

Wiltshire Council

Council

12 July 2011

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF OSBORN
TROWBRIDGE GROVE DIVISION

TO COUNCILLOR DICK TONGE
CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Question 1

Please can I be informed as to the revenue obtained from the Bradford Road, Trowbridge and the Church Street, Trowbridge car parks since the new charging regime was introduced?

For the sake of comparison can the revenue for the same period last year please be indicated?

I appreciate that previously there was no charge for the Bradford Road car park.

Also can I please be told the total cost of installing from scratch the electric ticket machine?

Response

<u>2010/2011</u>	<u>Apr – June</u>
Bradford Rd	£1099.00
Church St	£6189.00

<u>2009/2010</u>	<u>Apr - June</u>
Bradford Rd	£Nil
Church St	£7520.00

Machine Installation Costs

Ticket machines,

£2950.00 Metric

£401.08 SSE Connection

Signage,

£50 Groundworks for Signage Poles

£82.50 Signage Poles

£6926.00 Global total (West) Signage Trowbridge not specifically identified separately.

Notices in the press, etc,

£2649.98 Global total for press notices, Trowbridge not specifically identified separately.

TO COUNCILLOR TOBY STURGIS
CABINET MEMBER FOR WASTE, PROPERTY, ENVIRONMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL SERVICES

Question 2

A number of my constituents have contacted me regarding the new procedure for disposing of "medical sharps" such as diabetic needles.

Previously you had a yellow plastic container issued by the GP surgery. Once this was full of sharps, you returned it to the surgery for disposal.

Now, you still are issued with the yellow container but once it is full you are given a Wiltshire Councillor telephone number to ring and arrangements are then made to collect the container.

Apparently a person is employed by the Council to drive all over the county collecting these containers. Then they are all taken to Cornwall for disposal.

Please confirm that the above is the current procedure.

When and why did this change?

What are the respective costs involved between the two procedures.

Is there not a security/safety issue in asking people to leave a container of sharps on their doorstep waiting for collection?

Should not a communication exercise be implemented to fully explain to those members of the public precisely what is involved?

Finally, can the personnel at the other end of the said telephone number be made fully aware of the procedure? Some of my constituents reported that they found the said personnel extremely unhelpful and unable to answer pertinent questions.

Response

The procedure described by Cllr Jeff Osborn is correct, except that the waste is currently taken to Hestridge in Somerset for waste transfer/disposal.

The council was advised in 2007/08 by local GP surgeries and pharmacies that they had negotiated new General Practitioner contracts and previous well-established system whereby patients took their used "sharps" back to their local pharmacy or GP

would cease with immediate effect, as they had concluded (with no prior consultation with the local authority) that this was a service that we should provide as Clinical waste falls under Schedule 2 of the Controlled Waste Regulations 1992 (clinical waste from households is defined as "a household waste for which a charge for collection may be made". At very short notice the then Wiltshire District Councils worked to extend the small number of other household clinical waste collections it undertook in order to accommodate this new service need. At no point have charges been directed to the user, although the authority has the opportunity to do so. It was felt that, as Kennet District Council had adequately trained members of staff and vehicles already used for this purpose, they provided this service on behalf of the other Wiltshire districts prior to the creation of Wiltshire Council.

The previous arrangements, where diabetic patients returned their used sharps to their local GP or Pharmacy incurred zero cost to the local authority, as we had no involvement in the storage, collection or disposal of the waste. In terms of costs to the Council, we have seen increases in both collection and disposal costs. In respect of collection there is only a marginal difference, as the council's already provided clinical waste collections from some households in Wiltshire. The Council currently employ one driver, a vehicle and a part time officer and these resources remain unchanged from the old procedure to the new. The collection vehicle operates on a scheduled route around the County; the only change is that he makes more calls than was the case before the GP Practices changed their policy. This does incur an extra cost but this is a relatively minor increase because the majority of the mileage is to travel around his countywide route and the resources deployed remain the same. However, disposal costs will have increased as disposal is required to be either via Autoclave or incineration which typically costs in the region of £650 per tonne. It is also the case that the extra administration of this service also incurs additional cost to the authority. The service will shortly be reviewing this service in terms of a "lean systems" review, to see if this can be provided in a more efficient, and customer-focused manner.

