

COUNCIL
23 February 2010

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

**QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN OSBORN
TROWBRIDGE LAMBROK DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR TOBY STURGIS,
CABINET MEMBER FOR WASTE, PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT**

Question 1

May I please be informed as to Wiltshire Council's intention for the use of the old Innox Hall site, off Innox Road, Trowbridge? This site is in the ownership of Wiltshire Council and is zoned for community use.

Until recently it was expected that this would be the location for the successful Trowbridge Playbuilder bid. However I now understand that this is to take up green space in the adjacent Stallard Park.

A full update would be appreciated.

Response

There have not been any decisions made regarding the future use of the old Innox Hall site, off Innox Road, Trowbridge. It has been put forward as a possible site for affordable housing development and has also been under consideration as a possible play area.

There has been £75,000 playbuilder funding allocated to the Stallards/Innox Road site. To date a decision has not been made on whether to invest this funding in the Innox Road site or in the adjacent Stallard Park.

A report will be presented to the Trowbridge Area Board on 4th March to discuss investigating the potential of the Innox Hall site for development of affordable housing.

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

Question 2

Trowbridge Town Council has asked me to raise a question concerning Wiltshire Council Members' Briefing No. 23.

Why were Trowbridge Town Council and Trowbridge Youth Council not consulted on this matter?

Response

On 16 December 2009 the briefing note, No. 23. was sent to all Wiltshire Council Members and to all Community Area Managers. Contained within this note was a paragraph which outlined how local youth development co-ordinators were considering the options for the delivery of youth work in their community areas and how Community Area Young People's Issues Groups (CAYPIGs) and Community Area Boards should be enabled to participate in these considerations over the forthcoming months. Trowbridge Town Council are a key partner in the Trowbridge Community Area Board and the local CAYPIG offers the opportunity for the voice of young people to be heard.

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**QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR JEFF OSBORN
TROWBRIDGE GROVE DIVISION**

TO COUNCILLOR SCOTT, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Question 1

Please may the constitutional significance and implications of Members' Briefings be explained to the Council?

Can Members' Briefings be used as an instrument of decision making?

There is a particular concern that Members' Briefings, unlike Cabinet decisions and decisions delegated to Cabinet Members, do not allow for the possibility of Call In.

By what criteria is it determined that a Members Briefing is used, as opposed to a Cabinet decision or a Cabinet Member delegated decision, to inform councillors of decision making?

In the interests of clarity and transparency please may this whole matter be considered by the Standards Committee and a report brought back to Full Council on 18th May 2010?

Response

In this response the assumption has been made that reference in the question to Members Briefing is in fact the Members Briefing notes that are circulated to all councillors on a regular basis.

These Briefing Notes have no constitutional status other than to implement the commitment within the protocol contained within the Constitution (Briefing and Information for local Councillors' Protocol). That commitment is to ensure that local councillors are equipped with the information that they need to carry out their role, including information which relates to their individual division. The majority of these issues are not formal matters and are not therefore the subject of a report to a committee or cabinet, but relate to all sorts of activity within their division. These issues need to be picked up by service officers and it is their responsibility to ensure that councillors are kept well briefed. One of the ways to do this where the matter impacts on a large area of the county, is through the Member Briefing note process.

The Briefing Note is not an instrument of decision making other than that they can be used to inform councillors of decisions taken by officers under the approved scheme of delegation.

Parts 2 and 3 of the Constitution explain the functions of the Cabinet and the detailed scheme of delegation to Cabinet Members and as councillors will know there is a separate process for informing them of decisions taken under that scheme. The criteria which the question refers to is in effect the criteria used to determine whether the matter falls to the cabinet or under the cabinet members scheme of delegation or indeed the officer scheme of delegation. Parts 2 and 3 of the Constitution deal with this matter and this will determine the subsequent manner in which councillors are informed of the matter.

As Councillors will know the Standards Committee will be leading on a review of the Constitution and if individual councillors, when consulted on the review, wish to raise this as an issue, then the matter can be given the appropriate consideration.

Question 2

I refer to Councillors' Briefing Note No. 23, which concerns a proposed reallocation of Youth Service staffing.

In the fourth paragraph on page 2 of this briefing, members are informed that these considerations will be discussed at Community Area Boards.

In the event that an Area Board rejects these proposals, what would be the constitutional implication?

