

Council**Thursday, 19 July 2018, County Hall, Worcester - 10.00 am****Minutes****Present:**

Mr B Clayton (Chairman), Mr A A J Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr A T Amos, Mr T Baker-Price, Mr R W Banks, Mr R M Bennett, Mr C J Bloore, Mr G R Brookes, Mrs J A Brunner, Mr P Denham, Mr N Desmond, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr A Fry, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr P Grove, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr A I Hardman, Mr P B Harrison, Mr M J Hart, Ms P A Hill, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Dr A J Hopkins, Dr C Hotham, Mr A D Kent, Mr R C Lunn, Mr P M McDonald, Mr S J Mackay, Mr L C R Mallett, Ms K J May, Mr P Middlebrough, Mr A P Miller, Mr R J Morris, Mr J A D O'Donnell, Mrs F M Oborski, Ms T L Onslow, Dr K A Pollock, Mrs J A Potter, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr A C Roberts, Mr C Rogers, Mr J H Smith, Mr A Stafford, Ms C M Stalker, Mr C B Taylor, Mr R P Tomlinson, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall, Ms R Vale, Ms S A Webb and Mr T A L Wells

Available papers

The Members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. 12 questions submitted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (previously circulated); and
- C. The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2018 (previously circulated)

2006 Apologies and Declaration of Interests (Agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R C Adams, Ms R L Dent, Mr M E Jenkins and Prof J W Raine.

Mr R P Tomlinson declared an interest in Agenda item 6 - Notice of Motion 1 as a friend was Chairman of the Committee responsible for arranging the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Mr G R Brookes declared an interest in Agenda item 6 - Notice of Motion 3 as his son and daughter were both GPs, and his son was involved in the campaign.

Dr C Hotham declared an interest in Agenda item 6 - Notice of Motion 3 as his wife was a GP.

2007 Public Participation (Agenda item 2)

Mr Brennan presented a petition on behalf of St Ambrose Catholic Primary School concerning the School Crossing Patrol on the A456.

Mr Miah presented 3 petitions as follows:

- School Patrol on Birmingham Road (A456) petition on behalf of St Georges CE Primary School ;
- School Crossing Patrol on the A456 petition on behalf of Holy Trinity School and Sixth Form Centre; and
- School Crossing Patrol on the A456 petition on behalf of Little Trinity Nursery

Mrs F M Oborski presented a petition concerning the School Crossing Patrols on Comberton Road and Borrington Road, Kidderminster.

Mrs F M Oborski presented a petition requesting a Resident-Only Parking Scheme in both Lea Street and Lorne Street Kidderminster.

Mr P Middlebrough presented a petition urging First Bus Group to reinstate the village stops on the bus services between Upton Upon Severn and Tewkesbury

Ms Silver asked questions about the termination of contracts of lollipop staff working at zebra crossings in particular relating to Somers Park Primary School, Malvern.

Mrs Day made comment on the termination of contracts of school crossing patrol staff and presented letters and posters from the children as well as photographs demonstrating poor parking in the area affected outside Somers Park Primary School, Malvern.

The Chairman thanked all the public participants for their contribution and said they would receive a written reply from the relevant Cabinet Member.

2008 Minutes (Agenda item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2009 Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 4)

Noted.

2010 Reports of Cabinet - Summary of decisions taken (Agenda item 5)

The Leader of the Council reported the following topics and questions were answered on them:

- Plastics and Non-Recyclable Cups – Notices of Motion from Council 15 February 2018
- Council-Provided Day Services for Adults with a Learning Disability and Connect Short-term Service
- Future Provision of Replacement Care (Overnight Respite) Services for Adults with a Learning Disability
- Streetscape Design Guide
- Resources Report.

2011 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 1 - 2022 Commonwealth Games (Agenda item 6)

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion set out in the agenda papers standing in the names of Mr R M Udall, Mr R C Lunn, Mr P M McDonald, Ms P Agar, Ms C M Stalker, Mr C J Bloore and Mr P Denham.

The motion was moved by Mr R M Udall and seconded by Mr R C Lunn who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council agreed to deal with the motion on the day.

