the decision, and the factors taken into account as part of the wider public interest. For me, the most important consideration relates to the fact that the advice which was sought concerns an application which has not yet formally been determined through the grant of planning permission. As such, the advice concerns a matter which is still 'live' and which is capable in principle of becoming the subject of future litigation or further disputes.*

*I appreciate that the decision to withhold the information is disappointing for some, but I am satisfied that the fullest consideration was given to the information request and all relevant factors were applied robustly.*

Mr. Pratley thanked Councillor Berry for his response and commented that it was clear the Council had used public money to pay for legal advice to 'make the case' for the Chesterton development, and that the Developer would avoid paying UK tax on the huge profit from the sale of the land, as it had been registered in Bermuda. By way of a supplementary question, Mr. Pratley asked if the Council agreed that it was an irony that hard-working council taxpayers' money had been used in this way, and was in fact a misappropriation of public funds.'

The Leader thanked Mr. Pratley for his supplementary question and explained that the Council had paid for legal advice to ensure the Council was in the correct position to make the decision. The Leader confirmed that the Council wanted to ensure that it complied with the law.

- (2) From Mr. P Moylan of Cirencester to Councillor Mark MacKenzie-Charrington, Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing Services and Cirencester Car Parking Project

'We understand that the Case Officer for the Chesterton application has left the Council during the critical S106 negotiations on the Bathurst Outline Planning Application for 2,350 homes on Chesterton Farmland. What problems has this caused? Should the public be concerned about the adequacy of the Council's Planning resources?'

Response from Councillor MacKenzie-Charrington

*I do not believe that the departure of the said Officer has led to any problems or issues, especially as a three-month notice period applied. When the departure of the Officer became known, the case was immediately allocated to another Officer within the team, who received a formal hand-over and then spent time assimilating all relevant information and working jointly with the departing Officer in relation to on-going matters. It should also be borne in mind that a number of Officers worked on the application, in support of the Case Officer (including the Team Leader and Head of Service) - those Officers remain and provided one element of continuity. Continuity and consistency in the final negotiations on the application has been further assisted by the continuing employment of an independent planning adviser.*

*In summary, the change in lead Officer has not impacted negatively on progress with the application.*

*Turning to the more general point you have raised, I am satisfied with the current level of resource within the planning service. However, this is something that is regularly kept under review, given the importance and public prominence of the service.*

Mr. Moylan explained that many residents were dismayed by the 'bragging' of the Council, contained within a recently-published Conservative Group

newsletter, that it was the most efficient shire council in the country; and that many residents doubted not only whether the assessment criteria selected properly measured efficiency but also the claim that it was an independent evaluation.

Mr. Moylan suggested that to avoid raising council tax over a number of years was not difficult and might satisfy some people; but felt that to claim to do so without it seriously impacting the levels of staff needed was delusional and, in his experience, to be able to do this only existed in the most highly competent organisations with exemplary leadership, which he did not see at Cotswold District Council.

Mr. Moylan also referred to the fact that the Council had admitted that it had not been possible to meet the initially projected timeframe of July for completion of the S106 legal agreements, and drew attention to the fact that this had now been extended on more than one occasion, with even the most recent deadline having been missed. In addition, a recent Ombudsman review had resulted in a written apology from the Head of Paid Service to a complainant regarding such delays and the reasons for this.

In the light of concerns about unexplained delays, staff levels and continuity, the continued reliance on an external planning advisor, and rumours of problems with negotiations over the health centre, and by way of a supplementary question, Mr. Moylan asked why residents should believe the Council's stated promise that 'all is done to protect the community interest and to deliver the very best scheme possible', especially when communications to the public have been non-existent and people worry about a serious dilution of the applicant's obligations.

In the absence of Councillor MacKenzie-Charrington from the Meeting, the Leader confirmed that a full written response would be provided in due course.

(3) From Mr. P Moylan, of Cirencester, to the Leader of the Council

'The Council have refused to make public information about the advice it sought from and which it was given by the QC in respect of Chesterton and this refusal has been propped up by a formal review process undertaken by the Monitoring Officer from the Forest of Dean District Council. CDC relied on the exemption in Regulation 12(5)(b) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and section 42 of the Act. Why has the Council taken such a heavy handed and apparently clandestine approach to the disclosure of information which ought to be made known to the public? Would the Council be surprised that the public are suspicious of this approach?'

Response from Councillor Berry

*As you are aware, the decision taken to withhold the information at this stage had full regard to the legislative provisions, and the application of a public interest test. The decision of the Council's Officers has also been the subject of consideration by an experienced Monitoring Officer from another authority, as part of the internal review mechanism.*

*I accept and support the premise that, as a general principle, the Council should be open and transparent in all of its business, and acknowledge the general presumption in favour of disclosure of all information requested. However, in certain instances, it is right and proper for the Council to withhold information, either with or without a public interest test - as provided for by virtue of the absolute and qualified exemptions in legislation.*

*In the case to which you refer, the detailed responses provided set out the rationale for the decision, and the factors taken into account as part of the wider public interest. For me, the most important consideration relates to the fact that the advice which was sought concerns an application which has not yet formally been determined through the grant of planning permission. As such, the advice concerns a matter which is still 'live' and which is capable in principle of becoming the subject of future litigation or further disputes.*

*I appreciate that the decision to withhold the information is disappointing for some, but I am satisfied that the fullest consideration was given to the information request and all relevant factors were applied robustly.*

Mr. Moylan explained that the Council's reply claimed that legal privilege had 'trumped' the public test, given that the advice sought concerned an application that had not been formally permitted, was still live and was capable of becoming the subject of future litigation or further disputes. Mr. Moylan believed that these grounds provided more reason to disclose the information now in order to ensure transparency, and following the example recently set by Parliament.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr. Moylan asked why the Council was being so awkward if the information was not crucial or controversial; or, if what was being withheld was crucial and controversial, was the Council flirting with future condemnation.