When an executive decision is finally made regarding the reallocation of staffing, can this Council be assured that the said decision will be issued in an accountable and transparent manner? That is, in the form of a Cabinet decision or a delegated decision by a Cabinet member.

Consequently the decision will constitutionally be subject to the due process of Scrutiny.

Response

With regard to the proposed reallocation of youth work staffing resources, officers are working within the scheme of delegated responsibility according to the constitution of the Council. The use of the Member's briefing notes to inform and consult with Members, Area Boards and other stakeholders is one of the appropriate vehicles with which to carry this out. In the event that an Area Board objects to the proposed allocation for their area, that is a matter to be taken into account in reaching a decision on the appropriate allocation. It is not determinative of the outcome. If strong representations are made from a number of Area Boards then officers may wish to consider referring the matter for Cabinet Member or Cabinet decision.

With regard to the issue of scrutiny any member may ask for decisions taken by officers under delegated powers to be scrutinised by the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, in fact, a report will be going about this matter to the Autumn meeting of the Children's Services Select committee after Officers attended and spoke to the previous select committee meeting earlier this month.

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

Question 3

I refer to Members' Briefing No. 23 and the table on page 3 outlining Youth Work Staffing Allocations for Community Areas 2010/2011.

In order that members have a better understanding of the extent and location of the changes involved please can the Council be informed as to the Youth Work Staffing Allocations per Community Area for the current financial year – 2009/2010?

Response

This approach, in terms of identifying hours of delivery, to the reallocation of youth work staffing resources is, in fact, new. Previously the budget position for youth work was spent County-wide. It is therefore not possible to provide a "like for like" analysis. Planned staffing resource for 09/10 is appended to this response but in attempting to address the current inequalities then a simple comparison would not reflect the new approach. For example, it has been proposed, for one of the community areas, that a transfer of a Team Leader's post from a neighbouring community area offers a more cost effective use of the staffing resource as Team Leaders direct delivery is for 12 hours of their time whilst youth development co-ordinators delivery is of 18 hours of their time. Historically a nominal budget was provided and workers on the ground were then expected to deliver as much youth work as they could within that budget. They did this effectively but it was not linked to any assessment of need. It is difficult to compare historical allocations as they again are not reflective of need.

Officers have developed this new approach to ensure the clarity and transparency for all Members. The budget for Youth Work delivery has not decreased and what we have introduced is a fairer allocation of that resource based on a clear formula. The total county budget for 09/10 for full time youth development co-ordinators is £829,527 and for 10/11 is £880,901. The total county budget for 09/10 for assistant youth workers is £448,872 and for 10/11 is £462,287.

Youth Work Staffing per Community Area for 09/10

Youth Development Centres	Wiltshire Community Area	Local authority expected spend 09/10
Malmesbury	Malmesbury	£30,907
Purton and Cricklade	Wootton Bassett	£33,947
Wootton Bassett		£31,942
		£65,889
Corsham	Corsham	£25,940
Calne	Calne	£24,892
Chippenham	Chippenham	£14,150
Melksham	Melksham	£24,941
Trowbridge	Trowbridge	£42,758
Bradford -on-Avon	Bradford	£26,906
Warminster	Warminster	£31,537
Westbury	Westbury	£35,382
Mere & Tisbury split	Mere	£15,516
Mobile Youth Centre		£2,036
		£17,552
Mere & Tisbury split	Tisbury	£15,516
Mobile Youth Centre		£2,036
		£17,552
Wilton	Wilton	£17,645
Mobile Youth Centre		£2,036
		£19,681
Downton	Downton	£17,629
Mobile Youth Centre		£2,036
		£19,665
Salisbury (Grovesnor House)	Salisbury	£38,783
Salisbury		£32,105
		£70,888
Durrington	Amesbury	£39,755
Amesbury (sports centre)		£36,113
		£75,868
Pewsey	Pewsey	£41,909

Lugershall	Tidworth	£9,049
Tidworth		£31,982
		£41,031
Devizes	Devizes CA	£31,081
Marlborough	Marlborough CA	£33,626
	Total Equivalent budget	
	09/10	£692,153

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QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR ERNIE CLARK
HILPERTON DIVISION

TO COUNCILLOR JOHN BRADY, CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND HOUSING

Question 1

The only area of Wiltshire Council to still have council housing is Salisbury. However, I now understand that Wiltshire Council intends to embark on a small-scale council house building project in the Trowbridge area. What is the logic behind this bearing in mind

- a) the houses will be nowhere near existing stock,
- b) the Trowbridge area is already well served by several RSLs, and
- c) the recent Comprehensive Area Assessment found that the WC council house service is not being operated in a cost-effective manner? Would time not be better spent getting our house in order, if you'll excuse the pun?

