



Supplement for

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2025

Agenda Item No 7 Member Questions

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Member Questions for Council – 26 November 2025

#	Questioner	Question	Response
1	Cllr Julia Judd to Cllr Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning	CDC is currently recruiting Enforcement Officers. There seems to be an ongoing issue with recruitment and retention of staff in this department. In January 2023, Cllr Stephen Andrews put forward the motion “Armed Forces Covenant Re-Endorsement”, which I seconded and used the opportunity to talk about The Veteran’s Gateway. The Veterans Gateway offers information, advice and support for army veterans and their families. They are the first point of contact for army veteran welfare needs including employability and ongoing opportunities. If training is needed, this can be funded by The Forces Employment Charity. I liaised with both organisations who responded enthusiastically to my suggestion that an Enforcement Officer role would be a great fit for army veterans, as it is for ex-Police, as there are many transferable skills. I liaised with Planning Services Management and shared the information and contact details of both The Veterans Gateway and The Forces Employment Charity. As CDC is in the process of recruiting an Enforcement Officer, has this line of enquiry been pursued?	The Planning Team is currently preparing advertisements for several roles within the Enforcement Team. As part of our recruitment campaign, we intend to promote these opportunities through The Veteran Gateway. At present, recruitment is focused on an administrative position within the Enforcement Team. Officer roles will be advertised later in the municipal year, with the first expected to go live in the next 1-2 weeks.



2	Cllr Laura Hall-Wilson to Cllr Paul Hodgkinson, Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience	I am a frequent user of the pool at Cirencester Leisure Centre and along with many of my contemporaries with young families, we have become concerned at the lack of managerial oversight of some of the younger members of staff at the centre, culminating recently in a physical altercation between two members of staff at the side of the pool during the children's swimming lessons. I am sure you will agree that it is completely unacceptable. In the lead up to this event, there have been several Sundays where lifeguards are overwhelmed by too many children and families trying to join the warmer teaching pool, having been allowed to pay and enter the pool through reception and on many occasions, the pool is simply too cold for babies to be in there for any length of time. The level of cleanliness in the wet changing areas often falls below an acceptable standard, there needs to be more proactive cleaning during the time the pool is open. Given Cirencester is the largest centre in the district this does not reflect well on this service and presumably these issues are also prevalent at other centres.	I confirm I'm aware of the event referred to, but I'm sure members will understand that this is an issue for Freedom Leisure to deal with through their own HR procedures, rather than discuss in any detail in public forum. In terms of the concerns raised about the operation of the centre, Freedom Leisure heat the pools to the industry standard, enforced by our contract. The learning pool is heated to 30 degrees, with the main pool at 29 degrees. Since April, Freedom Leisure have received 28 comments about the pool provision through their comments procedure, across the three Cotswold sites. Only one mentions pool temperature. Freedom Leisure, advises they have only received one comment about cleanliness in the changing village since April. The Cirencester Leisure Centre has a high footfall, which has increased in year. While this high use is absolutely something to celebrate, it does mean at peak times a lot of people are using the facilities. Earlier this year, Freedom Leisure increased their cleaning hours to seek to respond to this.



		Please can you confirm you are aware of these issues, and confirm what actions you will take to address them?	As Cabinet Member I meet regularly with officers and with Freedom Leisure's contract lead to oversee this contract. I offer the assurance that Council staff will continue to monitor the contract to ensure Freedom Leisure adhere to the standards our contract specifies, and the standards residents can expect. To that end, we have recruited a Leisure and Culture Support Officer, to add to the capacity of the team in fulfilling this task.
3	Cllr Tom Stowe to Leader of the Council Mike Every	Following an investigation carried out by the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit a report was presented to Audit and Governance Committee in September which highlighted significant issues and irregularities regarding CDC procurement processes. The report refers to both an "Officer" and a "Councillor" and their role in 3 specific procurement exercises and confirms there have been clear breaches of procurement rules which are specifically designed to protect public money, ensure good value for money, prevent fraud and corruption and aid transparency and fairness for businesses supplying the council. "Section 4" of the report details the findings on the procurement exercise surrounding "Company B" and a	Cllr Joe Harris has made a statement this week, which identifies himself as the councillor referred to in the report to Audit and Governance Committee. He has referred himself to the Monitoring Officer so that she can investigate whether he has broken the Member Code of Conduct and has pledged to publish the results of her investigation. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on a live standards investigation, but I refer Members to Cllr Joe Harris's statement where he says 'I do not believe I have done anything wrong.'



