

CABINET MEETING 3rd March 2010

The following Statements and Questions had been registered by the time of publication.

REGISTERED SPEAKERS

There was 1 notice of intention to make a statement at the meeting. Where the intention is to speak about an item on the Agenda, the speaker will be offered the option to speak near the beginning of the meeting or just before the Agenda item.

- Ian Bell (Executive Director, Bath Chamber of Commerce and Initiative)
Re: Economic Strategy (Agenda Item 14)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

01	Question from:	Councillor John Bull
	Are Councillors Haerberling and Hanney able to tell us how the £83,000 delegated to them personally in the Budget is to be spent?	
	Answer from:	Councillor Malcolm Hanney
	No.	
	Supplementary Question:	
	When will the secret be shared?	
	Answer from:	Councillor Francine Haerberling
	<i>There is no secret – no decisions have been made so there is nothing to share and nothing to keep secret</i>	

02	Question from:	Councillor Tim Warren
	Could the Cabinet Member provide further information on the timescales of implementing the increased levels of highway maintenance following the approval of an additional £3 million as part of this year's Council budget? How will these additional resources be prioritised?	

Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>An initial £500k will be made immediately available to spend on minor repairs (potholes and patching) to maintain safe surfaces on the roads that have been damaged by the recent prolonged severe weather. The full extent of the severe winter will continue to reveal defects and a further £500k will be spent repairing potholes in 2010/11. To ensure the maximum return from the investment the remaining £2million will be spent in 2010/11 on preventative surfacing schemes using a variety of surfacing techniques. These schemes will be prioritised using the asset management information from the Council's independent technical surveys and the feedback from the team of Highway Inspectors.</i></p> <p><i>The schemes on this programme will target roads across the district and will be reported to the Executive Member for approval. Officers will endeavour to undertake any other planned works at the same time as the resurfacing to minimise any inconvenience to residents and the travelling public. The full list of proposed schemes will be issued for consultation in April.</i></p>	

03

Question from:	Councillor Marie Longstaff
<p>Could the Cabinet Member provide details on who exactly will benefit from the funding provided for free swimming for disadvantaged children, and timescales for when this is likely to be implemented?</p>	
Answer from:	Councillor Chris Watt
<p><i>The aim of the policy is to provide all children in receipt of free school meals with free access to swimming. We will be working with Active Sport and Leisure to put this in place as soon as possible. In addition we aim to extend the service already in place for our Children in Care so that they have free access to a range of leisure activities wherever they live. We will also extend this to the birth children of Bath and North East Somerset foster carers and to the carer themselves where the child placed with them or one or more of their own children is of primary school age, this will allow for the whole foster family to share leisure activities together.</i></p>	

04

Question from:	Councillor Bryan Organ
<p>Could the Cabinet Member provide figures for the cost of renovating and retaining the Riverside offices in Keynsham, as suggested by some Councillors at the Council budget debate? How does this compare with the costs/savings projected for the Council's current Office Rationalisation Programme agreed by Cabinet in December 2009? Could similar levels of carbon reduction/energy saving be expected from a Riverside renovation as in the current plans?</p>	
Answer from:	Councillor Malcolm Hanney
<p><i>The Office Rationalisation Programme agreed by Cabinet in December 2009 is</i></p>	

expected to produce savings of 10% per annum against the option of continuing the Council's current office provision. This equates to a £405,235 revenue saving for the Council, with savings rising to £946,146 from 2022 and £1,547,852 from 2032 onwards. In contrast, the option of renovating Riverside is calculated to actually result in a 3% increase in expenditure, equivalent to an additional £115,377 revenue cost, due to higher running costs in addition to expenditure on renovation.

These figures do not take into account the importance of the Keynsham Town Hall site redevelopment to Keynsham and its local economy. Cabinet agreed in December to an office strategy retaining office presence in all three main urban centres of the authority, including Bath, Midsomer Norton and Keynsham. As well as new offices, the Keynsham Town Hall site plans will include a new one-stop-shop, a new library, and retail facilities. This strategy will free-up much needed office space for the private sector in Bath, whilst underpinning the local economies of Midsomer Norton and Keynsham.

Savings in terms of carbon reduction and energy efficiency from a Riverside renovation would be expected to be significantly lower than the 70% reduction in carbon emissions expected from the current Office Rationalisation programme.

05

Question from: Councillor Nicholas Coombes

- a) Why were the total costs of the Bath Package project given as £65.9m, whereas the total funding was shown as £62.7m in the council answer of last month? Who is making up the difference?
- b) If the costs in practice prove to be larger than this, then who will be funding the difference?
- c) What is the council's estimated financial exposure should the government not give final approval?
- d) Do the above figures include the costs of property purchase along the route? What is the cost of this element estimated to be, gross and net of any resale?
- e) How much has the cost increased since the original bid/application in 2006?

Answer from: Councillor Charles Gerrish

a) There is no funding gap. The figure of 62.7m is the correct one analysed as follows:

<i>BRT</i>	<i>£29.1m</i>
<i>P&R</i>	<i>£27.2m</i>
<i>Bus Routes</i>	<i>£ 6.4m</i>

These figures include £0.7m management and £0.3m publicity. Apologies for the typing error in the previously advised figure.

- b) Latest tenders indicate that the scheme will delivered within budget.*
- c) Council is proceeding on the basis that approval will be forthcoming.*
- d) The Council is progressing the CPO process and negotiations related thereto including agreements that may be entered into before the Inquiry and details thereof / or the Council's assessment of potential relevant purchase costs are commercial in confidence and it is not appropriate to provide additional breakdown of information at this time.*

e) *Increases have been:*

- *£4.7m reported in E1851 Single Member Decision, with eligible expenditure funded 50% by additional DfT grant on full consent.*
- *£1.2m new estimate of costs of Public Inquiry and consequential delay.*

Supplementary Question:

I previously asked the member, and again at Council, who will be responsible for any overspend? He has yet to answer me.

Answer from:

Councillor Charles Gerrish

The nature of contractual arrangements between any two parties is usually set out in a detailed contract agreed between them. Liability for overspends in such arrangements is governed by a contract and usually depends on the circumstances of the overspend.

The question you pose is a purely hypothetical one. The latest tender prices indicate that the scheme will be delivered within budget. In the absence of any tangible overspend it is not possible to assign liability - nor is it sensible to comment on something that does not exist.

I therefore believe this answers your question in the best way possible at this time.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

There were none