



Supplement for

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 22 JANUARY 2025

Agenda No Item 7

Responses to Member Questions Full Council 22 January 2025

This page is intentionally left blank



Member Questions for Council – 22 January 2025

#	Questioner	Question	Response
1	Cllr Julia Judd to Cllr Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	<p>On Friday 20 December, I emailed cil@cotswold.gov.uk asking for support to find out if one of my parishes can use their CIL payments to enhance the school Wi-Fi so that the Parish could use the Wi-Fi for CCTV which they will be installing to disrupt ASB in their village.</p> <p>At the time of writing, neither I, nor the Parish Clerk have received a reply.</p> <p>Please could members be updated on the current CIL process to include what is the procedure to get the ball rolling to help parishes receive CIL money for their projects, what criteria is applied and who makes the decision on whether the needs of the Parish meet the criteria?</p>	<p>I'd like to apologise to Cllr Judd and the Parish Council for the lack of response from officers.</p> <p>Cotswold District Council has published clear guidance on how Town and Parish Councils can use their portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This guidance is available online and outlines how funds can be spent to support the development of the area. Specifically, the guidance states that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CIL funds can be used for the provision, improvement, replacement, operation, or maintenance of infrastructure.• Funds can also be used for anything that addresses the demands of development in the area. <p>This provides flexibility for Town and Parish Councils to spend CIL funds on a wide range of projects that benefit the community. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhancements to village halls• New or improved play areas• Affordable housing



			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan (if it addresses development-related needs) <p>Town and Parish Councils receive 15% of CIL funds collected from development in their area, which increases to 25% if a Neighbourhood Plan is in place. CIL can be used for infrastructure improvements, community facilities, and anything that addresses the impact of development.</p> <p>Additionally, Councils can use their CIL funds to support Crowdfund Cotswold campaigns, attracting funding from various sources to help fund projects.</p> <p>However, there are a few key conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CIL cannot be used to replace regular Town or Parish Council expenditures.• If funds are spent incorrectly, they must be returned to the District Council.• Any unspent funds after five years must also be returned. If a Council is unable to return funds, the District Council will recover them by deducting them from future CIL receipts. <p>Each year, Town and Parish Councils are required to submit an annual report detailing CIL funds received, spent, and any unspent funds. This report must be published by 31st December.</p>
--	--	--	--



			<p>We encourage Town and Parish Councils to use their precepting powers to raise funds through council tax for routine expenditure, as they are not subject to the same limits as district and county councils in this regard.</p>
2	<p>Cllr Gina Blomefield to Cllr Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning</p>	<p>Many councils including Harlow District Council have introduced civil penalties for rogue landlords who fail to keep their properties to the Decent Home Standard with potential fines of up to £30,000 for non-compliance.</p> <p>Whilst I very much hope that there are very few tenants suffering from sub-standard housing across the Cotswolds, where it does happen it can be a very serious issue for the tenants' health and wellbeing, and access to help to remedy their problems is essential.</p> <p>Does CDC have a process whereby social and private tenants can report poor conditions in their housing, and, if so, what actions are taken to ensure the responsible landlord brings the</p>	<p>Cotswold District Council is fully committed to ensuring that housing conditions across the district meet appropriate standards, prioritising the health and well-being of residents. While the council does not directly own any social housing stock, we work closely with registered social housing providers to address any issues raised by tenants in these properties.</p> <p>The Environmental Health Service at Cotswold District Council oversees the Private Sector Housing Regulation Team, which plays a key role in addressing housing issues across both private and social tenancies. This team is responsible for investigating complaints about poor housing conditions, inspecting Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), addressing public health concerns such as pest infestations, handling illegal evictions, and managing the licensing of residential park homes.</p> <p>The council has a range of statutory powers to address housing violations, such as the Housing Act 2004. In cases of complaints, we generally seek informal resolutions first, unless there is an immediate health or safety risk. If informal measures do not resolve the issue, formal action may be taken, including the issuance of prohibition or improvement notices. In cases of non-compliance, landlords may face prosecution or civil</p>