	review of the Council's brand identity and design guidelines. The findings of this internal investigation confirm that an unnamed Councillor "recommended" a company to be targeted to carry out this work, implying clear favouritism towards this business. This 'mystery' Councillor was clearly deeply involved in this procurement process. The report goes on to highlight several other serious concerns regarding this and other procurement processes. You have previously publicly refused to identify the mystery Councillor referred to in the report. From the evidence provided, there seems to be clear evidence of multiple breaches of the CDC Councillor's Code of Conduct by this mystery Councillor, as follows:- "Rules of conduct 7 – (5) Do not use your position improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage Rules of conduct 7 – (6) Do not do anything which compromises, or is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Authority. Rules of conduct 7 –(9) Do promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post by leadership and example.	
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	Rules of conduct 7 – (10) Do not behave in a manner which brings your role or the Authority into disrepute. Rules of conduct 7 – (15) When making decisions on behalf of, or as part of, the Authority: Do ensure that decisions are made on merit, particularly when making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.” CDC officers are refusing to pursue a formal code of conduct complaint lodged by the Conservative Group as we are unable to name the mystery Councillor in our complaint. Given the severity of the issues highlighted in this report, it is undeniably in the public interest to disclose the identity of this ‘mystery’ Councillor and that they are held accountable. Continuing to “cover-up” and withhold the identity of this Councillor is causing reputational damage to CDC as well as casting a cloud over other elected members, as the Public continues to speculate over the identity of the Councillor concerned. There are a number of serious potential implications arising from this report, including reputational damage, legal challenges from suppliers who have been treated unfairly, financial risk from litigation, breach of governance and accountability and the potential for corruption.	
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4	Cllr David Fowles to Cabinet Member for Environment and Regulatory Services, Andrea Pellegram	At a previous Council meeting, I asked you a member question regarding the removal of all the public litter bins at the lay-bys on the public highways and whether this decision was the right one. I requested that a review be carried out into not only the cost saving but also the fact that litter continues to be left in lay-bys and is blown across neighbouring fields, which is both unsightly as well as a hazard to animals. Please can you update me on the progress of this review?	Wheelie bins in laybys that were being repeatedly stolen or vandalised were removed and not replaced due to cost implications. Most bins in laybys are scheduled to be cleared and litter picked once a week, while there are a handful of layby bins which are emptied twice a week. There is some flytipping around and overflowing from the bins that remain, mainly in the summer, but this is dealt with by officers in the normal way. I am continuing to work with officers on a wider review of our street cleansing service as we seek to make the savings identified in the 2025/26 budget.
5	Cllr Len Wilkins to Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and	Bourton on the Water and other market towns in the District are suffering from many properties being turned into Air B&B and other holiday let units, this is contributing to our young people being unable to stay	We are very aware of this issue and the challenges it creates for local people, particularly younger residents who wish to remain in their communities.



	Planning, Juliet Layton	in the village. Can CDC take any action to control this as part of the local plan review?	The Council is taking steps to respond: • Through the Local Plan review, we are allocating sites for new housing to help meet local needs and reduce the pressure caused by holiday lets and second homes. • We have responded to the Government's consultation on short-term lets to advance the position of the District and push for stronger national controls. However, it is important to note that this issue is largely beyond the control of the Local Plan alone. Significant progress requires changes to national planning policy. The Government has consulted on introducing a new Use Class for short-term lets and a national registration scheme, but no national policy changes have yet been implemented. Once these changes are made to national policy, we can explore policies such as requiring planning permission for changes of use to short-term let accommodation. Short-term lets, holiday homes, and second home ownership all raise similar concerns, and the Council has considered a broader suite of measures to address these issues, including Council Tax premiums and other tools once national legislation allows.
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			We will continue to press for national reforms while using the Local Plan to prioritise housing for local needs and sustainable communities.
6	Cllr Gina Blomefield to Leader of the Council Mike Every.	I was delighted to receive the CDC organogram in August showing the structure of the council following Phase 2 of the Publica transition, this has been enormously helpful. At the time there were a number of vacancies showing, please could you confirm the current number of employment vacancies at Cotswold District Council and confirm whether there is a policy on how to deal with vacancies which remain unfilled?	The current number of employment vacancies at Cotswold District Council is 9. As reported in the Q1 budget monitoring report, Oversight of the Vacancy Management process has been strengthened by the Corporate Leadership Team ("CLT"), with CLT authorisation required to fill a vacancy, either on a short-term or long-term basis. CLT has also reviewed the process for assessing requests for additional resources to ensure a single and consistent approach is taken to the development and appraisal of proposals and business cases. This approach by CLT has resulted in the removal of a number of vacancies. Currently, 4 vacancies will be subject to restructures, 3 vacancies are being actively recruited to, and 2 are awaiting advertising. Some vacancies are being covered by agency staff whilst we recruit to them.