Response

Cabinet approved a programme of five bids to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver a total of 64 new affordable homes to be developed, owned and managed by the Council on Council-owned sites in July and October 2009. It will now be possible to provide 65 units across these sites. Of these, 22 units will be in Salisbury and the remaining 43 units in the Trowbridge area.

All five bids submitted were successful and Wiltshire Council has secured a total of almost £4.3m of investment by the HCA in addition to funding provided to RSLs for the provision of affordable housing. This pot of funding was specifically for Local Authorities to bid for and was not open to bidding from the RSLs. Consequently, if Wiltshire Council had not taken up this opportunity the funding and the additional 65 affordable homes would not have been secured.

As reported to Cabinet in July 2009, detailed discussions took place prior to bidding with the Head of Housing Management. He welcomes the opportunity to reduce the overall age of the housing stock, recognises the maintenance efficiency benefits of so doing, and has confirmed that he is able to effectively

manage the completed units from a base in Salisbury. Housing management staff currently work on a patch basis and the officers working in the most northern patch would be able to cover the new properties in the Trowbridge area. The current maintenance contract will shortly be up for renewal and the new properties will be included in any new contract agreed.

The CAA has no relevance to the need for more affordable housing in Wiltshire and the points raised by the CAA are being dealt with separately and will not stand in the way of us delivering more affordable homes. It should be noted that the CAA has not 'red flagged' the service and bringing five Councils in to one is a challenge and we need to accept that there will be areas which will need attention as part of that process.

Question 2

In the first consultation document for the Local Development Framework, Hilperton seems to have been 'de-listed' as a large village. How many other villages in Wiltshire have also been deemed to no longer exist by this document?

Response

Although I understand that it might appear from the consultation document that Hilperton has been “de-listed” as a separate village, this is not the case. In the Spatial Strategy background document, which accompanied the Wiltshire 2026 consultation, and on which the consultation document is based, Hilperton is identified as part of a ‘grouped settlement’ (Appendix B). This list includes ‘Tidworth and Ludgershall’, as well as the ‘Trowbridge and Hilperton (including Staverton Marina) functional grouping’. ‘Laverstock and Salisbury’ are treated similarly in the South Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Appendix B to the Spatial Strategy background paper states:

“If Hilperton were located at some distance from Trowbridge, it would be able to function more independently as a small town or village. However, due to its proximity to Trowbridge, and its close relationship with its neighbour, it cannot be considered in isolation.”

There is an eminently practical reason why, for the purposes of the Core Strategy, Hilperton should be treated as a part of the ‘Trowbridge/Staverton Marina/Hilperton’ functional grouping. Namely, that the Local Development Framework should allocate an appropriate level of development to each settlement in accordance with its needs. By treating Hilperton as part of a “grouped settlement”, such additional development can be accommodated at the most suitable location, or locations, for the grouping as a whole. If Hilperton were regarded as separate and distinct from Trowbridge for the purposes of the Core Strategy, additional development would have to be accommodated in or around the village to satisfy, what would then be, a separate need.

This 'grouping' of settlements for the purpose of the Core strategy, is just that. It implies no loss of identify for Hilperton, but merely reflects, from a spatial planning perspective, the relationship between settlements either abutting or in close proximity to one another.

TO COUNCILLOR FLEUR DE RHE PHILIPPE
CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK

Question 3

With the advent of one council and SAP, the public were constantly promised that substantial savings would result. However, the proposed WC council tax increase is on a par with many other councils. What has happened to these much-vaunted savings?

Response

Both the One Council and Business Management Programmes (BMP - SAP) have exceeded their business plan cost reduction targets for the first two years. These savings are to be independently verified by our external auditors.

The Executive has channelled these savings into two areas; (1) reductions in the rise of council tax levels - this is the fourth consecutive year where the rate of rise has been smaller than the preceding year, and (2) priority service growth areas as identified by the public during the budget consultation process; highway repair and maintenance, care for older people and children's services.