		<p>property up to standard or is otherwise penalized?</p>	<p>penalties, as outlined in the council's Enforcement and Civil Penalties Policies, which will be reviewed and updated later this year.</p> <p>If tenants encounter substandard living conditions, we advise them to first contact their landlord or housing provider in writing, if they have not already done so, to allow the landlord to resolve the issue. Should the landlord fail to address the problem, the council can initiate an investigation, which typically includes an inspection of the property and a discussion with the landlord.</p> <p>Tenants can raise complaints or report housing issues directly through the council's Customer Services Team or by completing the online form on our website. More information is available at https://cotswold.gov.uk/housing</p> <p>In addition to these efforts, the council has financially supported social housing regeneration projects in various areas, including Moreton-in-Marsh, Kempsford, South Cerney, and Cirencester, which have significantly improved the living conditions for many residents.</p>
3	<p>Cllr David Fowles to Cllr Mike Evey, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation</p>	<p>When the decision was taken in March 2022 to refurbish and then let a sizeable part of Trinity Road as serviced offices, the business case presented to Council projected an annual return of 12.3% on the £1,345,000 capital investment.</p>	<p>The total capital cost to reduce the Council's footprint within the building to reduce business rates and utility costs, generate an income and reduce the Council's footprint was £630,000 against an original budget of £673,000.</p> <p>A number of separate building maintenance items such as upgrading lighting, recarpeting, decorating, and refitting WCs was also carried out to</p>



		<p>Following the appointment of Watermoor Point a few months ago to both let and manage the site; it appears that the building is still largely unlet.</p> <p>This is against the backdrop of the main Watermoor Point being fully occupied</p> <p>Now that the works are completed, please could you confirm the final total costs of this capital investment project, the revised anticipated annual return and provide the Council with an update on how many tenants have signed up to date and what space is still unoccupied?</p>	<p>areas retained for Council use. This work was separate to the original project and included works which would have needed to be done anyway. However, it was more cost effective to do this work while staff were moved out of the main atrium area and contractors were already onsite, this was budgeted separately and cost £65,000.</p> <p>Council approved the capital investment at their meeting in March 2022.</p> <p>The business case developed for the decision, which is referenced by Cllr Fowles in his question, included an expected rental return from letting the available space to a single or small number of tenants taking the available space. The report to Council in March 2022 included projected net income of £166,000 per annum and clearly highlighted the financial risks inherent with project.</p> <p>The Property and Estates team engaged with public sector partners, agents and other interested parties when marketing the space.</p> <p>As it became apparent that the Council would be faced with a lengthy void period due a challenging market, a different approach to letting the available space was required to minimise the financial impact on the Council. The MTFs was adjusted to remove rental income expectations included in the business case as these were not likely to materialise. Since 2023/24, the Council has not included any income in the MTFs.</p>
--	--	---	--



			<p>Following a procurement exercise with engagement with serviced office providers, Watermoor Point was selected as the Council's partner with a Management Agreement.</p> <p>Estimates regarding net rental income will be developed and included in the revenue budget and MTFS.</p> <p>Take-up from tenants has initially been slow but Watermoor Point have reported a sharp increase in January. There are now nine tenants in place, there are 8 contracts out for signature, and there are 23 potential tenants for whom Watermoor Point is preparing quotes or providing information. There were 3 viewings last week.</p> <p>The open-plan atrium space is still largely unoccupied, but it is hoped as more tenants sign up and the space becomes busier and has more atmosphere, this will then attract even more tenants.</p>
4	<p>Cllr Gina Blomefield to Cllr Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning</p>	<p>There are reports from elsewhere in the Country of developers struggling to secure viable bids from housing associations to fulfil the social and affordable housing which developers are obliged to deliver under planning agreements with local authorities.</p> <p>This has the potential to delay</p>	<p>There is a broader issue within the housing market, where developers and Registered Providers (RPs) are facing challenges in agreeing on terms for the transfer of Affordable Housing. Several factors contribute to this, including financial viability concerns, competing demands on RP budgets, and the need for early involvement in projects. However, to date, this has not been a significant problem in the Cotswold District. The council is actively taking steps to manage and mitigate any potential risks.</p>