The Leader stated that he could add nothing further to his original response.

(4) From Honorary Aldermen JGK Birch and EGJ Horsfall to the Leader of the Council

'Could the Leader please tell us what position Cotswold District Council is taking regarding the Cotswold AONB becoming a National Park?'

Response from Councillor Berry

*The Council has not yet determined a formal position on any possible designation of the Cotswolds AONB as a National Park.*

*We are aware of the current on-going debate on the topic, and accept that any such designation is likely to have wide-ranging implications, not least on many democratically-elected and accountable bodies.*

*However, at this stage, and in liaison with counterparts from other affected authorities as necessary, our Officers are gathering information and seeking to undertake an evaluation of the potential benefits and disbenefits of National Park designation - so that the Council is best placed to respond, with evidence, to any subsequent formal consultation process (if one occurs).*

*We will also be responding to the questions set out in the 'Call for Evidence' document associated with the Glover Review of Protected Landscapes.*

Honorary Alderman Birch thanked Councillor Berry for his response and, by way of a supplementary question, enquired as to what effect the change of status of AONB to that of a National Park would have on the planning function of CDC.

In response, the Leader explained that National Park status would give the National Park Authority over-riding planning powers with, at least, the ability to call-in any decision made by the Council and to review and/or alter proposed decisions as deemed necessary.

(5) From Dr. D James, of Cirencester, to Councillor SG Hirst, Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Leisure

'Air Pollution Monitoring - Now that CDC's Local Plan has been accepted, we can expect several thousand new vehicle movements per day around the town during and after the Chesterton Site is developed up to 2031. Since Cirencester will then receive 2.5 times the average number of new houses/per 100 residents (17 v 7) in the UK, we will have a higher traffic density on our roads than any other similar sized market town and, therefore, higher pollution levels than elsewhere. We already know that the latest 2017 official CDC NO2 measurements in the town are only just under the EU limits at two locations, Gloucester Road and the London Road (Waggon and Horses). The former is only 150 yards from a very busy primary school. What measures are being taken to improve air pollution monitoring at this and additional sites around the town in order to safeguard the future health of those particularly vulnerable, i.e. the very young and the very old?'

Response from Councillor Hirst

*The Technical Pollution Team continuously reviews the monitoring locations in the survey network. There are many years' worth of data for the locations being monitored, and this provides us with enough information to be assured that there is no problem with air quality in most of the locations.*

*In Cirencester, we will review and set up new monitoring locations as considered necessary, partly in response to requests and also based on the criteria set out in accordance with Defra Technical Guidance LAQM TG(16) which, most importantly, considers risk to exposure of vulnerable groups (relevant exposure). Monitoring will continue around the District and an updated air quality report is produced annually,*



*helping us to determine whether there are new areas of concern within Cotswold District.*

Dr. James commented that a recent Council statement had explained the main reason for dismissing a park and ride for Cirencester was due to air pollution and the consequent loss of a green site. By way of a supplementary question, he asked how this could also not be said of the development at Chesterton.

Councillor Hirst confirmed that he would send a full written reply after the Meeting, but acknowledged that emissions from vehicles were increasing and represented a key pollution issue.

(6) From Mr. J Nicholas, of Cirencester, to Councillor to Councillor MGE MacKenzie-Charrington, Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing Services and Cirencester Car Parking Project

'Proposed new Health Centre at Chesterton - I and the people of Cirencester believed that, as part of the Chesterton Development, a new health centre would be crucial for the welfare of the new citizens and that this land would be available for the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to develop at their expense. Recently, we have come to realise that this is not the case and that negotiations are in progress over both the purchase of the site as well as the building of such a health centre. What progress has been made in these negotiations, and why was the land not given to the CCG in the interest of the Cirencester's citizens' health?'

Response from Councillor MacKenzie-Charrington

*It has been agreed that land will be safeguarded within the neighbourhood centre for the provision of a GP surgery and BDL, CDC and the CCG remain committed to on-site delivery. The land will therefore be made available by BDL for the provision of a surgery, based on health care development land value.*

Mr. Nicholas commented that if the Chesterton development proceeded, it was essential for residents that a health centre was provided. Mr. Nicholas stated that, several years ago, the initial Chesterton BDL Prospectus included the provision of a Health Centre, with the implication this would be provided by BDL, but this had then changed so that BDL would provide a site for the health centre, and now BDL would sell a site for a health centre to the Clinical Commissioning Group, based on development land value, however expensive this might be.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr. Nicholas asked if the Council would insist, via its Section 106 negotiations, that BDL provide a piece of land free of charge to the Clinical Commissioning Group for the construction of a health care centre.

The Leader responded that care development land was often priced at a considerably lower value than ordinary land retail values, but confirmed that he would provide a full written response in due course.

CL.36 MEMBER QUESTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, questions had been submitted, and responses provided, as follows:-

- (1) From Councillor AR Brassington to Councillor Sue Coakley, Cabinet Member for Environment

'A number of new street signs have been installed in Cirencester and across the Cotswolds.

The frames they sit in are made of a galvanised steel and no effort has been made to paint them in order to make them sensitive to our conservation areas or the AONB. Surely this isn't befitting of the beautiful Cotswolds?

Will the Cabinet Member commit to ensuring that all new frames for street signs are painted?'

