

## **Member Questions - Full Council 14 July 2021**

### **Question from Cllr Tony Berry to Cllr Joe Harris.**

At the Council Meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2021, I put forward a motion (seconded by Cllr J Judd) regarding additional funds to combat fly-tipping which was referred to Cabinet. Six months on I have not received any notification of the results of this referral, please could you advise me of the outcome.

### **Response from Cllr Joe Harris**

Since January, the Clean and Green Cotswold Programme has been established and an Officer team is being put in place.

Fly-tipping is within the scope of the Clean and Green Programme and I will ensure that Officers consider the motion and bring a report to the Cabinet meeting in September and apologise for the delay in bringing this to cabinet.

**Question from Cllr Tony Berry to Cllr. Andrew Doherty.**

I have recently had several complaints about missed green bin collections, and I understand that my colleagues have also received numerous complaints.

Please could you explain what problem(s) led to this and what we are doing to ensure that it is a hiccup and unlikely to re-occur.

**Response from Cllr Andrew Doherty**

There is currently a national shortage of LGV drivers and so recognising the issues that might cause for the contract, the Council took steps this year with Ubico to increase their establishment, so that they had a small pool of resource to use, to cover sickness and holidays. This would mean that they wouldn't have to rely on staff from an agency however, there is still a gap in those resources and they are advertising vacancies at the moment to try and fill them.

This shortage of drivers combined with the significant increase in garden waste material as a result of the wet and warm weather has meant that there are 2 collection days out of the 10 day cycle, where the crews are struggling to make all of the collections within the time available. Any customers who are missed on their scheduled collection day are being prioritised and collected first thing in the morning on the following day. As the garden waste volumes reduce (as they always do during the summer between the two growth cycles), and the additional drivers are recruited to fill the establishment, then this issue should be mitigated.

### **Question from Cllr Richard Morgan to Cllr Lisa Spivey**

At the last full council meeting on 17 March 2021, you listed extra items which will be added to the 14 new houses in Sunground, Avening.

As you can see from the recording of this meeting (3hours 4 minutes into the recording) you listed the following items.

- Air source for heating and hot water.
- Provision for future electric vehicle charging points.
- Bat, swift and hedgehog boxes.
- Water Butts.
- Secure cycle storage.
- Provision of broadband infrastructure.
- Option for solar panels

At the meeting I welcomed these items, but also proposed the council went further and added an additional £40,000 to ensure further bolt-on items could be delivered and to ensure the rainwater harvesting and solar panels would be delivered as opposed to being an option.

In response you replied “We can do that with the money we have already put forward” (3 hours 20 minutes into the recording of the meeting.)

There were further assurances from the officer (3 hours 23 minutes) that within the £400,000 we can afford air source heat pumps, electric car charging points, solar panels and rainwater harvesting for all the properties.

As a result of this clarification, I withdrew my amendment.

In the interest of absolute clarity, can you please answer this question in writing to confirm that the 14 new houses in Avening will be equipped with

- Air source for heating and hot water (installed and working)
- Electric vehicle charging points (installed and working)
- Bat, swift and hedgehog boxes.
- Rainwater harvesting (installed and working)
- Secure cycle storage.
- Provision of broadband.
- Solar panels (installed and working)

### **Response from Cllr Lisa Spivey**

Both Bromford Housing Association and the Council are committed to delivering affordable housing which is low carbon, enhances local ecology and provides a great place for local people to live. Bromford Housing Association have provided assurance that these measures will be installed. The provision of these items is a condition of the Councils grant funding which will support this housing scheme. The Council will be monitoring this both during the

construction of the units and upon completion. Please note rainwater harvesting refers to water butts which will be installed at each property.

**Question from Cllr Ray Theodoulou to Cllr Joe Harris.**

In a letter dated 11 May replying to a complaint from a local Quenington resident, Ms Claire Hughes, Business Manager Corporate Responsibility concluded inter alia that the Chair of Planning, Cllr J. Layton should receive training on the Planning Process.

Since that proposal was made Cllr Layton has been promoted and is now the Cabinet Member responsible for inter alia, planning. Can the Leader confirm that Cllr Layton undertook the recommended planning training prior to her appointment to the Cabinet?

**Response from Cllr Joe Harris**

Cllr Layton is a highly experienced member of this Council particularly pertaining to issues relating to planning. She sat on the planning committee for 10 years and chaired the committee for two of them.

As I understand it, Cllr Layton undertook LGA training in 2019 to assist her in her new role as chair of the planning committee and has had three Planning Advisory Service training sessions in the past year.

Both Cllr Layton and I only became aware of Claire Hughes' letter last week.

I'll leave it to Cllr Layton to decide as to whether she requires further training but I'm happy that her experience and depth of knowledge when it comes to planning equips her perfectly for the cabinet member role she now holds.

### **Question from Councillor Julia Judd to Cllr Joe Harris**

At the Council Meeting of 24 February this year, Cllr Julia Judd presented a motion to create a Cotswold District Council Award Scheme, seconded by Cllr Andrew MacLean. At the time the leader denied the motion a full Council vote saying that it will be put to Cabinet for consideration.

Four cabinet meetings have come and gone since 24 February 2021. This motion is entirely supportive of the Council's Climate Emergency declaration, yet the cabinet has been dilatory in considering this motion. Could the leader explain why the motion has not yet been presented to the Cabinet for discussion and commit to including it on the next cabinet agenda?

### **Response from Cllr Joe Harris**

At Council on 26th May 2021, Councillor Dilys Neill was elected as Chair of the Council.