We do not instruct customers where to leave the waste. We would prefer customers not to leave them on the doorstep as we recognise that this would not be the safest practice. Wherever possible we try to arrange collection by receiving the waste by hand from the resident or, if they are not at home, we might agree to collect from inside their front porch. If they are not at home on the scheduled collection day then we ask the customer where they intend to leave it for collection. However, the "sharps boxes" themselves are designed to rigorous EU-approved standards to ensure that the contents cannot be tampered with, once placed in the box, so actual risks of "needle-stick" injuries are minimal to anyone coming into contact with the box.

We are always interested to know how we can improve our communications. We are aware that customers receive information from their local chemist and GP Practice, we publish information on the Council's website and if customers phone Customer Services they will try to provide information. If Cllr Osborn has some ideas or suggestions on how we can improve our communications we would be pleased to receive them.

We are concerned by your advice that some of your constituents experienced some difficulty in receiving advice from our staff when they telephoned in to the Council. We will review the information provided to the relevant staff and identify any training needs. It is always our intention to be as helpful as possible and we try to continuously improve the service that we provide. We are very grateful therefore that these matters have been brought to our attention. To assist us in this it would be helpful if Cllr Osborn could contact his constituents to obtain more specific details of the occasions when they contacted the Council and experienced these difficulties.

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN KNIGHT
TROWBRIDGE CENTRAL DIVISION

TO COUNCILLOR DICK TONGE
CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Question 3

- a. Can the Cabinet member please advise me as to the revenue and number of users achieved by the Council since the implementation of the new off street parking order on 18th April 2012 up until week ending 25th June 2011?
- b. Can the Cabinet member also advise me as to the revenue and number of users achieved by the Council for the corresponding period during 2010?

Response

The occupancy figures are shown in **Appendix 1**, attached. Revenue figures will be provided to the end of June as soon as they are consolidated together with the corresponding figures for 2010. It is difficult to supply figures for part months.

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN OSBORN
TROWBRIDGE LAMBROKE DIVISION

TO COUNCILLOR LIONEL GRUNDY OBE
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Question 4

- a. Can it please be explained to councillors why the Wiltshire schools who opted to become academies remain members of Wiltshire Council's School Forum?
- b. As more Wiltshire Council schools become Academies will the governing bodies of these school be fully responsible for providing cover for teachers that are on 'long term' sick?

Response

- a. The Wiltshire Schools Forum is currently constituted with the following 'Schools' members:

Schools (13 representatives)	Nominated by:
4 x primary headteachers	PHF
3 x secondary headteachers	WASSH
1 x Special school headteacher	WASSH
1 x Academies Rep.	Academy Schools in Wiltshire
2 x primary governors	(see below)
1 x secondary governor	(see below)
1 x governor for special needs	(see below)

In accordance with good practice guidance, for each category of Schools Forum member there is where possible a nominating body, usually the relevant federation or association of teachers / governors. This arrangement is both fair and has proved durable over its years of operation. Of the head teachers above 2 are from schools which are or propose to become academies. Wiltshire wide it is expected that there may be 13 secondary schools, 1 special school and up to 5 primary schools who may have converted to academy status by the end of this academic year.

The December 2010 DfE guidance document "Schools Forums: Operational and Good Practice Guidance" states the following: "Whatever the membership structure of schools members on a forum, the important issue is that it should reflect most effectively the profile of schools across the authority to ensure that there is not an in-built bias towards any one phase or group"

Within Wiltshire we wish to work with the whole community of Wiltshire schools and continue to do this through Schools Forum and throughout the work of the Department.

As of July 2011 no concerns have been raised at meetings regarding Academy representation on the boards, but a report reviewing the Schools Forum membership and its constitution is already being prepared to be considered at the next meeting in October, in part to address the changing composition and status of many of Wiltshire Schools. This will clarify arrangements in a number of areas and ensure that the Forum complies with best practice. Any changes to the membership of the Schools Forum, its constitution and role, and its sub-groups will be considered at the October meeting.