The following amendment was moved by Mr A I Hardman and seconded by Dr K A Pollock:

"Council congratulates Birmingham on becoming the host city for the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Council calls upon the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to consider co-ordinating and preparing a report which would develop a strategy for the involvement of Worcestershire, and especially our District Councils with the games"

Having received an assurance from the Deputy Leader of the Council that any report/activities would be cross-party and that the University of Worcester and other sporting facilities across the county would be engaged in the process, the mover and seconder of the original motion accepted the amendment which therefore became the substantive motion as altered.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- The Commonwealth Games in Birmingham provided an opportunity for this county to work with partners and play a role in supporting the

Games, boosting the local economy and providing a lasting legacy for sporting activities. The County had a co-ordination role in terms of providing transport, hosting visiting teams and accommodation for tourists and spectators

- The Council could work with the district councils and the LEP to formulate an on-line communications strategy; approach smaller commonwealth countries by cultivating existing links; promote training facilities in Worcestershire to the smaller nation teams; promote tourism; promote health benefits in schools; and understand that the events were fun and produced great memories of the county. The Games provided an opportunity to achieve great benefits for the county at little cost
- The Deputy Leader acknowledged that the Council had a co-ordinating role but argued that this was more of a district council led issue. Officers had already met representatives of Birmingham City Council and the Cabinet Member for Economy and Infrastructure would be preparing a report for Cabinet in due course. Although work was already taking place, the Games belonged to Birmingham and this county's role was purely supportive
- It was important to utilise the skills of everyone to maximise the opportunities within the county of the Games coming to Birmingham. The Games represented a massive opportunity for hoteliers and sporting venues in the county.

On being put to the vote the substantive motion was unanimously agreed.

Council RESOLVED: "Council congratulates Birmingham on becoming the host city for the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Council calls upon the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to consider co-ordinating and preparing a report which would develop a strategy for the involvement of Worcestershire, and especially our District Councils, with the games"

2012 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 2 - School Crossing

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion set out in the agenda papers standing in the names of Mr P Denham, Mr C J Bloore, Mr R C Lunn, Ms C M Stalker, Ms P Agar, Mr R M Udall, Mr P M McDonald and Ms P A Hill.

Attendants' Remuneration (Agenda item 6)

The motion was moved by Mr P Denham and seconded by Mr R C Lunn who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council agreed to deal with the motion on the day.

Those in favour of the motion made the following comments:

- It was concerning that School Crossing Patrol attendants were so poorly paid with an hourly rate close to the minimum wage and therefore no surprise that there were so many unfilled vacancies. It was disappointing that the Council was no longer funding these patrols where pedestrian crossings existed. Many children were not capable of using pedestrian crossings safely. Although road safety training had been offered to affected schools, this one-off training was insufficient with a danger that some children would miss out or fail to learn anything and therefore did not compensate for the loss of a School Crossing Patrol. A daily rate should be introduced that would attract and retain suitable people with flexible working hours to meet the needs of individual schools
- School Crossing Patrols were not just important in terms of the safety of children but also the reassurance they provided for parents to be able to send their children to school on foot. The most likely outcome of this policy would be that more parents would drive to schools increasing congestion, air pollution outside schools and danger to children walking to school. The County Council had responsibility for employing someone to control the traffic and therefore it was not possible for schools to directly employ attendants
- Road safety training needed to be provided on a regular basis if it was to be effective. School Crossing Patrols were vital on busy roads and complex junctions
- The budget reductions to this service were creating a postcode lottery where schools in poorer areas would not be able to afford to replace its School Crossing Patrol
- The Council needed to understand why it was unable to attract people as School Crossing Patrol attendants. The School Crossing Patrol service was one of the few Council services that protected people and saved lives. The savings being made were disproportionate to the value of the service to the children and parents

- The motion was concerned with how School Crossing Patrols could be retained
- There was evidence that where School Crossing Patrols had been withdrawn, the number of vehicles on the surrounding roads had increased with associated parking issues in the vicinity of the school and consequent road safety implications
- The Council might wish to consider some form of branding/sponsorship arrangement to help with the funding of these School Crossing Patrols posts.