Response from Councillor Coakley

*I am happy to look at the cost of having the frames painted for all new signs that are installed. If this results in any significant budgetary impacts, a report will be brought back to Members for decision.*

Councillor Brassington did not ask a supplementary question.

- (2) From Councillor AR Brassington to Councillor Sue Coakley, Cabinet Member for Environment

'At present, planning notices are displayed in plastic wallets, which are usually fixed to lamp post columns or poles with sellotape.

Does the Cabinet Member agree that this is an awful example of where this Council is using single use plastics, and will she look into re-usable notice boards that can be affixed to surfaces that many other Councils use?'

Response from Councillor Coakley

*I would be happy to explore this but, as with the previous question, the cost implications will need to be considered; and there may be some practicality issues in certain locations, in terms of how re-usable notice boards would be fixed.*

Councillor Brassington did not ask a supplementary question.

- (3) From Councillor Jenny Forde to Councillor Sue Coakley, Cabinet Member for Environment

'What has been the increase in fly tipping in my ward since Fosse Cross had its opening hours changed?'

Response from Councillor Coakley

*We are monitoring the impact of GCC's decision to reduce the HWRC opening hours from 28<sup>th</sup> October. November saw an increase of 14 from the previous year (52 reported in 2017 to 66 reported in 2018) - this is not a significant increase and fly tip numbers fluctuate anyway. However, we will continue to monitor to see if a pattern of increased fly tipping emerges over time.*

Councillor Forde thanked Councillor Coakley for her response and commented that, in her view, 14 cases constituted a significant increase. By way of a supplementary question, she asked if there was a certain time period for identifying a pattern and what constituted a significant increase.

In response, Councillor Coakley explained that the Council would continue to monitor the situation closely and drew attention to a recent successful prosecution case in respect of fly-tipping, which had included the award of costs.

(4) From Councillor PCB Coleman to Councillor NJW Parsons, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Forward Planning

'In May, I asked a question about the costs relating to the Berrells Road application judicial review challenge and the value of the S106 benefits withdrawn as a result of the judicial review.

The Deputy Leader told me that he would provide me with a written response to this question which, to date, I still haven't received. Why have I still not had an answer?'

Response from Councillor Nick Parsons

*I am aware that this matter was further addressed at the last Council Meeting, but had not appreciated that a written response had not followed - for which I apologise.*

*For the benefit of all, I can confirm as follows:-*

- *the planning obligations offered as part of the original application relating to the Berrells Road site were also agreed and included within the permission granted as a result of the appeal decision;*
- *the planning obligations offered relating to the Highfield Farm site were subject to change across the original application, the permission granted as a result of the appeal decision, and a revised scheme for the site submitted after the appeal outcome and approved by the Council - by way of example, the original application provided for 20% affordable housing and a contribution of £600,000 towards indoor community resources; the appeal decision increased affordable housing provision to 50%, but omitted the contribution towards indoor facilities; whereas the revised scheme provided for no less than 21% affordable housing (as a result of a viability assessment), a significant contribution*

*towards the provision/upgrading of community facilities, and other benefits that had been common to the previous application and appeal decision;*

- *the appeal decisions (and the subsequent CDC decision re Highfield Farm) had regard to the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations.*

*I have asked Officers to provide a composite response to you, and for public record purposes, which covers your original and supplementary questions and associated points you have raised.*

Councillor Coleman thanked the Deputy Leader for his response.

Councillor Coleman did not ask a supplementary question.

(5) From Councillor Jenny Forde to Councillor AW Berry, then Leader Elect of the Council

'What is being done by the Council to encourage more women, young people and under-represented groups to stand for Council next year, to ensure that our Council reflects its residents?'

Response from Councillor Berry

*I believe it is important that the Council is not seen to be seeking to influence the democratic election process. As such, while I consider it vital that we make it easy for people who want to stand for election to find out how to get involved, what the rules are, and what they have to do to comply with those rules, I do not believe that, as a Council, we should seek to influence the profile of candidates.*

*I know that, in the new year, the Returning Officer intends to make available a wide range of information, via different channels, and also to hold events for prospective councillors. It should also be remembered that political parties probably provide the largest proportion of candidates, so they too have a role.*

*In an ideal world, local communities would be represented by a diverse pool of councillors - quality individuals who are capable, vibrant, energetic and engaged, and with a commitment to local people. However, it is not a requirement for the Council to secure a mix of councillors, but it is imperative that councillors, once elected, seek to represent the interests of all.*

Councillor Forde thanked the Leader for his response but commented that she was disappointed with the response as she believed that local democracy was strengthened by local people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Councillor Forde also drew attention to the House of Commons petition, seeking to increase the number of female MPs. By way of a supplementary question, she asked what information and channels could/would be used to increase the diversity in those standing for the Council elections in 2019.

The Leader explained that the Council would do what it could to encourage people from a wide variety of backgrounds to stand, but that it could not force people to do so. He added that it was also down to Members and their political groups to talk to people and encouraging candidacy.

(6) From Councillor NP Robbins to Councillor AW Berry, then Leader Elect of the Council

'In 2014, the Planning Committee at CDC unanimously voted to support plans to regenerate Cirencester's Market Place, the Conservative Cabinet also voted to support the scheme with £100,000 and Conservative-controlled Gloucestershire County Council raised no objections.

Does this administration support the new Market Place scheme?'