7	Cllr Tony Slater to Leader of the Council Mike Every	Now that Publica Phase 2 transition is complete and we look forward to the impending Local Government Reorganisation, please can you confirm that CDC maintains a comprehensive Asset Risk Register. Please confirm how often it is updated, monitored and reviewed. Please confirm who carries out this work and who is ultimately responsible?	I can confirm that a comprehensive list of all the Council's assets is available on the Council's website: https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/land-and-property-assets/ The assets are regularly inspected for general condition and statutory compliance. Following the Phase 2 transition, increased focus is being given to compliance monitoring, and this will be a priority component of LGR Baselining in the run up to Vesting Day. This work is carried out by the CDC Property & Assets team. At the recent Parish and Town Council forums I made make attendees aware of the assets list and invited parish and town councils to have a conversation with us about assets in their area.
8	Cllr David Fowles to Cabinet Member for Health, Culture and Visitor Experience, Paul Hodgkinson	As a senior Portfolio Holder of this administration and a longstanding and well-respected elected member, please could you confirm what involvement you have previously had in procurement exercises on behalf of this Council? Could you confirm what training you received regarding procurement rules and processes?	I have not had any involvement in procurement exercises on behalf of this Council. As regards training, I have received training on procurement from GCC in my role as a Cabinet member there. Training at GCC covered: Decision Making a. Principles of decision making



			b. Who can take decisions c. Rules for key decisions d. Duty to consult e. Equalities: Showing Due Regard f. Other considerations g. How Cabinet a report is developed, assured and signed off h. The Cabinet Meeting Budget & Policy Framework • What documents comprise the Budget & Policy Framework • Roles, Responsibilities and Requirements for developing policies within the framework • The role and purpose of the Council Strategy • Developing a new Council Strategy Managing Information • Principles and legislation governing access to information • How those apply to Cabinet members / Scrutiny / individual councillors / the public • How to make sure data is used appropriately • What happens if we get it wrong
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			There has also been a general Cabinet briefing on Procurement, with a focus on improving process and compliance .
9	CLlr Dilys Neill to Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation, Tristan Wilkinson	I have been approached by several private hire vehicle drivers in my ward who are concerned about the proliferation of vehicles from outside the district who are working in the area. There has been a particular expansion in the number of drivers who are working via Uber. Kevin Dunford has been very kind in explaining that there is a loophole which allows drivers who have personal, vehicle & operators licences with another district to work across district boundaries. This is causing concern among local residents as well as drivers. Firstly, it is clear that these drivers do not know the locality and even with the use of SatNavs, they can't always find the destination. Secondly, there is concern that the vehicles may be used for cross border criminal activities. Thirdly, the livelihood of drivers licenced to Cotswold District is threatened. Is there anything which CDC can do to support our local drivers? The situation is likely to get worse with the advent of robot taxis.	The points below explain the current position of the Council regarding Uber and any other Private Hire Operator. Under current UK legislation, private hire drivers may operate outside the district where they are licensed, provided they comply with the following conditions: • Triple Licensing Rule: The driver, vehicle, and operator must all be licensed by the same authority. • Pre-Booked Journeys: All jobs must be booked in advance through an operator (e.g., the Uber app). This means a driver licensed in one district can legally undertake journeys in another district as long as these requirements are met. Traditional taxi (hackney carriage) drivers are restricted to their licensed area for street hails and rank work. Private hire drivers, including Uber drivers, only undertake pre-booked jobs, which allows them to operate more widely under current law.



			The Department for Transport is currently reviewing these rules to address concerns about cross-border hiring and to strengthen local control. As a regulatory authority, the licensing team must remain impartial and uphold the principles of fairness and equality. Promoting or endorsing a specific operator would: • Undermine public trust in the licensing process. • Create an unfair advantage for one business over competitors. • Conflict with the departments statutory duty to regulate, not market, licensed services. Their role is to apply the law consistently, ensure compliance, and protect public safety—not to influence consumer choice or business success. The Economic Development Team has reached out to the lead private hire driver and arranged to meet with them to discuss the merits of an online/app booking system.
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