Those against the motion made the following comments:

- School Crossing Patrol attendants were employed on a pro-rata term time basis with the annual salary split over 12 instalments with a term-time factor. The salary took account of holiday entitlement and bank holidays. The nature of the work meant that applicants for the posts tended to be attracted from the local area to the school. In addition the rate of pay by the Council compared favourably with neighbouring councils. The proposal for a daily rate of pay was therefore rejected
- Certain schools had taken proactive actions to attract attendants and other schools might wish to take a similar approach. The Council was acting in accordance with the Green Book guidance and to introduce a daily rate would fall outside the Council's terms and conditions
- The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities commented that road safety education was offered to every school year group every year with follow up sessions and information provided on the school's web site. No evidence had been found to suggest that pay was the main reason for attracting people to the role of School Crossing Patrol attendant and increasing pay would not impact on recruitment levels. The Council was complying with national guidelines that stated School Crossing Patrols were not required where a pelican or zebra crossing existed on the basis that the crossing took priority
- If parents were concerned about the safety of their children walking to school then they should consider accompanying them rather than driving to school
- The Leader of the Council maintained this was not about saving money but maintaining the Council's commitment to School Crossing Patrols where

they were necessary and met the Council's policy guidelines. The Council would be unwise to treat one group of staff in isolation outside the Council's terms and conditions otherwise a full countywide review would be necessary. If members had any concerns about patrols in their division they should take the matter up with officers. If criminal offences were being committed by road users, they should be reported to the police.

On a named vote, the motion was lost.

Those voting in favour were:

Ms P Agar, Mr C J Bloore, Mr P Denham, Mr A Fry, Ms P A Hill, Mr R C Lunn, Mr P M McDonald, Mr L C R Mallett, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs M A Rayner, Ms C M Stalker, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr R M Udall, Mr T A L Wells (14)

Those voting against were:

Mr B Clayton, Mr A A J Adams, Mr A T Amos, Mr T Baker-Price, Mr R W Banks, Mr R M Bennett, Mr G R Brookes, Mrs J A Brunner, Mr N Desmond, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr P Grove, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr A I Hardman, Mr P B Harrison, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Dr A J Hopkins, Mr A D Kent, Mr S M Mackay, Ms K J May, Mr P Middlebrough, Mr A P Miller, Mr R J Morris, Mr J A D O'Donnell, Ms T L Onslow, Dr K A Pollock, Mrs J A Potter, Mr A C Roberts, Mr C Rogers, Mr J H Smith, Mr A Stafford, Mr C B Taylor, Mr P A Tuthill, Ms R Vale. (36)

Those abstaining were:

Dr C Hotham, Mr R P Tomlinson, (2)

2013 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 3 - 'Armed Forces Veteran-Friendly' Accreditation (Agenda item 6)

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion set out in the agenda papers standing in the names of Mr G R Brookes, Mr M J Hart, Mr A I Hardman, Mrs E A Eyre Mr R C Adams and Mr A P Miller.

The motion was moved by Mr G R Brookes and seconded by Mr A P Miller who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council agreed to deal with the motion on the day.

In the debate, the following principal points were raised:

- With suitable training, local GP practices could receive 'armed forces veteran-friendly'

2014 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 4 - Anti-Semitism (Agenda item 6)

accreditation. To become accredited, GP practices needed to offer support for ex-military personnel who faced additional challenges on their return to civilian life. They would need to adopt a clinical lead, be able to identify and flag up ex-military individuals and receive adequate training

- The support of the medical experts from the armed forces was welcomed and the CCGs would appreciate the support of the Council for this initiative
- The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health welcomed this motion and indicated that the Council would work to support this initiative
- Members had a role in letting veterans know about the initiative and encourage them to notify their local GP practice.

On being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

Council RESOLVED: "This Council recognises the contribution by our armed forces.

This Council endorses the NHS initiative to encourage GP practices to become 'Armed Forces Veteran-Friendly' accredited.

This Council resolves to request the Chief Executive write to the Worcestershire CCG's to support this initiative.

This Council requests that the Worcestershire Health and Well-being Board consider this matter at a future meeting and endorse this and look at what further practical steps can be made to encourage Worcestershire GP practices to become accredited."

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion set out in the agenda papers standing in the names of Mrs E B Tucker, Prof J W Raine, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr M E Jenkins.