Response from Councillor Berry

*Yes, the Council does support the Market Place Scheme, where a much better designed and larger public space has been delivered as an overall enhanced offer for the Town; and is delighted that the scheme has been recognised by winning a national design award.*

*A recently-agreed Memorandum of Understanding commits both District and Town Councils to work together on future plans for the town centre, with the aim of securing a solution that is conducive to a healthy and vibrant economy. This approach will help unlock investment and deliver co-ordinated improvements across the town centre which will also include a number of outstanding issues of public interest and/or concern, including:*

- *creating more Blue Badge parking spaces;*
- *improving facilities: seating, signage, greenery and a new phone box;*
- *creating clarity over traffic flows;*
- *ensuring that there are no continuing health and safety issues.*

*We also support the Town Council's previously-stated intention to carry out a full public review of the scheme.*

Councillor Robbins thanked Councillor Berry for his response and, by way of a supplementary question, called on the Leader to contact his political group in the County to ask them why they had made inflammatory comments about the Market Place when this Council was proud of the progress made.

In response, the Leader explained that a recent survey undertaken by the MP for the Cotswolds, Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, had generated 1,700 responses, and had highlighted that many residents were not happy with the Market Place at present and, also, that many other parts of Cirencester urgently required attention.

(7) From Councillor M Harris to Councillor AW Berry, then Leader Elect of the Council

'At the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 meeting, I highlighted the PM's Conservative Party Conference speech that wanted to create "a new generation of council houses to help fix our broken housing market". The government was offering up £2Bn to achieve this, and I asked that a cross-party group be set up to ensure we establish eligibility to get our fair share.

The reply was that it needed looking into, that the formation of Publica might speed up the process, and then a cross-party working party could be set up.

A year later I have not heard any more.

At this year's Conservative Party Conference, Theresa May used her closing speech to announce that she is getting rid of the cap on what councils can borrow to build homes.

She said "Solving the housing crisis is the biggest domestic policy challenge of our generation. We cannot make the case for capitalism if ordinary working people have no chance of owning capital."

The LGA described the move as "fantastic".

All I want to do is ensure that the Cotswolds gets its share and we do not miss out - so please would the Leader tell me why the people of the Cotswolds who need affordable housing have been neglected for over a year while Publica gets up to speed?'

Response from Councillor Berry

*To provide affordable homes for local people, of appropriate types and tenures, including starter homes and homes for life, is an objective for this Council as set out in our Corporate Strategy. I am keen to explore all available opportunities that might help us deliver on that priority.*

*I can also confirm that the Government's current Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme remains open for bids, that we are an eligible bidder (including in respect of social rented provision), and that Officers have been exploring the available opportunities and the detailed requirements.*

*I have been made aware of approaches being taken by some of our councils that we work in partnership with, including the potential establishment of a Housing Company in Forest of Dean and the financial support to a local housing association to build more affordable homes in West Oxfordshire. Our Officers are in on-going discussions with their counter-parts at Forest of Dean DC to see whether a housing company option here would be able to deliver any more affordable housing than would already come through via developers - given the significant differences in site availability and land values across the two areas.*

*I am also aware that informal discussions have previously taken place with Cabinet Members on the implications/benefits/disadvantages of re-establishing a Housing Revenue Account, given that, by and large, the Council does not hold land assets which are available for housing development.*

*Moving forward, I have discussed the matter with the Publica MD who has suggested that we arrange a meeting with an independent expert from Local Partnerships (a consultancy company owned by the LGA) to help us understand our options on how best to deliver on our objectives. It is hoped that this meeting will take place early in the New Year and I am happy to invite representatives from the Liberal Democrat Group to attend. I would expect that following the advice of an independent expert will enable us to bring forward a report to the Cabinet to formally consider any options.*

*In addition, I am aware of one site that we do own (where the development potential is below the threshold by which we could insist on affordable housing provision) which might be used to secure affordable homes through an alternative method. I believe that the site presents a real opportunity not only to secure affordable housing to deliver on the 'social' value of the site but also to deliver an exemplar housing scheme which sets the standard for the rest of the area in terms of green infrastructure and planning a scheme to enhance health and well-being. I have held initial discussions with Officers and a report will be presented to the Cabinet in the coming months.*

*I would also like to take this opportunity to confirm that there has been no let-up in efforts to deliver affordable housing since the formation of Publica - in 2017/18 we enabled 247 affordable housing units against a target of a minimum of 150 units; and this year we have delivered 185 units so far, again against an annual target of 150 units, and anticipate that we will see a total of approx. 300 affordable units delivered in the District this financial year. We have delivered social rented units, affordable rent properties, and low cost home ownership such as shared ownership and discounted sale homes. These provide a range of opportunities for people within a number of income brackets, but priced out of the open market, to find appropriate housing to meet their need. In addition, affordable homes also become available for re-let as people move on. This includes social rented homes as, often, tenants in existing social rented homes move on to new affordable rent or shared ownership homes, freeing up social rented homes for others that need them.*

Councillor M Harris commented that it had taken 14 months to get a response to the answer. By way of a supplementary question, he asked for assurances that, by the time of the next Conservative Party Conference, the Leader would ensure that the Council would seek to take advantage of all available funding.

In response, the Leader explained there were currently a plethora of options to assist in affordable housing provision, which in itself caused some problems. Overall, it was unlikely that the Council would look to build its own council homes but would instead look to community trusts as an alternative.

(8) Councillor JA Harris to Councillor AW Berry, then Leader Elect of the Council

'How many social rented houses have been built in the Cotswolds over the last year?'

Response from Councillor Berry

*Thirty - but this is part of a much more extensive affordable housing provision (as described in my response to the previous question).*

Councillor JA Harris stressed that social rented was the only affordable housing option available in the District and that the 30 houses built was, in his view, a disgrace. By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Harris asked if the Council wanted to build its own council homes in the future.