TO COUNCILLOR FLEUR DE RHE PHILIPPE
CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK

Question 4

A constituent has an interest in the WC proposal to upgrade its benefit database as he assists one of his relatives who is a Trowbridge resident in sheltered accommodation and receiving both housing and council tax benefit. He asks: What measures are being taken to ensure that WC does not end up with an overpriced and unworkable system, like so many modern database systems seem to end up? Is WC proposing to buy a system that has already been purchased by other councils and demonstrated to work properly or is it looking for a brand new development which is certain to have inbuilt and hitherto undiscovered risks? My constituent is rightly concerned that vulnerable people do not end up carrying the can for slack Council IT policy.

Response

The aim of the new revenues and benefits system is both to improve the service to customers and make it more cost effective. When selecting and purchasing the new system great care will be taken to ensure it is the right solution from a reputable provider, and that it provides value for money. The system will be thoroughly tested and implemented with a detailed implementation plan. Other authorities, who have implemented a revenues and benefits system, will be contacted at an early stage in order to learn from their experience.

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

TO COUNCILLOR JANE SCOTT, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Question 1

What is the projected annual cost of the production (including officer time), printing and distribution of 'Your Wiltshire Magazine'?

Is there a policy on acceptance and cost of advertising which takes into account the need to protect local newspapers from unfair competition?

What proportion of recycled paper is used in the production of the magazine?

Response

What is the projected annual cost of the production (inc officer time) printing and distribution of Your Wiltshire magazine?

Your Wiltshire magazine is distributed to all 200,000 households in the county. The first two editions were pilot editions where different approaches to design, print, advertising sales and distribution were tested. Copywriting and design were carried out in-house at a cost of £3,500 for those two editions.

The first two editions cost a total of £71,000 for production, print and distribution. Those two editions were done in partnership with Newsquest Wiltshire (Wiltshire Gazette & Herald, Wiltshire Times and Chippenham News) who secured the advertising and printed the publication. There is no evidence that the residents' magazine will impact on the viability of local newspapers. In fact, these two pilot editions have generated income for Newsquest through the percentage taken by the company of the total advertising income and the print cost paid for by Wiltshire Council.

It is now intended to tender for the magazine and to produce a maximum of 10 editions during a calendar year, omitting August and December. This calendar year it is intended to produce seven editions. The cost of the magazine will be offset against advertising (estimated at £150,000).

Is there a policy on acceptance and cost of advertising which takes into account the need to protect local newspapers from unfair competition?

The cost of the magazine will be offset against advertising and the target is to generate £150,000 a year. The advertising accepted by Newsquest Wiltshire, on the council's behalf, is in line with the council's advertising and sponsorship policy, adopted by Cabinet last autumn. There is currently no intention to run public notices and recruitment advertisements in the residents' magazine, these will continue to be placed in local newspapers and specialist publications.

What proportion of recycled paper is used in the production of the magazine?

The paper used by Newsquest Wiltshire is PEFC accredited (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification scheme). The printing arrangements of the magazine will be re-assessed as part of the forthcoming tender exercise and it will be our aim to use the most appropriate recycled paper possible.

Question 2

Under the European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive large public buildings have to display energy efficiency certificates. In the initial assessment (Oct 2008) no Wiltshire Council buildings scored the top 'A' grade and the distribution was skewed towards the bad end of the spectrum. The legislation requires the publication of annual updates.

Is more recent data on the performance of Wiltshire Council buildings available?

Will the leader undertake to publish energy efficiency ratings on the council's website so the public can see if energy and money are being wasted or conserved?

Response

The Council has 177 buildings affected by this directive.

Whilst it is correct that none of these buildings were rated as 'A' grade in 2008, 63% were within the remaining highest categories B-D. The figures for 2009 are now available and show a similar picture.

It should be noted that nationally in 2008, over 28,000 Display Energy Certificates were produced, of which only 150 were given an 'A' rating. Wiltshire's current position is not too dissimilar to the average pattern nationally, where the majority of properties are rated within the middle of the spectrum (categories D-E) with relatively low numbers being classified in the top and bottom categories (A & G).

The Workplace Transformation Programme will be concentrating on the disposal of the Council's poorest and least energy efficient buildings, and will also be aiming to improve energy efficiency of those buildings that are being retained, e.g., the Programme has an overall target of reducing carbon emissions from office buildings by 40% over the next 3 to 4 years.

Individual authorities are not statutorily required to publish annual updates. The relevant information is automatically collected from all authorities by LANDMARK – an organisation employed by DCLG – and published on their website, which is accessible to the public. However, officers are currently working on the development of a number of energy related web pages for Wiltshire which should be available for inclusion on the Council's website within the next 2/3 months.