The motion was moved by Mrs F M Oborski and seconded by Mrs E B Tucker who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council agreed to deal with the motion on the day.

In the debate, the following principal points were raised:

- There had been an increased level of fear amongst the local Jewish community as a result of the rise in anti-Semitism recently experienced across Europe. The Council had a duty under its equality responsibilities to take care of the needs of all members of the community. It was requested that the Council adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of anti-Semitism. The definition was clearly set out in the motion and did not prevent criticism of the political actions of any particular Israeli government in power
- This motion helped create a clear working definition of anti-Semitism which had also been adopted by a number of other public bodies
- It was important that this motion was supported to give a clear message to anyone promoting or experiencing anti-Semitism that it would not be tolerated
- This motion supported the premise that it was wrong to support any form of terrorism aimed at people on the basis of their religion
- The cross-party support for the motion was welcomed as it was important that members were seen to be taking a lead in calling out individuals who made anti-Semitic or racist comments.

On being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Council RESOLVED: "Council notes with concern the rise in Anti-Semitic attacks against members of the U.K. Jewish Community. Council believes that politicians and officials from all parties and institutions must lead by example, use responsible language and call out others when they do not.

In support of our gender and equality responsibilities, Council therefore resolves to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of Anti-Semitism and its appended examples; which has already been adopted by the U.K. Government, the Scottish Government, the Greater London Authority, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and over a hundred local authorities. Anti-Semitism is:

- Holocaust denial or minimisation; indicating sympathy for the Holocaust
- Holocaust inversion – i.e. identifying Israel or Zionists as Nazis;
- Giving support to, or failing to oppose, terrorism directed at the Jewish Community

2015 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 5 - The Elgar Archive (Agenda item 6)

- **inside and outside Israel;**
- **Theological anti-Semitism, such as accusing jews of killing jesus"**

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion set out in the agenda papers standing in the names of Mr A T Amos, Mrs L C Hodgson, Ms R L Dent, Ms K J May, Dr K A Pollock, Mr R M Udall and Mr R C Lunn.

The motion was moved by Mrs L C Hodgson and seconded by Mr R M Udall who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council agreed to deal with the motion on the day.

In the debate, the following principal points were raised:

- This motion was concerned with the further action that could be taken to continue the support for the Council's campaign to ask all the interested partners to engage in meaningful discussions about the future location and widest enjoyment of the Elgar Archives at the Elgar Birthplace Museum. Throughout his life Elgar kept Worcestershire close to his heart and chose to be buried here. The Archive had previously been kept at the Elgar Birthplace Museum. However, the British Library had started the process of creating a national archive. Whilst recognising the important role of the British Library, the County had a fine archive service itself. A petition had been launched with 3,000 signatures as well as a letter and article reported in the Times newspaper. As a result, conversations were being held with the British Library about the future of the Archive and it was hoped to invite them to the Hive in the summer
- Worcestershire was proud of its links with Elgar and the Archive belonged in the county. His history, music, birth place and grave were all in the county
- It was important that everyone worked together to show a united front for the county. The idea was to attract scholars to the county to see the archive as it was as easy to get to Worcestershire as to London.

On being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

Council RESOLVED: "Sir Edward Elgar is a huge part of our heritage in Worcestershire, he was born

**2016 Report of the
Cabinet Member
with
Responsibility
(Agenda item 7)**

here, he lived here and died here and in the words of his daughter Carice 'Worcestershire was everything to him'.

Worcestershire is regarded as a great place for residents and visitors alike to go and learn about the famous composer and about his vast contribution to music that has spanned so many years and it would be desirable that this continue.

The Elgar Foundation, responsible for this archive, recently made the decision to relocate their collection to the British Library in London from its current location at the Elgar Birthplace Museum in Lower Broadheath. This relocation has now taken place despite continued efforts for them to consider keeping them in the County Archive based at the Hive.

Council is asked to support a continued campaign to ask all interested parties to engage in meaningful discussion about the future location and widest enjoyment of this Archive in both physical and virtual forms."

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for the Environment presented his report which concerned a number of overarching issues:

- Waste Management
- Flood Risk Management
- Natural Environment
- Energy and Carbon Savings
- Priority activity for next 12 months.