Currently funding for academies is based on the local authority funding formula, albeit on a lagged basis, and therefore decisions made at Schools Forum do impact on both academies and mainstream schools. Any changes in the funding regime for academies or mainstream schools may lead to a change in the role of the Schools Forum and we would expect that this will be addressed by the DfE in the future consultation on schools funding.

N.B. There are also 4 positions for voting governor representatives on the forum, two for primary school governors, one for a secondary school governor and one for a governor from a special school. There are currently vacancies for the last two positions. The governor representation have previously been filled on the basis of historic arrangements and expressions of interest received, but with the development of the nascent Wiltshire Governor's Association and Wiltshire Special Schools governors Group, it is suggested that these groups become the nominating groups for the four positions in future.

- b. All schools, whether maintained or academy, are responsible for meeting the costs of cover for staff who are absent due to sickness. Schools are able to pay in to an insurance scheme managed by the Council to assist them in meeting these costs. This scheme is being offered to academies as well as maintained schools.

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR RICKY ROGERS
SALISBURY BEMERTON DIVISION

TO COUNCILLOR DICK TONGE
CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Question 5

Re-Design Works Junction of Roman Road/Pembroke Road Adjoining Wilton Road A36 Salisbury

- a. What is the total cost of the scheme to date?
- b. What is the estimated cost of the further proposed road markings?
- c. What criteria was applied for this scheme to become a priority when other local roads are in a disgraceful state?
- d. Why were four out of the five local schools excluded from any consultation on this scheme?
- e. How will the public concerns about this scheme be dealt with?

Response

- a. The construction cost of the scheme was £36,866. The design and supervision fee came to £24,260 although this did include some preliminary design work on another proposed cycle scheme in Salisbury (Around £5,000 of work). Therefore total cost was £61,126 minus the approx. £5k. The proposed waiting restrictions require a Traffic Regulation Order which will cost around £4,500.
- b. The cost of the road markings are included in (a) above.
- c. This scheme was prioritized because it formed part of the wider 'Connect 2' project aimed at providing a continuous cycle route through Salisbury (as part of National Cycle route 24). Pedestrian and cycling links between Bemerton Heath, the City Centre, and the Connect 2 route were felt to be particularly inadequate at this location. As part of the 'Safe Routes to School' initiative, the scheme also addressed pedestrian safety concerns as outlined by the parents and children of Lower Bemerton Primary School in their school travel plan. £150,000 was originally set-aside for cycling improvements on Churchfields Road. However, due to engineering complexity this project was postponed and the funding diverted to other cycling and walking projects around Salisbury (of which this was one).
- d. This location was highlighted by Lower Bemerton Primary School as a key pedestrian severance point on their journey to and from the school. We always try and involve all schools in consultations.
- e. To date the Council has received two complaints that centre on the availability of parking adjacent to the Best One Store and the impact on traffic flow around the pedestrian refuge. In response to this a waiting restrictions proposal has been formulated as mentioned in a. above. It is proposed to advertise the restrictions in October this year.

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR JON HUBBARD
MELKSHAM SOUTH DIVISION

TO COUNCILLOR JANE SCOTT OBE
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Question 6

- a. Does the Leader now recognise that the three core concerns raised in the NHS motion (*fragmentation of service, priority for private sector bidders and local governance*) which I proposed on 17 May have become central issues for the Government's response to the 'pause' in the NHS bill?
- b. Would the Leader not agree, in hindsight, that the Council would have better discharged its responsibilities to Wiltshire residents by conveying concerns on these key issues, rather than remaining silent?
- c. In the circumstances, and considering that the council had several more weeks in which to lodge any comments, was it not an error to say that the timing of the motion was wrong?

Response

Given the submission of previous motion on this matter, and the response given at Council on 17 May 2011 (page 21 of the main agenda pack refers), the previous response is reiterated.

Since the initial response on 17 May 2011, it has been agreed that the first Health and Wellbeing Board meeting will be held in September 2011. In addition the staff consultation process has started as part of the Section 75 transfer of the Public Health team from the PCT to Wiltshire Council.