The Leader explained that the Council needed to research all options available, but, as previously explained, the preference would be in favour of provision through community housing trusts.

(9) From Councillor JA Harris to Councillor Mark MacKenzie-Charrington, Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing Services and Cirencester Car Parking Project

'At the last meeting, Councillor Roly Hughes asked you about tidying up Brewery Court, particularly the former Bramley's building, of which CDC is the freeholder.

You told us that works would commence at the end of September if Wildmoor, who is the leaseholder, had not made repairs.

It is now December and the area is still blighted. Why has nothing happened?'

Response from Councillor MacKenzie-Charrington

*Officers have continued to work with Wildmoor, who carried out some initial repairs but failed to deliver the full extent of the works required by the Council. Given the potential for impending works on the site in respect of implementing the planning approvals, Officers felt it appropriate for Wildmoor to put forward alternative proposals which would meet the Council's desired outcome of an improved visual appearance in the area but would not force the company to undertake expensive works to buildings which would relatively shortly be subject to demolition upon commencement of the substantive works.*

*Wildmoor did put forward some proposals to tidy the site but have not yet completed these as they have been awaiting vinyl hoarding of a design similar to Farrell Close to be commissioned.*

*Officers felt it appropriate to give Wildmoor some more time to do this rather than risk taxpayers' money in completing works and then seeking compensation from the company.*



*We have reiterated the importance of the issue to the Council and residents of Cirencester, in order to reduce any blight in this area of town.*

*Works are now underway, and we expect the boards to be covered with appropriate vinyls as per Farrell Close. However, provided an acceptable scheme is achieved, we would not now expect Wildmoor to do everything in the initial repairs notice (such as replacing glazing) as it would seem pointless if the building is going to be demolished - however, further cosmetic works to tidy up the building are required.*

Councillor JA Harris explained that he did not consider the answer was good enough and that each month he had pledged to community groups that repairs would soon be carried out. By way of a supplementary question, he asked if a deadline could be provided by which the works would definitely be carried out.

In the absence of Councillor MacKenzie-Charrington from the Meeting, the Leader responded that the building had been boarded up and painted and that there were proposals for charities and schools to be invited to design suitable artwork for display.

#### CL.37 PETITIONS

No petitions had been received.

#### CL.38 FUTURE WASTE SERVICE REVIEW

The Council was requested to consider the design of the future waste service from 2019 and appropriate delegations for contract awards associated with service changes.

The Cabinet Member for Environment introduced the item and, in so doing, drew attention to the recommendations of the Cabinet and the key differences from the current service. The Cabinet Member explained that the Review had been prompted by an urgent need to replace the waste collection vehicle fleet - the Council was currently in year six of a seven-year cycle and was experiencing high costs in maintaining ageing vehicles; and, in addition, orders for new vehicles had a lead-in time of ten months. The Cabinet Member reported that a residents' survey undertaken by the Council had yielded 1,300 responses and she also referred to the various Member consultations and briefings that had taken place.

The Cabinet Member explained that, in addition to the recommendations as laid out within the circulated report, the Cabinet wished to introduce a further recommendation that, as part of the overall budget-setting by Council at its Meeting in February 2019, a review be undertaken of the current £30 fee for the optional green waste service, given the proposed reduction in the level of such service. The Cabinet Member then commended the report and recommendations to the Council, explaining that the proposals would enhance the District's environment and recycling performance. She also thanked Officers for their work in relation to the item.

A Member expressed concern at the proposed reduction in garden waste collections from 52 per annum to around 20; and also enquired as to whether research had been undertaken in regard to more suitable and longer-lasting cardboard sacks, and queried whether such sacks could be recycled.

In response, the Cabinet Member explained that the new external food waste caddy would be larger and of a more robust design. She added that the Council had taken advice from 'WRAP' and any new containers were based on best industry advice. The cardboard bag would be replaced with a larger, more user-friendly bag, similar to those used for collecting plastic. Bins and boxes were recyclable, but the sacks were not.

Another Member enquired as to whether a six-year vehicle replacement cycle would be more beneficial; and the Cabinet Member confirmed that she had challenged the Council's finance team to research the costs of a six, rather than seven, year cycle.

Various Members commented that, in their view, a cessation of garden waste collections over the winter period should result in a reduction in the service charge, and raised concerns that a reduction in collections could impact on recycling figures. A number of those Members suggested that an increased charge in return for maintaining weekly collections would be preferable and better received.

By way of response, the Cabinet Member reminded Members of the additional recommendation to review the garden waste charge at its Meeting in February 2019, but reminded the Council that the green waste collection fees were heavily subsidised. She also explained that 71% of the respondents to the residents' survey had indicated that they would still subscribe to a fortnightly collection; and that the Council, at present, was the only District in the County who collected garden waste on a weekly basis. The Cabinet Member also stressed the Council should be encouraging a reduction in waste, and not solely seeking to increase recycling.

In response to various other questions, the Cabinet Member also confirmed that the Council continually investigated the impact of changes to collections on those residents in flats and other communal areas but explained that it was also the responsibility of landlords and residents to ensure waste was properly managed; the District's residual waste would go to the Javelin Park incinerator in Gloucestershire (as this was preferable to the waste being land-filled, which was the current practice), but recycling materials would not be taken to the incinerator; and the collection model had been reviewed and Ubico would operate with 'driver plus two loaders', which would speed up collections and aid driver recruitment.