The Cabinet Member answered questions about his report which included the following topics:

- Recycling levels
- Links with Gypsy and Traveller Service for dealing with waste
- Innovative ways of managing flooding through National Flood Management Project
- The role of local councillors in Flood Resilience Programme
- The role of local group (FLAG) in the Flood alleviation schemes in Severn Stoke
- Drainage clearance in Wythall and surrounding areas
- Road verge management – mowing policy in

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relation to pollinators • The boilers on prescription scheme • European funding for the Business Energy Efficiency Programme.
2017	Question Time (Agenda item 8)	Twelve questions had been received by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Eight questions were answered on the day. The answers to all 12 questions are attached in the Appendix.
2018	Reports of Committees - Pensions Committee (Agenda item 9 (a))	The Council received the report of the Pensions Committee containing a summary of the decisions taken.
2019	Reports of Committees - Planning and Regulatory Committee (Agenda item 9 (b))	The Council received the report of the Planning and Regulatory Committee containing a summary of the decisions taken.

The meeting ended at 1.20pm.

Chairman

COUNCIL 19 JULY 2018 - AGENDA ITEM 8 – QUESTION TIME

Questions and written responses provided below. Questions 9, 10, 11 and 12 were not asked on the day.

QUESTION 1 – Mrs F M Oborski will ask Lucy Hodgson:

"In view of the high numbers of concerned parents signing petitions against the removal of school crossing patrols will she agree to visit the two sites in my Division catering for Comberton Primary School with me and the Crossing Patrol for St George's CE Primary and St Ambrose RC School with the Chair of Governors of St George's and a representative from St Ambrose before implementing a final decision?"

Answer

The decision to close the sites in question is in line with our approved Policy. It is therefore an Officer decision. Our School Crossing Policy takes into account of all legislative requirements including the most recent code of good practice and Road Safety Great Britain agreed guidance notes. (Road Safety GB is a national road safety organisation that represents local government road safety across the UK). The decision does not relate to any saving plan. The recent consultation was also a staff focused consultation, in line with our HR Policy, rather than a public consultation.

I have visited these sites with the relevant Officers to see for myself the potential impact. There is no doubt that these are busy points, which is the main reason why the Council has invested resource into putting permanent crossing support facilities in place. School Crossing Patrols and Light Controlled Crossings fulfil the same purpose: they stop traffic so pedestrians may cross the road safely and are therefore a duplication of resources.

I am also aware of concerns around the issues of negative driver behaviour outside schools. These issues are being taken up with the Safer Roads Partnership as this is a criminal enforcement issue and not something that a School Crossing Patrol can influence as part of their role.

QUESTION 2 – Mr A D Kent will ask John Smith:

"Following the severe storm and subsequent massive flooding that affected Wythall recently, which saw over 300 houses flooded, can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility advise whether the implementation of the emergency plan met expectations?"

Answer

Thank you for this question which relates to the recent flash flooding experienced by some residents in your electoral division.

I know that all Local Members will be interested to understand the context and background to this flash flood event which occurred on Sunday evening 27th May Bank Holiday weekend. The thunderstorms that evening were very localised and impacted on very specific areas including South Birmingham and the Hollywood area of Wythall in north Worcestershire. The rainfall during the thunderstorm was recorded locally as 130mm – the equivalent of 2 months' worth of rainfall – which fell in just 2 hours.

Currently 257 homes and one business are recorded as having flooded internally and over 60 properties flooded externally (gardens). Although information is still being collated my understanding is that up to 42 residents have left their properties due to flood damage whilst up to 18 people have chosen to remain in their properties. The response to this incident is therefore not over and support to affected residents continues.

You specifically ask about the Council's emergency planning arrangements and if these met expectations for this flooding. I can report to you that the County Council's Emergency Response Plan was activated in accordance with our protocols and implemented to provide the co-ordination required to respond to this incident. The immediate and initial response to the incident followed notification from the Fire Service and was provided by County Highways and District Water Management staff. When the full impacts of the flooding became clearer and better understood following the Bank Holiday weekend the Council's emergency plan was promptly activated to co-ordinate the ongoing response. This was achieved in close collaboration with our partners including Bromsgrove District Council, the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water and the north Worcestershire Water Management Service.