Wiltshire is considered to be a leading authority both within the South West and nationally and remains committed to fulfilling our responsibilities as an early implementer.

Question 7

- a. What was the cost in each of the years 2009-10 and 2010-11 of additional work, taken on by the Council's external auditors, KPMG, beyond their originally agreed remit?
- b. What were the reasons for the additional work being contracted to KPMG?
- c. What are the expectations for 2011-12 for additional work to be undertaken by the council's external auditor, in terms of additional costs, and reasons?

Response

- a. For 2009/2010 KPMG charged the Council £27,950 additional fee due to carrying out additional work on the Council's financial statements) to obtain assurance that data was accurately and completely migrated from the previous Wiltshire County Council and District Council's financial systems into SAP. The audit fee for this year though was less overall than the previous Council's collective fees. There was also an additional fee of £3,619 to respond to questions and objections from local electors

The 2010/11 audit is currently in progress so the Council is yet to receive a final invoice for the year. KPMG have communicated that an additional fee is possible due to work to be carried out in respect of following up on Internal Audit but we and they are hopeful this can be managed within the overall fee as other controls have been actioned since 2009/10 thus incurring no additional charge for 2010/11.

- b. KPMG are appointed as the Council's external auditors by the Audit Commission. The Council does not have the authority to appoint it's own external auditors.
- c. At this stage it is not expected that there will be any additional audit work required for 2011/12. However this audit will not be finalised until September 2012.

TO COUNCILLOR LIONEL GRUNDY OBE **CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Question 8

- a. At what stage did you become aware of the shortcomings in Criminal Records Bureau checks in Wiltshire schools and Surestart Children's Centres, as identified by Internal Audit?
- b. What steps are you, and Council officers, taking to resolve the potentially disastrous confusion about responsibilities and requirements for CRB checks?
- c. What assurance can you give the public that these shortcomings are going to be quickly resolved?

Response

- a. National Guidance around CRB checks has changed frequently over the last few years however the DCSF publication 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2007' remains the key guidance for schools to follow. HR guidance to schools on CRB and safer recruitment topics has been issued on a regular basis since 2006. The Schools HR Online website holds the current guidance and information. HR has also issued regular ISA/CRB Newsletters to inform schools of the changing requirements

The internal audit in 2010 identified the need to improve the requirements of service providers of children's centre services. CRB clearances are obtained for people working with children and vulnerable people every three years. Centres keep a Single Central Record (SCR) to identify who needs to be CRB checked and when. Staff have undertaken safer recruitment training. Robust monitoring of the contract on a quarterly basis ensures contract holders are upholding the highest standards of safeguarding for children and young people. The only published Ofsted inspection of a children's centre completed so far, commended the children's centre on its safeguarding practice. In the update to the action plan in October 2010 no further concerns were raised.

- b. The Protection of Freedoms Bill 2010-11 is currently passing through its reporting stages towards an autumn 2011 Bill. This will make changes to the CRB checks and restrict the scope of the current Vetting and Barring Scheme. This will resolve the changing information on the Independent Safeguarding Act/CRB checks. It is expected that the CRB and ISA will be combined and replaced by a new body called the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Current 'transitional' CRB arrangements will apply until the new Bill goes into law and Schools and Children's Centres are aware of this. Since April 2011 Children's Centres have been commissioned and provided by four independent providers: 4Children, Spurgeons, Barnardo's and The Rise Trust and through the regular monitoring meetings we are assured that safeguarding children is compliancy tested through their contract requirements. As soon as the Protection of Freedoms Bill 2010-11 is law, new guidance will be issued by HR to schools and we will ensure that the independent providers also issue guidance to their Children's Centres.
- c. We have ensured that a Single Central Record (detailing all staff CRB and pre-employment checking information) is in place for each School and Children's Centre. Ofsted, when inspecting, reviews this SCR and safeguarding procedures. For Children's Centres, CRB and safeguarding is integral to their contracts and they conduct audits of safeguarding to show their child protection training is up-to-date and they have protocols in place for sharing information. The Head of Early Years and Childcare is also a member of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).

