

APPENDIX C

Meeting of Somerset County Council held in the Council Chamber, Shire Hall, Taunton on Wednesday 15 February 2017 at 10.00am.

Written responses to questions to Cabinet Members

The following questions were asked of the Cabinet Members during the County Council meeting, who undertook to give written responses:

Written questions:

1. Decision - Approval to Accept DfT C-ITS Challenge Fund Award

From Cllr Alan Dimmick

Members will be aware of the key decision taken on 21/03/2017 “approval to accept DfT C-ITS challenge Fund Award.

Implement the Energy Efficient Intersection Project.

This is a result of Directive of European Union 2010/40/E.U. 7th July 2010

As a result of this directive 7 pilot schemes introduced across the EU involving 600 plus vehicles and 1,200 drivers (a very small sample) as a result working groups (9 in total) set up to examine outcomes, these published in the FINAL REPORT (JAN 16) of the C-ITS PLATFORM.

The decision to proceed is based on appendix A. Page 12 – Subjective User Feedback “findings used to build a business case” This is to be set against the EU final Report which states “there is no business case” only business models “which actors can then find their interest presented in a convincing way”

Many key findings within the EU Final Report contradict Appendix A-example- “priority schemes (which this scheme is) can cause an increase in delays in the wider network” The claim that CO2 emissions will reduce by up to 10% set against report findings that CO2 emissions EXPECTED to drop by 1.2% (one point two per cent) by 2030. It is to be noted that in a congested state NO BENEFIT ACHIEVED. In the final report it states that most savings achieved through “Intersection Related Services” (applicable in this case)

Parking Information (not applicable in this case)

Smart Routing (not applicable in this case)

As this scheme is a “pilot” and data is to be collected then it must be monitored to encompass the effects on the wider road network, air quality must also be monitored before and after the implementation of this scheme at a very local level. Question – who will pay for all of this work. Failure to carry out a full assessment will result in meaningless data being collected.

To base a decision on a commercial (biased) report brings the integrity of this Council into question.

Response from Cllr David Hall – Cabinet Member for Business, Inward Investment Policy

Thank you for your interest in this pilot project. Turning to your specific question, the appropriate monitoring of the success of the project will be funded from the DfT grant at no cost to the Council, and the system will only continue to be used if it demonstrates clear benefits.

2. Bee and Natural Pollinators Protection Plan

From Cllr Alan Gloak

For the benefit and protection of fruit growers and farmers across the county will Somerset county council consider adopting and implementing a bee and natural pollinators protection plan, based on a framework provided by Friends on the earth , that has already been adopted by Cornwall , Devon, Dorset and Bristol ?

Response from Cllr David Hall – Cabinet Member for Business, Inward Investment Policy

The Council acknowledges the benefits to all pollinators and the wider biodiversity of the county of reducing or eliminating the use of neonicotinoids (a class of neuro-active insecticide chemically similar to nicotine and reportedly particularly harmful to the bee population). I will ask the County Ecologist to liaise with key stakeholders within the County Council such as property and highway maintenance teams regarding a 'Pollinators' Action Plan'.

Questions asked at the meeting:

Cllr William Wallace to provide Cllr Sam Crabb with a response to the questions asked at the meeting regarding Fiveways Resource Centre.

Thank you for your questions raised at Full Council on the 26th April, I have set out further to the comments I made at Council the detailed answers below.

(1) Why have you picked out Fiveways as one of the centres marked for closure.

As part of the transformation of day services we have asked Discovery to spend time speaking to people who use our current day services, their families and staff about their experiences. We want people to tell us what they like about the current services and also to say what things they would like to do differently in future. We do not have any specific plans to close any centre at this point. Any plans to close a specific centre would only arise after the discussions I mentioned above have happened and any specific consultation has taken place.

(2) Do you think that Fiveways is well used by people, from Wincanton, Chard, Crewkerne, Martock and Yeovil.

I know from my visit to Fiveways that people do attend the centre from a number of locations across the county. We will obviously be speaking to people from all these areas as part of the discussions referred above. I am anxious that we are able to support people more in future in their local areas and reduce what for some people can be a long bus journey though clearly any changes will as I indicated in answer 1 only occur after the appropriate discussions and consultations take place.

(3) How do you feel about the families and carers who rely on Fiveways for support? What impact is uncertainty having on these families?

I know from the discussions I have had with families and carers the importance of day time activities. The importance is both in relation to respite for families as well as the activity for the person themselves.

(4) Mel Lock (SCC) is suggesting that the disco is moved elsewhere. But families and carers say it should stay at Fiveways.

Any plans for changes will be developed as part of the discussions mentioned in my answer to question 1.

(5) We have clients who come to Fiveways in wheelchairs. What future is for them? When Fiveways is suitable for their needs and a meeting place for them?

I do understand the importance of ensuring all clients have access to day time activities and where they have a physical disability need that this is met. We do want to ensure there are improvements to the availability of 'changing places' so that individuals who require this level of support can do so within communities.

(6) How do you feel about the dark cloud hanging over the staff and clients heads and the effect this is having.

I do recognise the anxieties that staff are experiencing, it is important that staff get the answers about their futures as soon as is possible. I know that Discovery has started the necessary discussions with Unions and will be speaking to staff as soon as possible.

Cllr William Wallace to provide Cllr Jane Lock with a response to the question asked at the meeting regarding staff identification badges.

As you will appreciate as a new organisation Discovery has been putting in place all of the necessary infrastructure including having the appropriate name badges. Staff will have a clearly identifiable 'Discovery' badge shortly as design and production processes are finalised.

In the meantime staff are able to self-service and get a name badge though the Dimensions facility though clearly this identifies the holder as Dimensions.

Cllr William Wallace to provide Cllr Alan Gloak with a response to the question asked at the meeting regarding the future of the Beckery Resource Centre

Thank you for your question at Full Council regarding the Beckery Centre and specifically if there any changes occurring there. I have checked and as I expected there is no changes occurring specifically there. Obviously the service has as part of the LDPS recently transferred to Discovery the Social Enterprise so will have gone through that change.

You will be aware from my response to the questions from Cllr Sam Crabb that 'Discovery' would be working with individuals to develop a clear plan for the future day service offer. Until that piece of work has been completed no specific or significant changes will occur.

You will have heard me recognise and appreciate the anxiety that people are feeling as they obviously want answers whether those be customers or staff but it is really important that the necessary engagement and consultation takes place before any change is implemented.