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**QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR STEVE OLDRIEVE
TROWBRIDGE PAXCROFT DIVISION**

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

Question 1

Can you confirm that WC have received a request from Bellefield School, Trowbridge to be exempted from the tendering process for Childs Centre provision.

If so how will this be dealt with by the Council.(who makes a decision on this?).

Response

A letter was sent from the Headteacher, Mr Steve Wigley and Chair of Governors, Mrs Jane Goldstone of Bellefield Primary School, Trowbridge on 2 February and received into County Hall on 4 February. It was addressed to Dr Keith Robinson, asking him to grant exemption from the procurement process for Bellefield Children's Centre, Trowbridge. A reply was sent from Stephanie Denovan, Service Director for Schools and Learning on 11 February which explained the reason for undertaking the procurement process.

As you are aware, the competitive tendering process is a requirement under European Union Procurement Directives and the Public Contracts Regulation 2006 to ensure open and fair competition amongst the member states of the European Union. Public procurement is based on good value for money which, in this case, means looking at cost and quality to meet requirements which should be achieved through competition unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary. These compelling reasons would be extraordinary situations where procurement would be impossible. We do not feel that this applies to any of our Children's Centres. I am sorry that on this occasion I cannot grant exemption from the tendering process for the Children's Centre at Bellefield.

This statement is based on information received from the Corporate Procurement Unit "The EU rules reflect and reinforce the value for money (vfm) focus on the government' procurement policy. This requires that all public procurement must be based on vfm defined as 'the optimum combination of whole-cost and quality to meet the user's requirement' which

should be achieved through competition, unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary. (EU procurement guidance)

The contracts for the 30 children's centres all end on 31 March 2011. They are presently managed by a range of different providers. Twenty are managed by voluntary sector organisations, 3 by Wiltshire Council and 7 by school governing bodies. It was agreed by the Wiltshire County Council Cabinet meeting on 23 October 2008 that the management of all the Children's Centres would be opened to competitive tendering using the normal procurement process from April 2011.

Question 2

In previous discussions with Officers I was given an assurance that school's wishing to take part in the tendering process would be given support to make applications. I am not sure this is happening, could you please confirm in detail, what arrangements are in place to assist governing bodies to undertake this exercise.

Response

The question about support through the tendering process was raised at the briefing session for providers and stakeholders on 28 January 2010 at the Corn Exchange, Devizes. As commissioners, the Council cannot provide support as well. An offer of training was given by Ali Perry, representing VAK (Voluntary Action Kennet) who has received funding to enable the voluntary sector to engage with the strategic agenda. At the meeting she welcomed all present providers whether they were from a voluntary organisation or not, to attend a session being held on 16 February from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm. It was organised by Voluntary Action Kennet and Develop, "Getting to Grips with Commissioning and Collaborating for Success". This was free as it was funded by the Children's Workforce Development Council. School governing bodies are included in this as they are Trustees. Two representatives from Bellefield Primary attended this session. There will be a further half day session on 17th March about the commissioning process and Voluntary Action Kennet has offered free help to anyone who requests it. The commissioning session held on 16 February has had excellent feedback

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**QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR MARK PACKARD
CHIPPENHAM PEWSHAM DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR FLEUR DE RHE PHILIPPE
CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK**

Question 1

What will be the annual cost to the revenue budget of the proposed £45 million of borrowing for Workplace Transformation ?

Question 2

How much borrowing is planned to meet the £24 million Workplace Transformation expenditure scheduled for 2010-11 and what is the impact of the latter on the revenue budget ?

Response

The annual borrowing and capital repayment cost of the £45 million is £4 million. This cost has been included in the overall project costs. Additionally, the programme will contribute over £17 million sales back to the capital programme.

The net savings from the project will be £2.5 million in year 3, rising to an ongoing £3.5 million per year from year five. This net figure is after allowing for the cost of borrowing and capital repayment.

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**QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR CHRIS CASWILL
CHIPPENHAM MONKTON DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR JANE SCOTT
LEADER OF COUNCIL**

Question 1

What was the rationale for locating Community Safety in the Department of Health and Wellbeing, rather than in Neighbourhoods and Planning?

