

County Council 26 April 2018

Agenda Item

Page No

- 9 **CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS**
Written questions and answers attached

3 - 6



Questions for County Council Meeting

Thursday 26 April 2018

Questions to the Cabinet Member for Transportation from Julia Wassell:

Q1 Please can you shed light on your comment on social media that pot holes could be filled in with waste plastic? This has caused quite a lot of interest as the disposal of waste plastic is a great cause for concern.

There are products on the market, currently under trial, which do use an element of recycled plastic within the surfacing material. These are primarily being used for larger areas of resurfacing rather than individual pothole repairs. Ringway Jacobs, through their shareholders, are monitoring these trials and if successful and if longevity can be assured, may well be interested in undertaking their own trials in Buckinghamshire. The products are however very new to the market and do need to be proven prior to extensive use.

Q2 As we are a Member Led Authority we are able to choose a road scheme in our division. Two of my schemes from previous years are yet to be completed 1. Baring Road Hill which is now riddled with pot holes 2. Micklefield Road section with speed humps also riddled with pot holes. Please inform me when these will be completed?

Baring Road is one of the steepest roads in the county and was not completed as part of the 2015 scheme (which included Gayhurst Road, Wellies Road, Green Close) as it wasn't suitable for the treatment being completed on the rest of the estate. When we discussed the road at our recent meeting this was noted and Baring Road was added to the list of local priorities to be priced programmed in our 4 year plans. It is not planned for completion in 2018 as the roads around Buckingham Drive and Tiling Crescent were seen at time as a higher priority.

The top end of Micklefield Road, at the junction with Woodside Road, is where the buses do a U-Turn to complete their routes – this area is subject to a lot of pressure and would be suitable for a plane and patch solution. This is the only area on Micklefield Road we have records of being discussed at the recent Member Meeting. As we have had a severe winter and some roads have begun to pothole and cause concern since the meetings held in January we will be reviewing the situation and will report back to you once that review is complete.

Q3 There are a few occasions when specific street lights are taking a very long time to repair. Unfortunately, residents in Warren Wood Drive have received an email saying that a street light has been repaired when it clearly hasn't been. Why does this occur and can you get the street light fixed please?

A lantern replacement programme has recently been carried out in the Warren Wood Drive area. This has resulted in the replacement of the old deep orange "SOX" lanterns with modern LED variants, individually tailored to each location to apply the principle of "The right light, in the right place". While the project was being implemented we have been advising that that the repair of the defects would be resolved as part of the project and this could lead to a short delay in the resolution of the reported fault. Unfortunately the automated message that was sent out was

prefixed with text that suggested that the defect had been resolved. This message has been reviewed and changes are being made to remove this possibility, we apologise for any confusion caused.

Questions to the Cabinet Member for Transportation from Mr C Ditta:

Q1 I was very pleased with the emergency response when a dangerous pot hole appeared in Hatters Lane, High Wycombe. However, this small section of Hatters Lane was left out when I chose Hatters Lane to be resurfaced. Please can you rectify this omission soon?

We will consider this under the plane and patch scheme, it will be assessed against our other competing pressures and programmed in line with the prioritisation methodology agreed at Cabinet in October 2017.

Q2 Members received an additional budget last year to make improvement with Highways projects. Please could we receive as Members an update on this work? I am pleased with the work that I can see has already been done.

I am pleased to be able to inform you that the vast majority of work defined by Members has been completed. Some isolated works have been delayed for reasons outside of our control (e.g. conflicting works, design issues or seasonal weather). If any Member has a particular concern about completion of work agreed then I would encourage them to speak with their LAT. Further (and increased) budget has been identified for this scheme in 2018/19, and Transport for Buckinghamshire have asked Members to provide their choices to TfB by the end of April.

Questions to the Cabinet Member for Transportation from Ms A Wight:

Q1 I would just like to say that I know my residents thoroughly welcome the Cabinet Member's initiative in providing Buckinghamshire with a Freight Strategy. As HGVs on narrow rural roads are causing my residents many concerns regarding road safety, traffic congestion during the school run, and loss of amenity, they are keen to know whether the final form of the Freight Strategy will include any form of enforcement, as is the case in our neighbouring counties of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire?

Thank you for your support throughout the consultation. Once we have published the Freight Strategy, we will be investigating the problems in rural areas that have been raised through the consultation to seek possible solutions and develop an action plan. This could include enforcement action as a last resort when other solutions are not possible and budget allows. I am pleased that Council agreed resources to implement the Freight Strategy which includes a new designated Freight Officer position, as well as over £700k for physical measures over the next four years.

Questions to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services from Julia Wassell:

Q1 I am very pleased to see that the closure of Children's Centres in Buckinghamshire has now been put on hold. I am pleased that the important points raised by Councillors and a campaigner at the Call In have now been taken on board. Please can you assure me that any future consultation will conform to the Gunning Principles? These state that 'Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage: Decision makers cannot consult on a decision that has already been made'.

Future consultations will be carried out in line with national best practice and will adhere to the Gunning Principles. The Council will make sure that key stakeholders, services users and residents actively participate throughout the consultation process.

Q2 What progress is being made with the Ofsted Inspector? What opportunities are there for the Inspector to meet with Opposition Members to hear our views?

Since his appointment by the DfE, the Commissioner and his team have spent a number of days in Buckinghamshire. During their visits, they have met with front line staff, team managers and senior managers across the majority of our social care teams. In addition to this, time has been allocated for the Commissioner to meet both the leader of the opposition and the chairman of the Children's Select Committee, in the coming weeks.

Questions to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services from Mr C Ditta:

Q1 The closure of Hampden Way Children's Centre has been postponed, but I understand that key staff have left their posts. Please can you inform me how many Children's Centre staff in Bucks have resigned from their posts since the launch of the consultation in July last year? Are these posts now being recruited to?

We are not aware of which staff may have left posts within services which are externally commissioned. The recruitment to posts within these services is the responsibility of the provider in line with the contract terms and conditions.

Questions to the Leader from Julia Wassell:

Q1 Would it be better for you to meet with District Council Leaders to provide a unified response to Sajid Javid the Secretary of State? I am sure that I am not the only person who feels that the frittering away of tax payers money because Buckinghamshire Conservatives cannot agree on a Unitary model is wasteful and embarrassing.

The County and District Councils have collectively agreed that the current system of local government in Buckinghamshire is not sustainable for the future and we have put forward a compelling case for change. I am pleased that this has been recognised by the Secretary of State in his 'minded to' announcement. We do have different perspectives on the right model of unitary government for Buckinghamshire however and it is entirely appropriate that we submit these to the Secretary of State so that he can consider all views in reaching a final decision. I would strongly encourage residents, businesses, partners and key stakeholders to take the opportunity to make their own views known to the Secretary of State in the period for representations up to 25 May 2018.

Questions to the Leader from Mr C Ditta

Q1 As you will know Wycombe does not have a Town Council and last week Wycombe District Council voted to turn its Town Committee into a new 'super committee' with delegated powers. I was wondering whether you thought this sudden empowerment for elected representatives in the Town is because WDC are now hoping for a 'no change' outcome to their unitary campaign?

This is entirely a matter for Wycombe District Council.