It was PROPOSED and SECONDED that the recommendations be approved, subject to the amendment identified by the Cabinet Member.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(a) the consultation summary, the financial estimates and other information provided be noted and, based on this evidence, the future Waste and Recycling Service be delivered as follows:-**

- **a fortnightly collection of residual waste (as existing);**

- a fortnightly collection of dry recyclates (as existing) but subject to an enhancement to the existing kerbside sort collection service, to include additional materials (i.e. waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), textiles and cartons) and a change in receptacle for cardboard;
  - a separated weekly food waste collection;
  - a separated fortnightly garden waste collection;
- (b) revenue costs be mitigated by introducing an annual three-month suspension of the garden waste service during the winter period (dates to be determined);
- (c) capital be allocated as set out in Appendix 'D' - Table 3 to the circulated report for the selected option for the procurement of fleet and new containers;
- (d) one-off revenue allocations be agreed of up to £180,200 for the additional waste service management of mobilisation and procurement, delivery of containers, communications to the public, and additional customer services and operational support immediately prior to and during service launch;
- (e) delegated authority be given to the Council's Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Group Manager (Council Advisory Services), Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment, to take the decision on fleet contract awards;
- (f) a contract for the bulking and onward sale of all recyclates collected in the new service be produced; and delegated authority be given to the Council's Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Group Manager (Council Advisory Services), Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment, to take the decision on such materials handling contract award.
- (g) a review of the optional garden waste collection fee be presented to the Council at its Meeting in February 2019, with the intention of making a reduction to the fee, given the transition to a separated fortnightly garden waste collection.

**Record of Voting - for 29, against 0, abstentions 3, absent 2.**

**CL.39 TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW - MID-YEAR 2018/19**

The Chairman of the Audit Committee presented the report and recommendation of that Committee in relation to the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review for 2018/19.

Members were content with the review report.

**RESOLVED that the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review for 2018/19 be approved.**

**Record of Voting - for 27, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 7.**

**CL.40 GAMBLING ACT 2005 - REVIEW OF THE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

The Chairman of the Planning and Licensing Committee presented the report and recommendations of that Committee in relation to suggested revisions to the Council's Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005, based on legislative requirements and statutory guidance. In so doing, the Chairman drew specific attention to the recommended continued adoption of a 'no casino resolution'.

Members were supportive of the Committee's recommendations.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(a) the reviewed Statement of Principles, attached at Appendix 'A' to the circulated report, be approved;**

**(b) the Council continues to adopt a "no-casino resolution" for inclusion in the published Gambling Act 2005 Licensing Policy Statement.**

**Record of Voting - for 29, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 5.**

**CL.41 OLD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, CIRENCESTER**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Forward Planning presented the report and recommendations of the Cabinet in relation to options for the future of the Old Memorial Hospital Site, Cirencester.

In introducing this item, the Deputy Leader extended his thanks to Officers for their work in relation to the project. He explained the proposals sought to progress a previous Council decision, and provided for the demolition of the existing building and the formation of additional car parking spaces pending the development of the Waterloo decked car park. The Cabinet Member amplified various aspects of the proposals, and commended them to Members

A Member expressed regret that the Council was faced with having to make this decision. Whilst he appreciated that the building was not attractive, apart from the frontage, it occupied a special part in the hearts of many local people given its previous uses. In addition, many of the charities and community groups that had previously occupied the site had found difficulty in finding other suitable venues to operate from and hold activities, and some had folded.

The Deputy Leader reported that since the vacation of the site in January 2013, the Hospital had cost the Council around £30,000 per annum, resulting in the Council having invested around £180,000 to maintain the building's safety. Furthermore, despite a potential buyer once coming forward, this had been prior to the adoption of the Local Plan and it had not therefore been considered an appropriate time to sell the building and site.

The majority of Members supported the proposed way forward.

In response to various questions from Members, it was reported that more detail would be provided to Members in the future regarding recycling of

existing materials at the site; the Living Memory Historical Association was being consulted in connection with the protection of the air raid shelter; and the demolition costs were high due to the large amount of asbestos contained within the building.

**RESOLVED that:**

- (a) full demolition of the Old Memorial Hospital Building, Sheep Street, Cirencester, be agreed;**
- (b) a revised design and construction of additional parking on the site be agreed;**
- (c) the allocation of capital funding of up to £695,000, to be funded from the Council Priorities Fund be agreed;**
- (d) delegated authority be given to the Chief Finance Officer to update the MTFS, Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators to include the capital expenditure;**
- (e) delegated authority be given to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, Group Manager Legal and Property Services and the Car Parking Demand Project Board to accept the most economical advantageous tender for the works outlined within the report.**

**Record of Voting - for 25, against 4, abstentions 2, absent 3.**

**CL.42 ISSUES/REPORTS ARISING FROM THE CABINET**

There were no issues/reports arising from the Cabinet.

**CL.43 ISSUES/REPORTS ARISING FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND/OR AUDIT**

There were no issues/reports arising from the Overview and Scrutiny and Audit Committees.