Response

The rationale for the location of Community Safety was related to the consideration of the need to have strategic oversight and co-ordinated operational management of our public protection services, and to strengthen further partnership working. In that context the term 'public protection' is to be interpreted in its broadest sense and thus it encompasses Community Safety and Emergency Planning. The strategic oversight of these areas at Corporate Director level has been designated as falling within the aegis of the Corporate Director (Public Health and Well Being). Service Director responsibility was adjusted accordingly in that Public Protection and Community Safety will be managed by the newly appointed Service Director, Public Protection.

**TO COUNCILLOR KEITH HUMPHRIES
CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

Question 2

(a) How many professionally trained environmental health officers were employed by the four Wiltshire District Councils at the end of 2009, prior to the change to a unitary council?

Response

Pre local government reorganisation, 32 qualified Environmental Health Officers (including 5 managerial posts) plus 3 vacancies.

In addition there were 15 qualified Environmental/Technical officers, 13 Trading Standards Officers and 13 Trading Standards Enforcement Officers.

- (b) How many professionally trained environmental health officer posts will be on the Wiltshire Council 2010-11 complement, after the cutting of three posts which is planned in this year's budget proposals (page 44)?

Response

For 2010/11 we have 32 qualified Environmental Health Officers (including 2 managerial posts with previous 3 vacancies filled)

In addition 16 qualified Environmental/Technical officers, 12 Trading Standards Officers and 13 Trading Standards Enforcement officers)

Additional information

The environmental/technical officers are also qualified staff albeit in more specific areas (e.g. food safety, health & safety, environmental protection)

**TO COUNCILLOR JOHN NOEKEN
CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**

Question 3

- (a) How many posts are to be cut from the Council's Democratic Services complement in the £46000 a year reduction being planned in this year's budget proposals (p.45)?
- (b) Will this involve the loss of a post or posts which are currently filled?
- (c) Does this involve any reduction at all in the support for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny work?
- (d) What services to backbench members are to be reduced, or removed?

Response

There is no reduction in posts within Democratic Services. The text attributed to the savings of £46,000 is incorrect. The majority of these savings are made up of the 4% vacancy factor applied to all staffing budgets.

There will therefore be no reduction in service to any councillors or group of councillors.

TO COUNCILLOR DICK TONGE
CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Question 4

- (a) What has been the cost of introducing the recent parking restrictions in Ivy Road in Chippenham?

Response

Reviews of parking have been undertaken consecutively in a number of towns. The costs have not been attributed to individual restrictions. The work following the Chippenham review is not quite finalised but the costs of the traffic regulation order and installation of the signs and lines for the parking restrictions throughout the town are estimated at £15,000.

- (b) What led him and the Council's officers to think that these changes were needed?

Response

It is a commitment that following the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement, when responsibility for enforcing parking controls passed from the Police to the council, parking problems in the towns would be reviewed.

Requests from residents and others for controls to deal with obstruction or safety problems have been investigated and where appropriate restrictions formulated.

Representation was received from a resident of Ivy Road that parked cars were obstructing access for refuse collection vehicles.

- (c) How many residents made representations to the Council that additional parking restrictions were needed, before the initial recommendations were published?

Response

As indicated above a complaint was received about the obstruction of the highway.

The Town Council, former District Council and local Members were consulted on the preliminary scheme for Chippenham prior to the proposals being finalised and advertised for public comment.

- (d) Does he accept that the real cost of these changes is now being borne by the majority of residents, who have lost parking spaces for no apparent benefit?

Response

Yellow lines have been placed across vehicular accesses in Ivy Road at the request of residents of Bath Road who indicated, in response to a survey undertaken by officers, that access to rear off-road parking was subject to obstruction by parked vehicles. Also in agreement with the occupiers of commercial premises in Ivy Road, parking has been prohibited at two vehicular access points. The yellow line restrictions will ease access for the refuse collection vehicle.

In respect of lost parking spaces, vehicles parking in the locations where yellow lines have been placed in Ivy Road would obstruct access for off-road parking.

Question 5

- (a) When the parking restrictions were introduced in Esmead in Monkton Park in Chippenham, concerns were expressed about the likely displacement of parking by users of the train station into Cocklebury Road, one of the busiest roads in the area. Is he aware that this displacement is occurring daily, causing considerable difficulties to the residents of Cocklebury Road?

Response

In response to the advertising of the new parking restrictions in Chippenham over sixty letters of objection and support were received, together with two petitions. Comments were received that individual restrictions did not go far enough but overwhelmingly there were objections on the grounds that the proposals were excessive. Conscious of the controversial nature and because of the frequent challenges to their justification, new parking restrictions are generally formulated to deal with the problems identified.