TO COUNCILLOR TOBY STURGIS/DICK TONGE

CABINET MEMBERS FOR WASTE, PROPERTY, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL SERVICES / HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Question 9

When Melksham's new Asda store was going through the planning process much was made of the free shuttle bus that would be provided as part of the Section 106 agreement that accompanied the development. I understand that Asda have fulfilled their part of the agreement on this, but Wiltshire Council have chosen to use the money provided to subsidise their own paid for services, rather than provide the free

shuttle bus promised to the people of the town. Could you please clarify why the council changed the use of the funding from that which was originally promised to the people, and give some indication of how removing services such as this contribute to the council's alleged commitment to the viability of our market towns?

Response

The Planning Committee resolved that permission should be granted subject to conditions and a legal agreement to secure, amongst other things:

- (i) Sustainable transport measures which will include a £500k contribution based on £100k per annum towards bus transport to Melksham Town Centre from the application site

The s106 agreement does not specify a free bus, and officers in Passenger Transport Unit (PTU) have never been in discussions about a free service being provided. Officers have been negotiating an expansion of the town bus service that links Asda to a wider area of the town, and which also improves the town service for other users. This is a better option than a free bus on grounds of benefit to the wider public and the long term sustainability of the service. Indeed, PTU officers would have argued against a free bus for these reasons if this had been proposed at the time that the agreement was being negotiated.

The improvements that are being made to the town bus will be introduced in full on 1st August, and include;

- a half hourly bus service to Asda from the Market Place and the Forest area (this is already in operation thanks to the agreement of the current bus operator until the full new services are in place)
- an improved hourly service from Dunch Lane, Granville / Portman Rd, Roundponds / Shurnhold and the Rail Station to Asda and the town centre, including cross town journeys giving improved access to the Hospital / Doctors Surgery and other areas of the town without changing buses in the Market Place
- the service to be run by two low floor easy access buses in dedicated Melksham Town Bus livery

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS CASWILL
CHIPPENHAM MONKTON DIVISION

TO COUNCILLOR JOHN THOMSON
CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE, COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING

Question 10

The Council's Internal Audit team have recently reported weaknesses in the administration of residents' cash and care records in four visited care homes. What steps are being taken to remedy this situation? And what can be done to ensure that the problem is not more widespread in Wiltshire?

Response

This was a medium risk raised by the Audit report. Since then this matter has been discussed with the Order of St John - they have undertaken an internal review. This review has involved the restructuring of their internal finance team, who will undertake unannounced visits to care homes that will include addressing the key areas raised by the Audit report. The Department of Community Services are undertaking a follow-up review of the issues raised within the Audit report and analysing the internal review undertaken by the Order of St John. We will then follow this up with examination of practice in other Care homes across the Council – this will be a standard process as part of our contract management arrangements for Care homes.

Question 11

- a. How many, if any, of the patients being treated at Winterbourne View were Wiltshire residents? Have satisfactory alternative arrangements now been made for their ongoing care?
- b. Are any Wiltshire residents being treated at Castlebeck's Rose Villa rehabilitation centre in Bristol, and if so, have any arrangements been made to review that facility?

Response

- a. Three of the residents at Winterbourne View are Wiltshire residents. The hospital is now closed and all residents have alternative placements. NHS Wiltshire is the commissioner and they have arranged alternative placements for the 3 Wiltshire residents.
- b. Four Wiltshire residents did reside at Rose Villa at the point the safeguarding alert was raised. A Safeguarding investigation was carried out and NHS Wiltshire are satisfied that measures were put in place that ensured the safety of the residents.

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BRIAN DALTON
SALISBURY HARNHAM DIVISION

TO COUNCILLOR DICK TONGE
CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Question 12

- a. How much income was taken in Wiltshire council owned car parks in the City of Salisbury for the months of April, May & June for the years 2009, 2010 & 2011? Each car park separately for each of the three yearly-quarters.
- b. The same question for off street; but a total for each quarter will do, but if this can be broken down to each street that would be good.

Response

Figures for the months of April, May and June 2011, together with details of the corresponding figures for the previous years mentioned, are attached at **Appendix 2**