**CL.44 NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

The Chairman reported that he would allow all Motions to be debated at the Meeting; and explained that, given their similar content, Motions 7/2018 and 9/2018 had been combined. A copy of the wording of the combined Motion had been circulated at the Meeting

- (i) Motion 6/2018 re Modern Slavery**

Proposed by Councillor AW Berry, Seconded by Councillor JA Harris:

*'Cotswold District Council resolves to adopt the Modern Slavery Charter and will:*

- Request and urge Publica, Ubico, SWAP and SLM (its principal partners that deliver services on its behalf) to ensure that their*

*employees are trained to recognise the signs of modern slavery;*

- *Ensure that appropriate channels are available for staff working for partners or contractors to report any potential cases of modern slavery, such as through the Whistleblowing policy or the Counter Fraud Unit;*
- *Request and urge that the procurement teams of Publica, Ubico, SWAP and SLM are appropriately trained to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply on-line course on Ethical Procurement and Supply;*
- *Require all contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015;*
- *Require those submitting any abnormally low-cost tenders to provide evidence to ensure they do not rely upon contractors practising modern slavery;*
- *Encourage suppliers to remind contract workers that they are free to join a Trade Union or representative organisation, as we recognise this provides added protection against modern slavery;*
- *Refer cases of suspected modern slavery to the National Crime Agency for investigation;*
- *Provide an annual summary of any actions taken on this subject in its annual performance report.'*

In Proposing the Motion, Councillor Berry explained that, in many ways, it was sad that the Council had to consider such a Motion in order to protect the vulnerable and put in place a series of measures to seek to prevent modern slavery, which should have no place in society.

In Seconding the Motion, Councillor Harris stated that it was not true that slavery only happened overseas and referred to the fact that the British Government had estimated that there were 10,000 cases of slavery in the UK with many workers being forced into agriculture and hospitality working. Whilst acknowledging that the UK Government was recognising the existence of slavery, he did not believe that the current arrangements to address the situation were fit-for-purpose. More locally, he hoped that the Motion would send a clear message that the Council would take action if cases were found within the District, and he urged Members to support the Motion by way of a re-affirmation of the Council's commitment to address an exceptionally sad and sorry situation.

The matter was then opened for debate by the Council, and there was wide support for the Motion.

Various Members commented that if anyone considered that modern slavery practices would never happen in the District then they were sadly wrong, and drew attention to recent action taken by the Council in regard to illegal working in restaurants within the District.

For administrative completeness, the Head of Paid Service suggested the addition of a further resolution in regard to updating any Council documents and Policies to reflect the decision of the Council on the Motion; and this was supported.

Councillor Berry was then invited to address the Council again. Councillor Berry explained that this Motion was one of great importance and significance, and was of the opinion that the Council should do all it could to create awareness of the issues that formed the substance of the Motion.

**RESOLVED that:**

- (a) **the Motion be supported;**
- (b) **the Head of Paid Service be requested to update any Council documents and/or Policies to reflect the decision of the Council on the Motion.**

**Record of Voting - for 31, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 3.**

- (ii) Motion 7/2018 (newly-combined Motion to replace previously-submitted Motion 7/2018 and Motion 9/2018)

Proposed by Councillor Alison Coggins, Seconded by Councillor Dilys Neill:-

*'This Council notes the recent decision to reduce X-ray and radiology provision at North Cotswold Hospital from 28 hours a week to just 8.*

*This Council further notes the strong strength of public feeling against the decision, including over 5,000 signatures on a petition opposing the change, and lends its support to the North Cotswold Rural Community in opposing the decision.*

*This Council calls for the immediate reinstatement of this service and to preserve current walk-in services at North Cotswold Hospital.*

*This Council instructs the Leader of the Council to write to Chief Executive of Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust outlining the Council's position; and to the local MP seeking his support in opposing this change and maintaining services at the Hospital.'*

In Proposing the Motion, Councillor Coggins explained that, when built in 2012, the Hospital had been billed as a once in a generation construction representing an exceptional facility to serve an ever-growing population of the northern part of the District, with an extensive catchment area. Those needs had continued to grow, given the ever increasing population in the light of new housing build.

Councillor Coggins informed the Council that the Hospital was a fantastic facility, offering many specialist medical services. The X-ray equipment had been provided through fund-raising and donations from the local community, and was the lynch-pin to the Minor Injuries Unit, clinic and orthopaedic department.

The reduction in the X-ray and radiology provision had raised concerns amongst residents. Councillor Coggins understood that the reason for the cut in hours was a lack of resources as opposed to a cost-cutting exercise, but believed that this false economy of reducing the hours had ramifications both for patient quality of life and in an economic context, including (i) the ability to get timely X-rays; (ii) the increase in travel time to Cheltenham or Gloucester,

with a journey of some 40 minutes to one hour or more each way; (iii) the inability of the Minor Injuries Unit staff to access X-rays when there was no radiographer on duty; and (iv) increased pressure on the ambulance service, and other hospitals.

In concluding, Councillor Coggins drew attention to a petition that she had coordinated in an attempt to restore X-ray Services at the Hospital. The petition had attracted over 8,000 signatures, which represented over a third of the adult patient population in the North Cotswolds are unhappy with this situation. In addition, residents were being encouraged to write to the decision-makers with their individual concerns and situations in relation to X-ray use. In summary, she urged the Council to support the Motion.

In Seconding the Motion, Councillor Neill explained that the reduction in X-ray services at North Cotswold Hospital would affect residents across a large area, including her Ward. She understood that the main reason given for the reduction was the need to protect imaging services at the larger hospitals because of recruitment difficulties, with 24% of radiographer posts currently vacant compared to a national average of 17%.

In drawing on her experience of working in the health service, both at Gloucester Royal Hospital and as a local GP in the District, she questioned the logic of the decision, arguing that whilst centralisation of services sometimes provided the best and safest option for patients, this was not always the case. In her view, imaging departments at larger hospitals were always overstretched; and with more and better imaging modalities, and in particular with the rapid expansion of interventional radiology, the requirement for radiographers as well as radiologists was increasing.