She advised the Council that the former Council Chair's Awards would be re-starting and would combine with a Covid-19 awards scheme to recognise the contribution made by the District's residents during the pandemic. A cross party working group will be established shortly to take this matter forward and a report will be presented and considered by the Cabinet in September, setting out more about how the award process could operate and potential nomination categories.

**Question from Cllr Richard Norris to Cllr Andrew Doherty.**

Can you please clarify/confirm the acceptable criteria for the blue bag cardboard collection

**Response from Cllr Andrew Doherty**

The Council explains what types of cardboard are accepted on its website, together with the other materials which are collected for recycling - <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/what-to-put-in-your-bin/recycling-black-box-white-and-blue-bag/>

The cardboard bag must be presented with the lid closed in order for it to be collected. This is to ensure that the contents don't get blown out of it while it's waiting to be collected, but also so that the capacity on the collection vehicles can be effectively managed and so that all properties on the collection round are able to receive a collection. We are not able to take additional cardboard which is placed by the side of the blue bag, because of the risk of the collection crew not being unable to complete the round.

### **Question from Cllr Stephen Andrews to Cllr Dilys Neill, Chair of the Council**

Section 6 of the current procedure rules of the Council require that:

The Interim Chief Executive will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. At least five clear days before a meeting, the Interim Chief Executive will send a summons signed by him or her to every Member of the Council or leave it at their usual place of residence. The summons will give the date, time and place of the meeting and specify the business to be transacted, and will be accompanied by such reports as are available.

In the case of this meeting, some 200 pages were distributed to members with the agenda. A further some 200 pages were distributed only two full working days before the meeting. At the time of writing, a possibly important Annex to Item 7 has still not been distributed.

This situation is intolerable, as it allows little or no time for Members of this Council to properly scrutinise, investigate and draw a reasoned opinion on the matters raised in the meeting.

This set of circumstances is also contrary to the Constitution of this Council, in particular Section D3 - Access to Information Procedure Rules, which clearly state that all reports must be available at least 5 days before the meeting (para. 5.1) with the only exception being if an item is added to the agenda (para.5.2).

Would she agree with me that Councillors have not received papers in time for this meeting to allow them sufficient opportunity to fully understand the complexity of the issues laid before them and agree with me that this is a wholly unreasonable and unworkable state of affairs. Under these circumstances, will she rule that late papers should be ruled as inadmissible such that they can not therefore be discussed or decided upon and the related agenda item should be deterred.

### **Response from Cllr Dilys Neil**

Thank you for your question Cllr Andrews.

Firstly I am sympathetic to your concern about the amount of paperwork to be read in a short time, but this is by no means unique to this meeting.

Cotswold is an ambitious Council and there is a lot of business to transact.

The Council Procedure Rules, which are part D1 of the Constitution, does permit reports to be circulated after the summons for this meeting. This might be an area, the Constitution Working Group, which I understand you are a member of, reviews at one of its future meetings.

I'd like to clarify that the additional 200 pages were distributed by email very late on the evening of Thursday 8 July. Appreciating that most members wouldn't have seen their

emails until the following morning, but that did provide the opportunity on Friday, Monday, Tuesday and today to read through the documents . However, the distribution of the missing annex to agenda item 7 wasn't distributed until yesterday afternoon for which I'd like to apologise.

The Constitution Working Group were consulted on earlier drafts of these documents at their meeting on 2 July. I understand from officers, that this group, including yourself, have made several useful suggestions which have been incorporated into the documents we are considering later on today's agenda.

For that reason, I will not rule that these papers are inadmissible

**Question from Cllr David Cunningham to Cllr Andrew Doherty**

"This Council notes that following the floods of December 2020, the village of Bledington was, in terms of properties impacted, the worst affected settlement in the entire Cotswold District. The Cabinet member for Environment is fully aware of the situation and has been working closely with the Parish Council, via its Flood Working Group, to instigate measures aimed at constructing a comprehensive flood protection scheme. I would like to note that the Cabinet Member has been instrumental in bringing together various elements for this program and the residents of Bledington have praised his commitment and level of engagement.

In recent days it has been brought to the attention of the Flood Working Group that funding is a potential issue in delivering these much-needed flood alleviation works and that this may lead to the main component of the defences not being constructed before the winter. This potentially leaves the residents of Bledington exposed to the misery of more flooding, more damage to their homes and more upset.

Given that this Council has made a commitment to helping those affected by the Climate Emergency and specifically the dangers of flooding, via schemes such as Flood Wardens etc, will the Cabinet Member for Environment put aside emergency funds to deliver the project before the winter to avoid further catastrophe for residents in flood prone areas?"

**Response from Cllr Andrew Doherty**

To be provided verbally at the meeting

### **Question from Cllr Stephen Andrews to Cllr Andrew Doherty**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021 the Government completed its consultation on the Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England. In seeking to gather views on how the Environment Bill powers should be used and how these policies should be implemented, including the use of statutory and non-statutory guidance, in order to ensure efficient comprehensive and frequent waste collections across the whole of England. The consultation recognises that an important part of increased efficiency will be the rationalisation of different waste streams across the different Waste Collection Authorities.

Not only is waste collection one of the top two services that we provide, it is expensive. It is currently setup for kerbside recycling in a particular way. It might reasonably be expected that any change that has to be made will come at some change to service delivery and at some cost.

Given the importance of this service to this Council and to its residents, has this Council submitted a response to this consultation? If so, what was the major concern that was identified across the areas being consulted on?

Will the Council response to that consultation be made available to all Members?

### **Response from Cllr Andrew Doherty**

To be provided verbally at the meeting