

Member Questions for Council - 16th November 2022

Question	Response
<p>Question from Councillor Claire Bloomer to Councillor Joe Harris, The Leader of the Council</p> <p>I am concerned about the spread of graffiti in our towns and the increasing effort and cost to clean it up. Has the Council considered using community payback by offenders to clean up areas blighted by graffiti thereby saving both officer time and council funds?</p>	<p>This is a great idea and one I hope we can make a reality.</p> <p>Officers have approached the Gloucestershire Community Offending Team who undertake such projects within the county to ask whether there are teams that carry out the removal of graffiti as part of restorative justice.</p> <p>Officers are still awaiting a response and will update me once a response is received.</p>
<p>Question from Councillor Claire Bloomer to Councillor Joe Harris, The Leader of the Council</p> <p>We have recently seen more cuts to bus services in the Cotswolds. These cuts will have a huge impact on residents who rely on them to get to work, to the shops, for medical appointments and to see friends and family. What can the Council do to help residents whose bus services are being withdrawn?</p>	<p>Gloucestershire County Council are responsible for bus services in our area but the District Council will always do what it can to try and help improve the situation with the very limited resources we have.</p> <p>Firstly, it's worth noting that bus services in Gloucestershire have been decimated over the past decade due to cuts to bus subsidies. This has made it much harder for people to get around, particularly in rural areas.</p> <p>The current situation is in large part the result of the Government's austerity programme which has put the squeeze on local authority budgets over the past decade.</p> <p>More recently issues including a nationwide shortage of bus drivers and the forthcoming withdrawal of the Covid recovery grant (in March 2023) and the reluctance to return to bus use post-Covid, particularly amongst concessionary fare holders (only around 50% of whom have returned to regular bus use) have been the driving issues behind cuts to public transport services.</p> <p>In combination, these are having a severe effect on the ability of bus companies to reliably operate routes. I</p>

	<p>think we will see further cuts coming over the next few months.</p> <p>The District Council will continue to work with community transport providers such as Cotswold Friends in order to help target support to the most isolated and most vulnerable in our District.</p> <p>This is however not a long term solution to the lack of provision in public transport in our District and as a council we'll work proactively with Gloucestershire County Council, through our Sustainable Transport Manager, to try and improve access to public transport.</p> <p>It's worth noting that the Government's own net-zero targets won't be met without meaningful investment into public transport so we can only hope that this spurs them into action.</p> <p>Walking and cycling may be options for others, and we are working with the County Council to improve those infrastructure networks.</p>
<p>Question from Councillor Tony Berry to Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economy and Transformation</p> <p>I note that Cabinet has approved a sum of £125,000 for new car parking charge machines which have a higher speed for authorising card charges and don't accept cash. Given the inflationary challenges facing the Council, would this not be a good opportunity to save a not unsubstantial amount of money by retaining our existing machines and at the same time pleasing all those members of the public who still want to pay for their parking in cash?</p>	<p>There is a Capital Budget of £125,000 to replace the payment machines.</p> <p>Only £21,195 of this Capital fund will be utilised to change the remaining machines, not yet converted, to card only payment and upgrade all machines with the latest technology. This will allow card payments to be made off-line which will increase the speed of payment and reduce waiting times.</p> <p>One of the Council's priorities is to make all its car parks cashless. The removal of cash enabled machines will significantly reduce the amount of travelling required for the cash collector contractor and therefore will reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p>Residents will still be able to pay by credit or debit card or by using Apple or Google Pay at all parking machines or by using the PayByPhone mobile app.</p> <p>I note that Conservative-run Gloucestershire County</p>

	Council has recently transitioned to cashless car parking machines.
<p>Question from Councillor Tony Berry to Councillor Joe Harris, The Leader of the Council</p> <p>Please could you tell us how many old road signs you sold at the recent auction and the amount received for them net of commission?</p>	<p>The Council is looking at a number of ways of selling old street signs. We're doing this to inform how we'll sell the rest.</p> <p>As a first step we recently used a local auction house where 10 signs were put up for auction, all were sold generating a small income of £18.70 after commission and VAT. I think we can do much better by targeting how we sell the signs and I think it unlikely we'll use an auction again.</p> <p>To date we have had 52 enquiries, which we are following up and hope to make substantially more than we achieved at auction.</p>
<p>Question from Councillor Stephen Andrews to Councillor Joe Harris, The Leader of the Council</p> <p>In September 2020 the Council approved its first Recovery Investment Strategy to provide critical support to the key priorities in the Corporate Plan 2020-2024. This was re-approved more recently in July of this year to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan to 2020-2024. At the same time, there was no analysis of the financial risks within the strategy that might impact upon the delivery of key Corporate Plan outcomes and there was no prioritisation within the Corporate Plan of those outcomes.</p> <p>Given the stated intent to rescind the Recovery Investment Strategy, which outcomes within the Corporate Plan is it proposed to scale back or will no longer be delivered?</p>	<p>We're not planning to scale back or cancel any of the outcomes in our Corporate Plan although they may now take longer for us to achieve due to the expected recession and tightening of the public finances.</p> <p>The months of political uncertainty in Government and the effects of the disastrous mini-budget have made these impacts much worse than they might have been had we been governed by a stable fiscally-responsible government throughout 2022.</p>
<p>Question from Councillor Julia Judd to Councillor Andrew Doherty, Cabinet Member</p>	<p>Reported Fly tip incidents cases April to March 2019 528</p>

<p>for Environment, Waste and Recycling</p> <p>We were told earlier this year that instances of green waste fly tipping have greatly increased. Please could we be told by what percentage (ideally since 2019 or from whenever there are recent records) and how much it has cost the council to collect green waste fly tipping?</p>	<p>2020 914 2021 1107 2022 534 (To end of Q2)</p> <p>Reported Green waste cases April to March 2019 23 2020 55 2021 30 2022 15 (To end of Q2)</p> <p>Green waste % of total incidents 2019 4.36% 2020 6.02% 2021 2.71% 2022 2.81% (To end of Q2)</p> <p>Officers are still awaiting a response from Ubico for the cost to clear green waste and will update Cllr Judd once a response is received.</p>
<p>Question to Councillor Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for the Economy and Transformation, from Councillor Tom Stowe</p> <p>Following the news of the Cabinet's u-turn and its decision to rescind the planned £75,000,000 Recovery Investment Strategy. Can the Cabinet Member please confirm the sunk costs incurred by the council in relation to developing these now abandoned plans over the last 3 years, including Consultancy fees, Officer's time and any other associated costs.</p>	<p>The costs incurred to date on schemes that will not progress and therefore regarded as 'sunk' are around £50,000 made up of procurement and technical advice, tax advice and funding advice. Some of this advice is not specific to the Recovery Investment Strategy and will help inform more general capital programme activities in the future. The nature of these schemes is such that there were always anticipated to be sunk costs on schemes that did not go ahead.</p> <p>The Council allocated £350,000 from its Priorities Fund to support its work in this area of which £152,175 remains unused. £87,512 was used to finance the 'Economic Development Lead' and 'Affordable Housing Programme Manager' posts in 2020/21 and 2021/22.</p>
<p>Question to Councillor Jenny Forde, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, from Councillor Ray Theodoulou.</p>	<p>The Council is currently undertaking a procurement exercise and inviting contractors to tender to operate the authority's leisure and cultural services in Cirencester, Chipping Campden and Bourton on the Water.</p>

Is the administration planning to increase the cost to the public of any leisure facilities?

There are currently no plans to increase costs to the public.