However, the workload at North Cotswold Hospital was different; with the radiographer there providing a service for patients who attended the minor injuries department and also for patients referred by their GP for routine X-rays, including a walk in chest X-ray service. Councillor Neill was surprised at potential recruitment problems at North Cotswold Hospital, as she thought it likely that the hours and the location would appeal to someone who did want to work the shift system in operation at the Cheltenham or Gloucester Hospitals.

Councillor Neill stated that the work would still need to be done, and there would be an increase in pressure on the imaging departments in Cheltenham, Cirencester and Gloucester. Furthermore, getting to those other hospitals represented a major problem for anyone who did not have a private car. In addition, given the rapidly increasing number of older people, and especially frail elderly people who were likely to need X-rays, the demand for a local X-ray service was highly likely to increase. In summary, the change made neither medical nor economic sense.

Councillor Neill also echoed the comments made by Councillor Coggins regarding the waste of a high-quality facility and equipment that was only six years old, which had been funded in part by the local community. Councillor Neill stated that the Campaign Group would continue to challenge the Trust and oppose the closure, and reminded the Council of the large amount of opposition to any reduction in services at the Hospital, as highlighted by the petition.



The matter was then opened for debate by the Council, and there was widespread support for the Motion.

Various Members expressed extreme disappointment at the reduction in services at the Hospital, and highlighted the fact that the Hospital served many rural communities within the District alongside those from large towns such as Moreton-in-Marsh and Stow-on-the-Wold. Those Members also stressed that it was vital for the Council to do all it could to ensure that the community hospitals within the District provided the best possible service to residents, and expressed the fear that the decisions recently undertaken could lead to further reductions in services at those community hospitals, including to Minor Injuries Units.

A Member explained that the decision had come as a great surprise to the County Health and Care Overview Scrutiny Committee, but confirmed his understanding that it represented a temporary response to an emergency situation, owing to staff shortages. He added that it was important to secure more radiologists in order to resume a good level of service at the Hospital as soon as possible.

It was suggested that, given the wide level of support expressed by Members for the Motion, representations could also be made to the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Gloucestershire Health Trust, explaining the Council's concern. This was supported.

Councillor Coggins was then invited to address the Council again. Councillor Coggins explained that she welcomed the comments made by Members and urged the Council to support the Motion to enable further action to be taken.

**RESOLVED that the Motion be supported, with representations also being made to the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Gloucestershire Health Trust**

**Record of Voting - for 31, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 3.**

(iii) Motion 8/2018 re Household Recycling Centre Opening Hours

Proposed by Councillor Jenny Forde, Seconded by Councillor NP Robbins:-

*'Council notes the recent decision by Gloucestershire County Council to reduce the opening hours of Household Recycling Centres (HRC) across the County.*

*Fosse Cross HRC, in the Cotswolds, is now closed on Tuesdays and during the winter is only open from 10am to 4pm.*

*Council further notes that, since the decision to reduce opening hours, fly tipping has occurred outside the Fosse Cross HRC and in the roads and lanes around Fosse Cross HRC.*

*Council recognises that the small savings made by the County Council are a false economy because these costs are passed on to CDC in order to clear up fly tipping and dealing with increases to residual waste.*

*Council therefore calls on the County Council to re-open Fosse Cross HRC on Tuesdays and return to the previous opening hours.'*

In Proposing the Motion, Councillor Forde explained that a key objective of the Council was to encourage recycling and that the Fosse Cross HRC complemented that objective, offering a wide range of recycling facilities. However, Councillor Forde was concerned that the reduction in opening days and hours of this facility would lead to an increase in fly-tipping and littering across the District, which was a costly and time-consuming process to address. Furthermore, Councillor Forde was not convinced that funding from fines received for incidences of fly-tipping would pay for the clearance of fly-tipping incidents.

In Seconding the Motion, Councillor Robbins stated that he fully supported the comments made by Councillor Forde. From his perspective, whilst a closure on Tuesdays was not critical, a reduction in hours to 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. meant that many working people would be excluded from visiting the site on weekdays. In his opinion, the reduced opening hours were not about service demand but an attempt by the County Council to save funding. Councillor Robbins believed that these changes would also have an impact on town/parish councils who would feel obliged to clear any fly-tipping incidents within their areas. In conclusion, he urged the Council to support the Motion.

A Member commented that the County Council had saved £200,000 as a result of the reduction in opening hours, but believed that that this only represented savings in agency staff. She agreed that the reduction could have been better communicated, but explained that she understood that the new opening hours were based on actual usage measures and that other centres were open during hours that the Fosse Cross HRC was not. She also re-affirmed that 14 cases of fly-tipping had been reported to the Council since the reduction in opening hours.

Another Member expressed the view that the savings resulting from the reduction were substantial and that, if the funding would be used by the County Council to better support key services, such as adult and child services, then it should be welcomed. He also agreed that better publicity should have been produced regarding the changes and felt that the Council should write to the County Council reiterating the importance of communicating and publicising changes in service provision to residents.

Other Members supported the Motion, and expressed disappointment at the reduction in service provision. Those Members felt that recycling should be encouraged and facilities provided for all residents insofar as was possible. Councillor Forde was then invited to address the Council again. In so doing, she reiterated the importance of recycling and its positive impact on the wider environment. Councillor Forde believed that the County Council's decision was short-sighted, and a false economy.

**RESOLVED that the Motion be supported.**

**Record of Voting - for 17, against 10, abstentions 4, absent 3.**

CL.45 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

**RESOLVED that the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to all contracts, conveyances and any other documents necessary for carrying into effect all resolutions passed by the Council.**

**Record of Voting - for 31, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 3.**

The Meeting commenced at 10.07 a.m. and closed at 12.40 p.m.

Chairman

(END)