Following activation of the Council's Emergency Plan a series of internal Tactical (Silver) meetings and Recovery Group meetings were convened and a multi-agency Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Tactical Co-ordinating Group chaired by the WCC Silver Commander took place. Co-ordinated action at Hollywood has included staff from the County and Bromsgrove District Councils providing a presence on the ground, supporting vulnerable residents, providing information about Public Health, carrying out repairs to damaged footpaths and roadways, and arranging for the National Flood Forum, a charity to advise and support residents.

Should you require my further assistance with any matter relating the Councils response to this incident please get in touch with me.

Supplementary question

In response to a query, John Smith indicated that as soon as all the relevant information had been gathered regarding the flooding incident in Wythall, the protocols and emergency plans would be re-examined to ensure they were appropriate

QUESTION 3 – Mr P Denham will ask Marcus Hart:

"In May, the Cabinet Member was aware that Nadhim Zahawi, Minister for Children and Families, made the welcome announcement that an additional £252,000 was to be made available to Worcestershire to provide improved facilities for the education of children with special needs in our county.

At the time of this announcement, Mr Zahawi said, "All parents want to send their child to a good local school, one that meets their individual needs and supports them to achieve their full potential, regardless of the challenges they may face."

The parents of special needs children attending Riversides Special School in my division will share this aspiration, especially since these children continue to occupy totally inadequate premises leased to the school by this authority,

Does the cabinet member intend to spend any of this new money at Riversides School?"

Answer

Worcestershire County Council is due to receive £1,338,145 in capital funding over three years from the Special Provision Fund, including the £252,480 top up announced in May. As part of the process for receiving this funding, the Council invited bids from all special

schools for projects to increase places, as the need for additional places was the highest priority following the recent High Needs Commissioning Review.

We are currently consulting on proposals to increase capacity at Rigby Hall using the first tranche of money in 2018-19. We are also working with the Advance Trust which is the Multi Academy Trust that runs Riversides School to develop their schemes.

The £1,338,145 allocation equates to £446,048 capital funding per year and whilst it is welcome, will not go far in meeting the pressing need for increased places in Special Schools in Worcestershire. We do not, therefore, have funding to address suitability or condition issues. As Riversides School is an academy their first point of call for such issues is the Education and Skills Funding Agency who manage the funding for academies.

Supplementary question

In response to concerns about the state of the school buildings and the Council's responsibilities for it, Marcus Hart undertook to continue to work with Riversides School to find suitable alternative premises for the school on one site.

QUESTION 4 – Mr R C Lunn will ask Karen May:

"Can the Cabinet Member update us on the progress of the "rolling" 100 day turnaround plan to rectify errors with the Liberata E5 School finance system. What amount of compensation has been paid to schools impacted in the 2017-2018 financial year?"

Answer

Thank you Cllr Lunn for your question.

I can confirm that there was no compensation paid, however Liberata did recognise that in a number of cases a rebate for the fee was offered and accepted. This totalled £187,021. However, I would stress that over the last 12-15 months significant work has been undertaken to improve the service and I note that a report was uploaded yesterday for next week's Audit & Governance Committee that spells out exactly how all E5 and iTrent users were affected at the time. From that I would point out that levels of underpayments or escalations have been low in terms of the overall population (value and number) of payments. We don't however shirk away from the fact there were lessons to learn and following on from the 100 day plan we have a rolling improvement plan with Liberata and I can reassure you we are working with schools and in the Council to address all issues, and the report to Audit next week also sets more details out on this.

Supplementary question

Were there any outstanding claims for compensation from schools and did the Cabinet Member accept that if the Council had a 100 day plan it should stick to it? Karen May responded that it was not a compensation payment. £250k had been set aside by Liberata which equated to 6 weeks of the normal amount that schools paid. The 100 day plan was recommended by the SOCITM report which she saw as an ongoing plan.

QUESTION 5 – Mrs M A Rayner will ask Lucy Hodgson:

"I would like to ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities if the criteria for the school crossing patrols is a one size fits all and why?"

Answer

Worcestershire County Council (WCC) has agreed a policy for the School Crossing Patrol Service. This was adopted by Cabinet in November 2017.