Yellow lines were installed in Esmead, as requested by the residents, to deal with obstructions problems. It is difficult to judge where and to what extent displacement parking will take place and to then justify restrictions beyond the location where complaints have been received.

- (b) Will he take this chance to restate the commitments made at that time to an early review of these knock-on effects, and give a timetable for that review?

Response

New parking restrictions are monitored to assess the need for new traffic regulation orders to reduce the extent of restrictions or introduce additional controls.

The programme of work for 2010/11 allows for the making of traffic regulation orders to address problems identified from the monitoring of

the restrictions introduced following the review of parking in the towns including Chippenham.

- (c) Given the continuing parking problems in Chippenham, will he agree to start the much needed process of an overall review of parking options, including a fresh look at residents' parking schemes?

Response

The Council's term consultants Mouchel have recently been commissioned to undertake a review of the current Wiltshire Local Transport Plan – Parking Plan which dates from 2000. As part of the commission Mouchel will review and recommend a range of parking policies and options, including policy for the introduction of residents parking schemes.

Question 6

- (a) Is he aware that in vetoing any further work on engineering solutions for the anti-social behaviour problems in the Bath Road car park in Chippenham, he is blocking the investigation of solutions requested by a large majority of members of the Chippenham and Villages Area Board?

Response

I understand that officers recommended use of mobile CCTV to combat the problem and this was approved for implementation. Investigation of other solutions is a recommendation by the Area Board. If Chippenham Area Board feels that this matter is a priority they can fund the feasibility study in the new financial year. They may also wish to explore whether Chippenham Town Council wishes to work in partnership and match fund this as the Car Park is in the town. Wiltshire Council has a duty to all residents when considering allocation of funding and resources.

- (b) What evidence did he consider in coming to the conclusions that the situation here is “comparable to many other car parks in Wiltshire”, and not a high priority?

Response

The Council does not have comparable and consistent information on anti-social behaviour in its car parks that would allow a like-for-like comparison. However, feedback from the Police Authority and the Crime Reduction Team has been considered.

- (c) Which car parks did he use to make this comparison?

Response

Anti-social behaviour has been experienced in Castle Combe Car Park in Chippenham, Methuen and Somerfield Car Parks in Corsham, Multi Storey Car Park in Trowbridge to name a few.

(d) Why did he overlook the commitment made at the Area Board to involve local residents in a working group which would take forward possible solutions?

Response

This commitment was taken by the Area Board and the Cabinet member. I understand that the Head of Crime Reduction will convene a working group meeting with residents. A meeting has been arranged for 10th March at which time residents will be invited to contribute to identifying possible solutions.

TO COUNCILLOR JOHN THOMSON
DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY
SERVICES

Question 7

Where in the Area Board Handbook or other published guidelines does it specify that Area Board requests for action by officers must be referred to a Cabinet member to establish that the action can be taken?

Response

Page 31 of the Handbook makes clear that delegation of powers to area boards and officers operates in conjunction with the Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members. This is intended to ensure that area boards and officers act within the corporate policies and resources of the Council. In cases where expenditure is proposed by an area board where no specific budget provision exists the officers involved would be expected to seek the views of the Cabinet member or the full Cabinet.

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
23 FEBRUARY 2010**

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

**QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BRIAN DALTON
SALISBURY HARNHAM DIVISION**

**TO COUNCILLOR DICK TONGE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS
AND TRANSPORTATION**

Question 1

How much has parking charges in the former Salisbury District Council (SDC) area generated for Wiltshire council (WC) since April 1st 2009? Broken down into on-street and off-street income?

Question 2

How much money has been raised in parking fines in the Salisbury City (boundary area) since April 1st 2009? Broken down into fines from each car park?

Question 3

How much has been raised from yellow lines/obstruction fines, which are more serious and the fine is more severe; again within the City boundary?

Question 4

The same question as 2 & 3 above, but outside the City Boundary and within the former SDC area.

Response

I have obtained the figures requested in these questions and these have been provided to Cllr Dalton. A copy will also be attached to the minutes of this meeting which will be available on the website. I have not attached them to the questions at this stage, purely in view of the number of pages involved to provide the breakdown of figures requested. If in the meantime, any Councillor would like a copy, please contact Democratic Services.