

CABINET – 19 JULY 2011

ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Question received from the following Member:

1. Councillor John Goddard to the Cabinet Member for Transport

"In view of the surplus in the on-street parking account in respect of Oxford City Residents' Parking Zones, will the Cabinet consider returning some portion of this money to residents who have been over-charged?"

Answer

No.

2. Councillor Zoe Patrick to the Cabinet Member for Transport

"Is it correct that there is a policy not to spray weeds on pavements and gutters? If so, what is the projected additional cost to the council in having to replace pavements which deteriorate? (For example the new pavement between Stadhampton and Chiselhampton). Will the Cabinet consider adopting a more flexible policy which allows spraying in some areas by agreement with parish and town councils? "

Answer

"The decision was taken that the £2.3m needed to spray the weeds across the county was not cost effective. The clearing of noxious weeds is still undertaken and we work closely with the Royal Horse Society and assist their volunteers who pull the ragwort by providing bags and collecting waste.

Members will recall that we set up an Area Stewardship Maintenance Fund this year to provide local members with the flexibility to allocate some funds in their Locality to issues that they agree are of importance to the community. If weed spraying is considered to be a priority then Councillors within each locality can consider whether this is something they would wish to fund.

You make particular reference to the new pavement between Stadhampton and Chiselhampton. Before any new surface is laid the area is weed treated which should stop weed growth for at least two years, and is covered by an indemnity. If weed growth returns within this period the work would have to be redone at no cost to the council."

3. Councillor Jean Fooks to the Cabinet Members for Police & Policy Co-ordination and Safer & Stronger Communities

" In the Big Society report, Agenda item 8, I see that recommendation c 'asks officers to work with community groups to enable them to take over buildings to facilitate continuity of provision as much as possible from 1 September. '

Please could the Cabinet member explain what is meant by this recommendation? There is no reference that I can find in the report to this recommendation, although it is of course something which community groups would welcome. Does it mean that existing youth workers will be able to help community groups to maintain youth provision through August and into September, before new staff are advertised for and taken on by community groups?"

Answer

Recommendation (d) is a reference to the work that has and will go on across the council to make sure that where we are ceasing to provide youth services and a big society solution has been agreed by Cabinet, we will work with community groups to help them, as far as possible, to be up and running by 1 September 2011.

4. Councillor Anne Purse to the Cabinet Member for Transport

"A recent story in the media reported that there were proposals made at a recent scrutiny committee meeting that local parishes should pay for salt in the winter if they wanted it more. Please can you confirm whether, in places where salt bins have been purchased (e.g. by Parish Councils or by the City Council in Oxford), the County Council will indeed continue to refill these bins for use on local roads as was the deal at the time the bins were bought ?"

Answer

"Our policy is to fill grit bins at the beginning of the winter period and then to replenish them when required as long as this will not compromise winter activity on keeping the main routes open. As members will know there has been extreme pressure on our salt stocks over the last two winters which has meant we were unable to refill grit bins routinely. I am currently looking at a better way of managing this to ensure that communities have improved access to an adequate supply of salt over the winter."