The policy takes account of all legislative requirements including the most recent code of good practice and Road Safety GB agreed guidance notes. (Road Safety GB is a national road safety organisation that represents local government road safety across the UK).

Section 2 of the Policy sets out the legal position, with section 2.2.2 stating that SCP sites are established based on an approved national formula (described in detail in Appendix 3 of the policy). This is based on the number of pupils using the site, traffic flow, suitability of crossing point and other associated factors.

Each site is assessed on its own merit and whilst a standard approach is followed there will be associated, site specific, issues that are considered.

Supplementary question

If the School Crossing Patrol was removed from the busy A456 Kidderminster which served three schools, what safety strategies would be implemented for children, motorists, parents and local residents in compensation? Lucy Hodgson responded that the sites selected were on crossing points eg pelican or zebra crossings. On these sites the crossing took precedence and the attendant could only take action when the crossing was on green. Road safety education and training would be provided on an annual basis and she would welcome the involvement of parents in this. Overview and Scrutiny were also looking at this matter.

QUESTION 6 – Mr C J Bloore will ask John Smith:

"Would the Cabinet Member for Health join me in congratulating the NHS on its 70th Birthday and would they agree with me that the public will not forgive any government that fails to ensure our NHS and its staff are adequately resourced to meet the growing demands of our ageing population?"

Answer

Thank you Cllr Bloore for this question. My colleague, Cllr Hardman Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care joins me in responding that yes, we do congratulate the NHS on its 70th birthday. We note the many funding challenges that have faced every Government since 1948, which have arisen because demand for health care is far greater than was originally expected and welcome the recent announcement of additional central funding for the NHS. We will continue to do all we can to encourage the prevention of ill-health, and to work closely with health colleagues at operational level so that the demands of our ageing population are met.

This anniversary reminds us that the post-war reforms in the Welfare State included the introduction of state funded social care as well as the introduction of free health care. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those dedicated social care professionals, many of whom are employed directly by this Council, who work tirelessly to provide high quality care to our residents, and who are so rarely acknowledged in public for this essential work. They too should be seen as part of our 70th anniversary celebrations, thanks and congratulations.

QUESTION 7 – Mr R M Udall will ask Karen May:

"Further to my question at the last meeting of the County Council, can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility confirm that she will not sell the land in the ownership of the County Council at the former St John's YMCA for development; not until she has fully explored all the potential options to preserve the land as a sporting venue for the local community. Furthermore, can I invite her to join me and the County Councillor for the neighbouring Riversides Division, to visit the St John's YMCA Field, so we can jointly show her how important it is to the local community?"

Answer

Thank you for your question Cllr Udall.

I can only re-iterate the response I previously gave you on this matter.

The land is surplus to the council's direct delivery requirements. The Council's agents are reviewing the options to regularise the current use and protect the Council's asset and they are exploring all options which may be available to this Council, in terms of disposal of this surplus site.

I am happy to visit the St John's YMCA Field with the Division Members.

Supplementary question

In response to a query, Karen May commented that she would explore all future options for the use of St John's YMCA Field going forward.

QUESTION 8 – Dr C Hotham will ask Tony Miller:

"The recent disastrous flooding in Wythall has highlighted the need for significant improvement in the drainage system. Can the Leader please confirm what additional funding is to be made available to facilitate these works?"

Answer

It was a shame that Dr Hotham did not attend any of the meetings with outside agencies as he would have a greater insight into the problems that had been experienced there. As you know I phoned you on the day of the flood to ask you what properties had been affected in your division. I know you were on holiday at the time but I would have expected some sort of communication and I have received no communication so to ask this question when you have not been to any meetings is a little disingenuous.

I will update you on the programme and invite you to the debriefs and let you know the dates.

QUESTION 9 –Mrs F M Oborski will ask Alan Amos:

"At a previous Council meeting you assured me that the speed limit at the A456 junctions with Husum Way and Hurcott Lane was appropriate but improvement to signage was being implemented.

Since that answer there has been at least one further accident (at the time of writing this question!). Will you, with appropriate Officers, come to a site meeting at peak traffic time to actually see the situation as experienced by local residents?"

Answer

I thank Cllr Oborski for her question.

She will know that I recently visited this site some weeks ago, consequently since when further signage has been ordered which it is anticipated will be installed by the end of this month. In addition, the road markings at this junction were refreshed in May.