		<p>developments or alter the balance of planned housing projects, posing a significant barrier to meeting local authority targets.</p> <p>Are you aware of any similar problems in the Cotswolds and how much of a concern could this be given the likely increase in development in the coming years?</p>	<p>To address this, the council's Strategic Housing Manager has introduced a Housing Delivery Phase monitoring process. This allows for close monitoring of developments once they have planning approval and are under construction. The aim is to foster early engagement between developers and RPs, which helps reduce the risk of delays or issues with securing bids for affordable housing.</p> <p>In addition, the Strategic Housing Manager has proactively engaged with RPs operating in the Cotswolds, emphasising the expectation that they will be active in taking on S106 Affordable Housing from developers. This ensures that RPs are prepared to fulfil their obligations as partners in these projects.</p> <p>While this issue remains a concern across the country, the risk in the Cotswolds is being carefully monitored, and the council continues to work closely with all stakeholders to ensure housing targets are met. This issue will be kept under active review by officers as development activity increases in the coming years.</p>
5	<p>Cllr Theyer to Cllr Tristan Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment</p>	<p>5 months after the re-zoning of rounds caused huge disruption to waste collections across the district, there are still an unacceptable number of missed collections in Sandywell Ward and across the district. Why,</p>	<p>I apologise to residents who continue to experience disruptions to their waste collections due to the re-zoning process.</p> <p>Since the re-zoning, collections in Sandywell Ward and across the district have shown significant improvement. In October, there were 829 missed</p>



		<p>after such a significant time, is this impact still being felt?</p>	<p>collections, but this number dropped to 243 in November and 355 in December.</p> <p>Currently, Sandywell Ward has an impressive collection success rate of 99.2%, and the district as a whole is performing even better with a 99.98% success rate.</p> <p>While recent severe weather conditions, including flooding and icy roads, have led to some unavoidable service interruptions, we are committed to resolving missed collections as quickly as possible. In fact, 80% of missed collections are rectified within 48 hours.</p> <p>I understand that this situation remains frustrating for some, and I appreciate their patience. Please be assured that we are continuing to work hard to minimise disruptions, and we are confident that the trend towards fewer missed collections will continue in the coming months.</p>
6	<p>Cllr Corps to Cllr Tristan Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment</p>	<p>When new housing developments are first built, developers often hand over the maintenance of public areas and assets, such as dog waste bins, to a resident's management company.</p> <p>Over time, as these developments become established, local authorities—such as the County Council for highways and the District</p>	<p>Under the previous Government, the responsibility for maintaining public spaces in new housing developments was often transferred to residents' management companies rather than local authorities. Dog waste bins, in particular, are not directly regulated through the planning system.</p> <p>From a planning perspective, if the open spaces in a new development are managed by a private management company, it is that company's responsibility to provide, empty, and maintain dog waste bins within the development.</p>



		<p>Council for public waste management— generally adopt responsibility for these assets.</p> <p>Given the huge numbers of new housing CDC is planning for the district, and the inevitable rise in demand for dog waste bins on public footways, what steps has Cotswold District Council taken to ensure it has the necessary resources in place to effectively manage both the current and anticipated increase in dog waste bins?</p>	<p>However, if there is an identified shortage of dog waste bins in public areas, funding from the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) could be used to address this issue.</p> <p>Cotswold District Council’s Waste Service is currently conducting a review of its street scene services, which includes assessing the provision of dog waste bins and their emptying frequency. This review will also incorporate the implementation of upgraded IT systems for residents and collection crews, which will enhance efficiency in reporting and routing. Additionally, the review will take future capacity needs into account.</p> <p>While dog waste bins are a relatively small component of the overall waste management service, the anticipated increase in bins is expected to have a minimal impact on resources. Over time, as new developments become fully established, local authorities, such as the County Council (responsible for highways) and the District Council (responsible for waste management), will typically assume responsibility for these assets.</p> <p>This proactive approach ensures that both current and future needs for dog waste management are effectively addressed.</p>
--	--	--	--

This page is intentionally left blank