

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

**ANNUAL COUNCIL
18 MAY 2010**

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR TREVOR CARBIN
HOLT AND STAVERTON DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR JOHN THOMSON
DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE,
COMMUNITIES AND LIBRARIES**

Question 1

The publication "Valley News" has been banned from Wiltshire libraries. Why?

Response

It is not correct to state that Valley News has been banned from Wiltshire Libraries.

Valley News has made a complaint, which is currently being investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman. The position, as confirmed to the Ombudsman, is as follows.

On 3 September 2009, the council's communications team was made aware by the General Manager (South) covering Tisbury Leisure Centre of concerns regarding the content of articles published in Valley News September edition regarding Wiltshire Council.

The concern also referred to the use of the council's branding and logo and a modification made to the logo to substantiate one particular article.

The article concerned did not reflect balanced reporting as no comment was sought from the council. It was written as an opinion piece rather than a news story but was presented as a news article. It was in the council's view neither fair nor balanced and related to money spent on advertising for key posts in the council and the value of staff.

The council was not offered a right of reply regarding senior management salaries or the recruitment of the Chief Executive post, or to advise on the vast savings made as a result of the new council reducing the number of senior managers and chief executives.

The communications team was only made aware of copies of Valley News being available in Tisbury Leisure Centre. It was not aware of copies in any other council premises at this stage. There is no agreement or contractual arrangement regarding the promotion or display of Valley News publications.

The manager of Tisbury Centre was advised to withdraw the September edition only from the Leisure Centre. There was no communication or decision regarding future editions.

To note -

The council currently spends £480.00 on advertising in Valley News to promote Tisbury Leisure Centre.