I understand that this recent accident was, fortunately, a damage-only incident. Although not normally done, in the light of Cllr Oborski's particular concern about this location, a site meeting is being arranged in the next few weeks with officers from the Accident Studies and Traffic Management teams together with the police. This accident will be considered in detail to establish if there are any remediation measures that can or should be pursued. Cllr

Oborski will be invited to this meeting when she can raise and discuss this accident and any further concerns. I have asked for a report back and I have no problem with taking further measures if they prove necessary and agreed.

However, I would remind Cllr Oborski that an extensive safety remediation scheme was carried out at this junction in 2010 which has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of accidents at this location. I am assured that officers will continue to monitor and evaluate accident data at this site.

QUESTION 10 – Mr A D Kent will ask Karen May:

"GDPR is an EU initiative that had to be implemented by 20 May 2018. Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility advise what the cost has been to Worcestershire County Council to implement GDPR and what is the perceived cost of future subject access requests?"

Answer

Thank you Mr Kent for your question.

The General Data Protection Regulations (and the Data Protection Act 2018) came into force on 25 May 2018. There will be unquantified opportunity costs of training and compliance, as there is with other significant new legislation. On specific costs, in order to prepare for the introduction of the changes we secured £197k from the Transformation Fund to resource a project team to support compliance with the new law. This work is ongoing with the project due to finish at the end of this financial year.

In terms of Subject Access Requests, we have experienced an increase in numbers (number and volume of records) year on year for some time. We have not noticed any immediate, significant increase that can be attributed to the change in legislation. We are not, at this point, anticipating the cost of provision to change substantially overall at this point, but it is early days. The small income we previously received to contribute to the cost of disclosure (£10 per application) is no longer chargeable, but in reality made little difference compared to the cost of the service. We will continue to monitor demand over the forthcoming months.

QUESTION 11 – Mr C J Bloore will ask Alan Amos:

"Could the Cabinet Member for Highways explain to me why residents living on the same street in my division are treated differently by Ringway when applying for a dropped kerb?"

Answer

I thank Cllr Bloore for his question.

He hasn't specified either the residents or the road in which some residents living in the same street have allegedly been treated differently in applying for dropped kerbs.

However, if he supplies me with this information after the meeting, I can assure him I will look into it.

However, if he is referring to a particular road that I think he is referring to, I can only say that if one crossing was approved inconsistent with all the criteria and despite not all the prerequisites being met, then it was only right that another application with the same characteristics was not then approved as well. It does not help a situation to compound an error by committing the same one twice. So, at worst, somebody got something to which they were not entitled; whilst somebody else did not get something for which they did not meet the criteria anyway.

But if it is the same example, I can further say that when discovering what had happened, improvements were swiftly made both in terms of the staff and the administrative procedures involved; together with a greater oversight of the contractor by the County Council. Ringway's vehicle crossing team deal with about 500 dropped crossings a year so we need to maintain a sense of proportion when things go wrong. As a result of the changes made following this case, this should not happen again.

QUESTION 12 – Mr R C Lunn will ask Lucy Hodgson:

"Can the Cabinet Member inform me as to what amount of money was spent on new library books across the County in 2017-18? How did this compare with the previous year?"

Answer

In both 2016/17 and 2017/18, £302k was spent on new library books across the County, including audio books, e book and e audio books. The breakdown of book spend in 17/18 is broadly the same as that in 16/17 and is set out below:

Stock Type	Spend £k	% Spend	% Issues
Adult fiction, non-fiction, reference	185	61.26	63
Children fiction, non-fiction, reference	70.5	23.35	30.3
Large print	16.5	5.46	3.2
ebooks, eaudio	22	7.28	2.3
Audio books	8	2.65	1.2
Total	302		

In 2017/2018 spend on books represented 80% of total stock budget spend with the remainder being spent on DVDs (£20k), Online reference services (£37k) and Newspapers % Magazines (including e magazines) (£17.4k).

The stock budget is tightly managed and closely monitored and decisions on book spend and wider stock spend are made collaboratively by a team of frontline managers to ensure that they closely reflect customer demand at the frontline as well as trends in stock formats.

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